

FALL 2025 | NEWSLETTER

THE CASCADE



Photo by Naturalist John Zuke

FRIENDS OF CUNNINGHAM FALLS AND GAMBRILL STATE PARKS, INC.

**A 501(C)3 NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
DONATIONS DIRECTLY SUPPORT BOTH PARKS**

- 3 Generations of Volunteering in the Park by Christine Patterson.
- Video of a Black Bear Walking in the Woods by Ranger Ben Gantz
- Come On Out! Fall Hayrides in the Park w/Campfire & S'mores. Oct 25, 26th, 11am-4pm.
- 10k/5k Race Fun Run/Walk In the Park: Nov 2nd 9am-11am. Sign Up Now.
- Rescue Board Donation by The Thurmont Lions Club.

Park Headquarters: 301-271-7574





Friends of Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks

Friends of Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Our Mission is to support and enhance the programs and recreational offerings of Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks through charitable contributions and in-kind donations.

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Please Donate to Help your Parks.

From the desk of 'The Friends' President



Carol Abraham Burger

Dear Park Patrons,

There's a crispness in the air, and the mountains are dressed in their finest colors — gold, scarlet, and amber. Fall has arrived in our parks, and it's one of the most beautiful times of the year to get outdoors.

Whether you're hiking a favorite trail, pausing by the lake, or watching the sunlight filter through the trees at Gambrill's overlooks, this is a season that reminds us to slow down and breathe in the beauty around us.

🍂 Mark your calendars for these favorite fall events:

🚚 Fall Hayrides in the Park
with Campfire & S'mores!

📅 Saturday & Sunday, October 25 & 26 | 🕒 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

Bring family and friends for a cozy afternoon of laughter, sweet treats, and the sound of crackling campfires in the autumn air.

🏃 10K / 5K Race & Fun Run / Walk

📅 Saturday, November 2 | 🕒 9 a.m.–11 a.m.

Sign up online, lace up your sneakers, and join us as we run — or stroll — through the stunning fall scenery of our parks.

As the year winds down, we're grateful for each of you who gives your time, energy, and heart to support our shared mission. Take time this season to visit your parks, enjoy the changing of the leaves, and remember how lucky we are to have these places to call home.

With appreciation and warm autumn wishes,

Carol Burger

Friends of Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks, Inc.

email: president@cunninghamgambrill.org

OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Carol Abraham Burger-President

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Mary Miller

Christine Patterson

Laura Patterson

Chris Trone

WE APPRECIATE YOU!

The [The Thurmont Lions Club](#) kindly donated a Rescue and Safety Board to the Lifeguard Team at Big Hunting Creek Lake at the William Houck Area, Cunningham Falls State Park.



L to R: President-Thurmont Lions Club-Bill Reckley, Ranger Scott Offutt, 3 Guards/CFGSPs Lifeguard Team, Ranger Carson DeLauter.

THANK

YOU!

LINK: WWW.THURMONTLIONSCLUB.COM



SPOTTED NEAR CFSP:

Black Bear Video



VIDEO TAKEN BY RANGER BEN GANTZ

THE BEAUTY OF *Fall!*



Big Hunting Creek Lake
Fall photo's (including cover) taken by Naturalist John Zuke

THE BEAUTY OF *Fall!*



Little Hunting Creek
The Manor Area
Cunningham Falls State Park

THE BEAUTY OF *Fall!*



Catoctin Iron Furnace
Cunningham Falls State Parks

THE BEAUTY OF *Fall!*



Frederick Scenic Overlook, High Knob @ Gambrill State Park



Iron Mike, CCC Honorary Statue @ High Knob

THE BEAUTY OF
Fall!



Little Hunting Creek @ The Manor Area
Cunningham Falls State Park



*Awesome Events
Coming Up*



UPCOMING EVENTS



FALL HAYRIDES IN THE PARK W/CAMPFIRE & S'MORES CUNNINGHAM FALLS STATE PARK

14274 WILLIAM HOUCK DRIVE, THURMONT, MD 21788

OCT 25, 26TH, 11AM-4PM. SUGGESTED DONATION @ THE ENTRANCE, \$5/PP,
CHILDREN IN CAR SEATS FREE. SHINE ONLY.

