



# Stewardship and Service: A Maryland Park Ranger's Life

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# Your Maryland Park Service

- Founded in 1906, the Parks and Forest Services are among Maryland's oldest State agencies.
- Maryland was a leader among the states in establishing a program of forest conservation, and out of that forest conservation initiative, Maryland's system of state parks emerged almost immediately.



# The Birth of Maryland Parks



- In 1906, philanthropist brothers John and Robert Garrett challenged the state to establish a forestry program by donating nearly 2000 tree-stripped acres of land in Garrett County to the state on the condition that the state establish the governmental machinery to promote wise use of forest resources.
- At that time, Maryland's tree cover had been reduced from nearly 90 percent of its land surface when the first colonists arrived to a paltry 35 percent.
- Maryland was running out of wood, losing wildlife habitat, suffering the ravages of erosion and stream siltation, and being scourged by unchecked forest fires.



# 1906: A New Beginning

- The state legislature responded with Maryland's first forestry law, which Governor Edwin Warfield signed into law on April 5, 1906.
- Maryland was thus the third state in the union, preceded by Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, to establish a statewide forestry program.

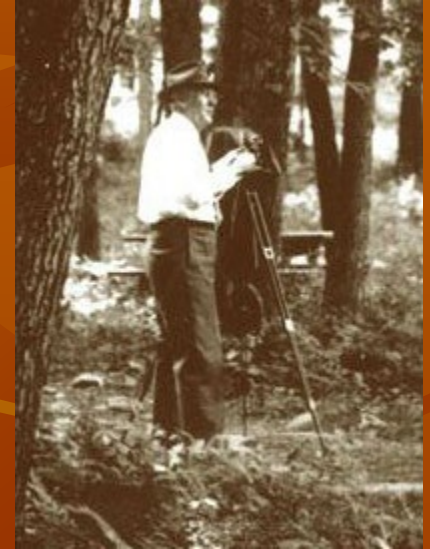






# Fred Besley: Maryland's First Forester

- Governor Warfield appointed an able young forester working for the U.S. Forest Service, Fred W. Besley, who would serve as Maryland's first State Forester from 1906 until 1942.
- A Yale School of Forestry trained protégé of Gifford Pinchot, first U.S. Forester, Besley proved to be an able and energetic choice.





# Volunteers and Parks: Partners from the First

- Among Besley's first acts was to create a staff of over 300 volunteer forest wardens to reduce the incidence of forest fires and fight fires when they occurred.
- Volunteers have been partners in our parks and forests ever since.





# Your Maryland Parks Today

- Today, Maryland's system of 66 state parks provides over 300,000 acres of public lands.
- Eleven million visitors come to these valuable resources each year and contribute over \$650 million in economic activity to the state's economy.
- There is a state forest or park within 20 miles of every state resident.



# Our Mission

- To manage the natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources to provide the best use for the benefit of people





# Seneca Creek State Park: Montgomery County's Own

- 1951: Montgomery County Council approves a proposal to “establish a 1000 acre State Park” along the Potomac River to protect the Seneca Creek Watershed in the county Master Plan
- Concept includes soil and water conservation and recreation as major uses.



# Seneca Creek State Park: Montgomery County's Own



- 1955: State acquires 255 acres of Woodlands estate, including historic Clopper Mill
- 1964: Woodlands Homestead site added to Park. Early uses include picnicking and wilderness camping.
- 1964-present: Park grows to its full 13 mile extent, from Rt. 355 in the east to the Potomac in the west.



# Seneca Creek State Park: Recreational Resources

- Clopper Lake: 90-acre lake; canoes, kayaks and rowboats available for rent, launch ramp for private boats (no motors please!), excellent fishing for largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie.







