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Introduction

Catoctin Mountain Park and Cunningham Falls State Park are located side by side on approximately 10,000 acres of mountain land in western Maryland. The parks occupy the easternmost ridge of the Blue Ridge Province. Known as the Catoctin Mountains, this ridge has elevations generally in the range of 1,600 to 1,700 feet, and it rises abruptly from north to south more than 1,200 feet above the adjacent Frederick Valley.

Catoctin Mountain Park is managed by the National Park Service and is located to the north of Maryland Route 77; Cunningham Falls State Park is managed by the Maryland Forest, Park, and Wildlife Service and is located to the south of Route 77 (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. The entrance to the parks from the west is through a tunnel of trees that is beautiful during all seasons.

The area covered by the two parks is notable for a variety of features. The unique geology of the Catoctins opens windows not only to the ancient history of the earth but also to the intermediate history—which includes the formation of the Appalachian mountains—and to the more recent events of the Ice Age. The streams and falls that are a part of this geologic history are excellent for fishing, study or meditation. The regenerated forests offer opportunities for the study of ecological concepts and wildlife habitats. Finally, the sites related to the 19th century iron industry and to the New Deal programs of the 1930s provide interest to the student of American history.

Table 1. A Statistical Synopsis of Catoctin Mountain Park (CMP) and Cunningham Falls State Park (CFSP)

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Area: | 10,211 acres total. CMP: 5,765 acres. CFSP: 4,446 acres (3,500 acres are state-designated wildlands). |
| Roads: | About 14 miles of paved roads lie within the parks' boundaries. |
| Maximum Elevation: . | 1,880 feet |
| Minimum Elevation: . | 480 feet (near Catoctin Furnace) |
| Scenic Overlooks: | Seven. These are accessible only by walking trails. |
| Trails: | Over 25 miles; several interpretive; two accessible to persons with disabilities; horse trails. |
| Streams: | Owens, Big Hunting and Little Hunting creeks; numerous tributaries. |
| Lake: | Hunting Creek Lake: 44 acres, 255 million gallons. |
| Fishing: | Lake and streams, with some restricted to catch-and-return. |
| Hunting: | Only on 3,500 acres of wildlands in CFSP. |
| Overnight Facilities: . . | CFSP: Two campgrounds. CMP: One campground; rustic cabins for rent. |
| Swimming: | CFSP: Two beach areas at lake. |
| Boating: | Launching ramp at lake; electric motors less than 1 hp; canoe and aquacycle rental near beach area. |
| Picnic areas: | CFSP: two areas; snack bar near lake. CMP: two areas and scattered tables. |
| Activities: | Interpretive programs, hikes, seminars, demonstrations. |
| Historical Areas: | CFSP: Catoctin Furnace. CMP: Sawmill, Charcoal and Whiskey Still Trails. |
| Winter Activities: | Cross-country skiing and sledding. |
| Park Established: | 1936, as Catoctin Demonstration Area. 1954, division into two parks. |
| Annual Visitation: | CFSP: over 900,000 annually. CMP: about 800,000 annually. |