LINK: WWW.CUNNINGHAMGAMBIRLL.ORG

CFSP



10K 5K RACE FUN RUN/WALK
11/2/25
9AM-11AM

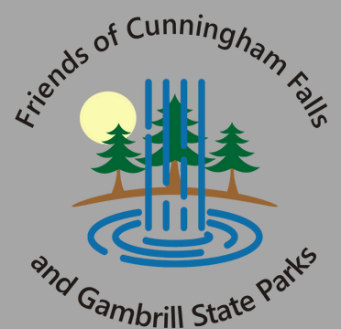


LINK: WWW.RUNSIGNUP.COM

CFSP



56TH ANNUAL
MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL
MARCH 14, 15, 21, 22
2026



PARK ADMINISTRATION: 301-271-7574

MEET MARYLAND'S BATS!

BY SARAH A. LISTER
MARYLAND MASTER NATURALIST

Meet Maryland's Bats!

"Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog...."

The witches of Shakespeare's "Macbeth" cooked up one crazy brew. Bats are creatures of the night. Silent and secretive, they've long been tied to sinister memes. But really, they're just going about their lives like the rest of us. Let's get to know them better.

Bats are mammals, like us. They make milk to feed their young. Bats belong to the order Chiroptera, meaning "hand-wing"; *they are the only mammals capable of active flight*.

Maryland is home to ten bat species: four that roost in trees and that may migrate in winter, and six that roost in caves. Get to know each of Maryland's bat species [here](#).



MEET MARYLAND'S BATS!

BY SARAH A. LISTER
MARYLAND MASTER NATURALIST

One Pup, Two Pups, Three Pups? Four?

Worldwide, there are more than 1,400 different bat species. For most of them, the females have two mammary glands and teats, and give birth to one pup at a time. Twins are rare.

Among the few bat species that have four mammary glands and teats, and that give birth to litters of pups, are two of Maryland's bats, the Eastern Red Bat (a.k.a. the cinnamon donut bat!) and the Hoary Bat. Eastern Red Bats often give birth to three pups, sometimes four, and very rarely, five! Together, these litters can weigh as much as their mom! Not only does she have to make milk for all of them, but she carries them in flight for the first few weeks of their lives. Pups cling to her belly with their thumbs, feet, and mouths, and off they all go! Mom must be a good hunter to have the energy for all of that! Learn more about bats raising their pups [here](#).

How many pups do you see clinging to this Eastern Red Bat? See page [4] for the answer.



MEET MARYLAND'S BATS!

BY SARAH A. LISTER
MARYLAND MASTER NATURALIST

Co-Evolution: A Tit for Tat in the Sky

Yes, bats eat lots of mosquitoes, but nursing mother bats also need hefty meals like beetles and moths. When predators and their prey co-exist over time, they adapt to each other in a process called co-evolution. The predator adapts to catch prey more efficiently, and the prey adapts to avoid capture. Echolocation is the bat's predatory superpower for hunting in the dark of night.

Bats emit sound pulses (clicks) that echo off a prey item, creating a sonar image for the bat.

Some moths have evolved ways to stymie echolocation. For one, moths flutter in chaotic loops, making the bat's job harder. The lovely Luna Moth and some other species have long hind-wing extensions, or "tails," which send confusing echoes back to the bat. Some moths have modified scales that make them "fuzzy," to absorb rather than reflect the bat's sonar. To hear how this works, bounce a tennis ball on a wood or tile floor, and then on a thick rug.

Some moth species fight sound with sound. Moths that taste bad or are toxic may signal that to predators by sending clicks of their own, like the way Monarch butterflies and poison dart frogs signal their toxicity with bright colors. One species, the Tiger Moth of the U.S. Southwest, emits its own sound pulses that "jam" the echo the bat receives. Read more about this remarkable adaptation [here](#).



Male Luna Moth
Native to Maryland
Wikipedia.com



The "fuzzy" Rosy Maple
Moth Native to
Maryland
Wikimedia Commons



Tiger Moth
Native to Arizona
Van Truan at Project Noah

MEET MARYLAND'S BATS!

BY SARAH A. LISTER
MARYLAND MASTER NATURALIST

Leave the Leaves

Soon winter will envelop us. Maryland's cave-roosting bats will be in hibernation. Some of the tree-roosting bats will have migrated south, but some will stay, hunkered down in a lighter form of hibernation called torpor. They may come out to forage on warm, sunny winter afternoons. This is completely normal.