# Seneca Creek State Park: Recreational Resources

- Recycled Tire Playground







# Seneca Creek State Park: Recreational Resources

- 27-hole Disc Golf course, largest in Mid-Atlantic States





# Seneca Creek State Park: Recreational Resources



- Hiking Trails:  
50+ mile trail  
network,  
including new  
Seneca Bluffs  
and Seneca  
Ridge Trails





# Seneca Creek State Park: Recreational Resources



- Mountain Biking: 16 miles of dedicated mountain bike trails at Schaeffer Farms unit



# Seneca Creek State Park: Recreational Resources

- Picnic groves and Picnic Pavilions







# Seneca Creek State Park: Historical Resources

- Woodlands: Archeological remains of Clopper/Hutton Family plantation





# Seneca Creek State Park: Historical Resources

- Clopper Mill and Black Rock Mill







# Seneca Creek State Park: Historical Resources

- Seneca Stone Cutting Mill and Schoolhouse







# Seneca Creek State Park: Natural Resources

- Preservation of Regional Water Quality

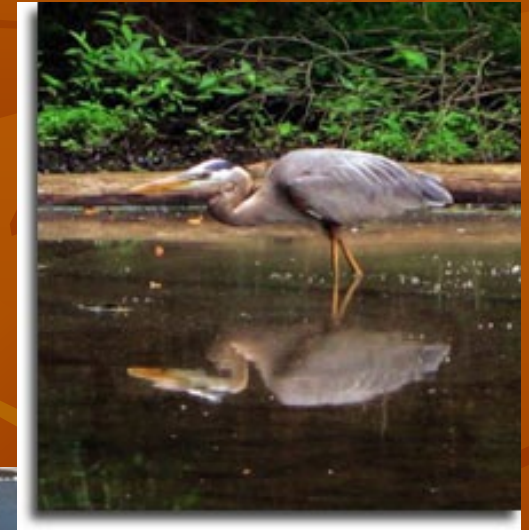






# Seneca Creek State Park: Natural Resources

## ■ Wildlife Habitat





# Seneca Creek State Park: Natural Resources

- Agricultural and pasture land





# A Maryland Park Ranger's Job



- *A Maryland Ranger devotes professional responsibility for stewardship and protection of Maryland's natural and historic resources. In carrying out that duty, a Ranger incorporates education, enforcement, management, conservation, or some combination of these skills in regular interaction with the public.*





# A Ranger's Life: Education

- We are a diverse group! Maryland Rangers have academic backgrounds in Parks and Recreation, Biology, Conservation, History, Archeology, and many more fields.
- In-Service Training:
  - Emergency Medical Response/ CPR and AED
  - Search and Rescue
  - Water Rescue
  - Wildland Firefighting
  - Tree care / Chainsaw Operation
  - Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance







# A Ranger's Life: Operations

- Check Park facilities for safety/cleanliness
- Respond to weather emergencies
  - Snow/ice
  - Floods
  - Wind damage/downed trees
- Greet visitors, provide advice and information
- Educate visitors as to Park policies and encourage compliance



# A Ranger's Life: Maintenance

- We are universal handymen and women!
- In an average day we might:
  - Fix a restroom plumbing problem
  - Repair a leaking kayak
  - Cut up a fallen tree
  - Maintain a trail
- And much much more!





# A Ranger's Life: Interpretation

- Boat tours
- Nature Walks
- History Hikes
- Lectures and Public Outreach
- Live Animal programs







# We Need You!

- Volunteers have been partners in our parks from the beginning: remember Fred Besley's Forest Wardens!
- We have a role for every age and skill.







# Volunteer Opportunities

- Trail Maintenance
- Gardening
- Planning / Staffing Special Events
- Photography
- Conducting Historical Research
- Tree Planting
- Building Bird Boxes
- Sign Making
- Carpentry Work
- Historic Interpreter / Docent
- Registering Campers
- Mowing
- Leading Canoe Trips
- Painting
- Leading Nature Hikes
- Desktop Publishing
- Computer work
- Visitor Center Receptionist
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Presenting Campfire programs
- General Maintenance / Repairs
- Organizing slide and photograph files
- Historical Interpretation
- Assisting in development of trail maps, brochures, etc.



# Opportunities for Youth

- Student Service Learning
- Maryland Conservation Corps
- Conservation Jobs Corps







# So Come Join Us!

- <https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/central/Seneca/volunteer.aspx>