Where do tree-roosting bats hunker down in winter? They use cavities in trees, bark crevices, and leaf litter. That's right! They will sleep under leaves and snowpack on the ground, along with pupae of many species of their prey, moths.

When leaf blowers blow, and vacuum trucks suck up curbside leaf piles, there could be wintering bats in those leaves. To save them, gently rake or blow leaves into light layers in flower beds or on grass-less areas around trees, so bats and other critters can have a warm, safe winter home.

Learn more about preserving leaf-litter habitats [here](#).

A Final Note

Some bats in Maryland may carry rabies. If you come across an injured or "downed" bat, you can pick it up with leather gloves, put it in a box safe from children, dogs, and cats, and contact a wildlife rehabilitator using [this tool](#) from Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). If you find a bat in your house, contact your local health department. They'll walk you through steps to take for your situation. X: Here is the answer to how many babies there are:



This Eastern Red Bat mom has her wings full! To count her pups, first look for heads by finding eyes. Two heads are visible on the left of the photo. One is clear. The other belongs to a pup sprawled across mom's chest, with one eye visible. What's that on the right? It's a pup's feet and tucked tail. That would have to be one loooong pup to belong to head number 1! That's the caboose of a third pup, with its head not visible.

Currently Closed

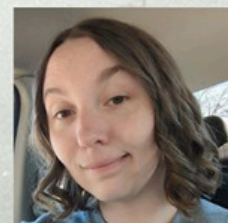
Please Note: Park Patrons can still walk around outside the Aviary to view the birds.



Teddy, the Bald Eagle
Scales & Tales Aviary
Manor Area



Camp Hosting *at* Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks: Ginger & Don's Story



**by Emma Ford
Board Member**

**“Our favorite part of Camp Hosting is meeting
Campers...”**

For the past nine years, we've been proud to serve as camp hosts at various Maryland State Parks. Now that we're both retired, this role has become even more enjoyable and meaningful! At Cunningham Falls State Park, there's always something new to discover. With trails that wind from the campground and park areas to both the top and bottom of the Falls, visitors get a true taste of Maryland's natural beauty. Two beaches provide a refreshing escape from the summer sun, and during the season, we help maintain their cleanliness. We deeply appreciate the park visitors who respect the “trash-free” policy and help us keep these areas pristine.

There are so many activities for families to enjoy, including stargazing nights, archery lessons, the Nature Center with hands-on activities for children, and the Manor Area's aviary.

Over at Gambrill State Park, the scenic views from the mountain's top are breathtaking—a must-see for visitors!

Our favorite part of camp hosting is meeting campers from all over Maryland and across the country. Many families return year after year, making these parks a regular gathering spot for reunions, holidays, or weekends away. We love helping guests feel welcome, sharing tips about the parks, answering their questions, and lending a hand if they've forgotten something.

As camp hosts, we also make sure everything is ready for their stay:

Campsites and fire pits are cleaned and prepared. Trails are checked for safety.

Bathrooms are refreshed between official cleanings.

It's important to us that every visitor feels welcome, comfortable, and safe. These campers become part of the Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks family—and so do we.



“Making a Difference”

by Christine Patterson

**Volunteer Master Naturalist
Board Member-Friends of CFGSPs.**



There are several reasons that volunteering is part of the culture of my family. The first is my mother.

Despite physical and emotional issues, she volunteered long hours for her church. She emphasized that volunteering is important by her example.

I tell you this because now I spend many hours with my youngest daughter, Laura, and her daughter, Maya, volunteering. We volunteer as a family and after about five years of having my granddaughter with us, I've seen them both develop an understanding of the value of doing things and not getting money in return. My granddaughter definitely didn't understand at first, but now, at 16, she seems to understand that helping others, even without getting any money or credit, feels good. Now, I can tell you she doesn't always want to go out early on a weekend morning or after school and pick up trash, but once we are there, she and I walk and talk and learn about each other while we are working. We both love that time together.

Learning is probably one of the biggest reasons I love to volunteer. Every volunteer shift brings a chance to learn something new and we have learned so much volunteering for Cunningham Falls and Gambrills State Parks. We've picked up trash everywhere. We've sweated pulling all kinds of weeds and non-native plants that are crowding out the plants that should be there. We've greeted and helped guests at our nature and visitor centers, taught nature classes and helped in the camp office. We have spent long hours manning events like our Maple Syrup Festival, the annual marathon and more. The list goes on.

From those and other jobs, we learned how hard it is to run a park, and how blessed Maryland is to have so many rare and special individuals, paid and unpaid, making the world and our corner of it, more beautiful and welcoming to everyone. The work isn't glamorous for them but after everything they do, the park looks like she's smiling, at least to me anyway.

Our family has learned so much about plants, native wildlife, the history of the region and how trails and creeks got their names. These lessons stay with you for life, enriching the way you see the world. And preparing each of us to be good stewards of our Earth. I can't tell you how many great people we've met during these years volunteering for the Parks. Every different kind of person, from the U.S. and around the world, comes here eventually. Everyone comes to enjoy the beauty, have some fun and get good healthy exercise. As a volunteer with knee and hip replacements, part of my therapy is walking all over the park with teams of other good souls, pulling weeds, planting native plants, and my favorite job, picking up trash. No, I'm not kidding. It sounds like I am a nut, and you wouldn't be wrong thinking that, but not because I like that job. Walking through the park, I see every new bud that opens, hear every new bird's call as they arrive in the Spring. I smell campfires burning, tip my toes in the lake and at the end of the season, watch as the forest gets ready to sleep. And then the trees start to glow with autumn color. Amazing.

Working alongside others who share your love for nature is also energizing. There's a camaraderie that comes from working toward a shared goal—one that can brighten your week and strengthen your heart (literally and figuratively).

And last but not least, I come to the park to just “be.” After I've been traveling away from home, my first thought is always to come to the park and drink in the peace, the beauty and contemplate the meaningfulness of a life spent surrounded by so much beauty. For us, it's not and cannot be about some day “having” time to volunteer; it needs to be entirely about making time for things that bring the value of life to you and those you love.

So whether you come alone, with friends, or as part of a family tradition, volunteering offers countless rewards. Become a part of the beauty, the friendships, and the meaningful work that our parks offer; you just might find it becomes a part of you, too.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 2025

- Oct 25, 26 – Fall Hayrides in the Park with S'mores
 - 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Cunningham Falls State Park
- Suggested Donation \$5/pp, children in car seats-free.

NOVEMBER 2025

- Nov 2 – 10K/5K Race, Run/Walk
 - 9:00 AM-11AM, Cunningham Falls State Park – Register Online:
<https://runsignup.com/Race/MD/Thurmont/Friends10K5K>
- Nov 8 – Trail Work Days @ Gambrill State Park-- Register online:
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/pages/western/gambrill.aspx>

DECEMBER 2025

- Dec 6 – Traditional Village Christmas, Catoctin Iron Furnace
 - 10am-4pm.
- Dec 13 – Museums By Candlelight: Holidays and Historic Sites
 - 12 Noon-7pm.



Fall Hayrides In The Park w/Smokey Bear: Join Us-Oct 25 & 26, 11am-4pm.

Hayrides w/Campfire and S'mores @ The Sugar Shack,
South Beach, Cunningham Falls State Park!



Smokey Bear sending his message: **'Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!'**

Guiding Smokey Bear is Volunteer Master Naturalist, Kim Hildreth.

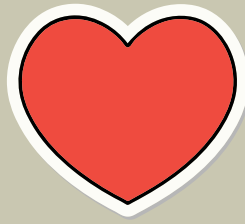
THE PARKS NEED YOU!

Your donations help provide Vet care for the birds and reptiles in the Scales and Tales Aviary, and they help preserve, protect and enhance the parks we all love.

Link to donate to the Parks: www.cunninghamgambrill.org

Questions? Email us: info@cunninghamgambrill.org

Please Donate



Facebook:
Friends of CFGSPs



Become a part of
*'The Friends of
CFGSPs'!*

Thank you!

**We value and
appreciate you and
hope to see you
soon!**

Interested in park events, a
quarterly newsletter, or to
volunteer in the parks, email:
info@cunninghamgambrill.org



Photos courtesy of:
Naturalist John Zuke, Ranger Ben Gantz, Maryland Master Naturalist Sara
Lister, Emma Ford, and Canva.