

Patapsco Tributary

The Newsletter for Patapsco Valley State Park

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For more than 100 years, people have enjoyed the beauty and history of Patapsco Valley State Park.

Come join us soon for your Patapsco adventure!

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Visit the MD Department of Natural Resources on the web at www.dnr.maryland.gov Or call toll free in MD at 1-877-620-8DNR



In case of emergency, dial 911. To report a violation in the park or to contact a Ranger call 1-800-825-PARK

Winter 2011-2012

First Day Hikes

America's State Parks announced that all 50 state park systems will sponsor free, guided *First Day Hike* Programs on New Year's Day 2012. America's State Parks First Day Hikes offer individuals and families an opportunity to begin the New Year rejuvenating and connecting with the outdoors by taking a healthy hike on January 1, 2012, at a state park. First Day Hikes offer a great way to get outside, exercise, enjoy nature and welcome the New Year with friends and family.



First Day Hikes originated over 20 years ago at the Blue Hills Reservation, a state park in Milton, Massachusetts. The program was launched to promote both healthy lifestyles throughout the year and year round recreation at state parks. Many other states have offered outdoor recreation programs on New Year's Day, however, this is the first time all 50 state park systems have joined together to sponsor First Day Hikes.

This year the Maryland Park Service will be joining other state parks throughout America to welcome in the new year with a "First Day Hike". Two hikes will be offered at Patapsco Valley State Park.

Hilton will be hosting a History and Geology Hike along Buzzards Rock Trail. This trail offers scenic views of the Patapsco River Valley and the Bloede Dam. A Volunteer Ranger and a local geologist, will recount the Valley's unique history and the story of Bloede Dam. A camera and suitable hiking gear are recommended for this challenging winter hike. The recommended ages are 12 and up. Interested participants should call 410-461-5005 to register and meet at the Hilton Nature Center. The hike is free, though donations are welcome.

A hike at Soldiers Delight Natural Environment Area will explore the intricate balance of this endangered ecosystem, serpentine barrens, the plants and animals that live there and the history of the area. To register for this hike please call 410-461-5005. Participants will meet at the Soldiers Delight Visitors Center. This hike is free of charge.

What better way to welcome in the New Year than learning something new and having some brisk fun outdoors?

Stormy Weather



August and September were rough months for the landscape of Patapsco Valley State Park. As a result of three natural disasters, the park, particularly along the river, may look different to many of you. While Patapsco managed to go relatively unharmed in August's earthquake, the early fall's two other natural disasters certainly left their mark. Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee hit the park with high winds and flash floods.

In anticipation of Hurricane Irene, state parks east of Washington County were closed, including PVSP. Campgrounds were closed at sunset on Friday to allow the park staff to secure the area. Friday and Saturday were spent removing potentially hazardous trees, clearing culverts, preparing equipment and doing many other small jobs that would help the park to recover from the coming damage. After a long preparation day Saturday, Irene hit in the middle of the night with much less excitement than anticipated.

Though PVSP managed to avoid a direct hit power was lost, the river rose and trees of all sizes fell. Several trees were left strewn across roadways, trails and the river. Trucks of chainsaw crews fanned across the park Sunday, and much of Monday to make the roads and trails passable. There are still several trees down throughout the park that will be left to firewood permits and to decompose.



Tropical Storm Lee raised the river level to its greatest heights since Hurricane Agnes in 1972. The ground, already saturated from the deluges of rain brought by Irene, was unable to absorb anymore water. Instead the water was left to flow into the river and raise the heights several feet. The build-up of rain resulted in a flash flood that took many by surprise as it carried sediment, trash and people's belongings. These flowed down the river and objects of all sizes were deposited along the banks of the park and even high up in the trees.

One ranger found a carousel horse several feet up in a tree. Trash cans, plastic bags, sand bags and whole trees were caught, partially damming the river in a few places. Some formerly deep fishing spots were filled in by this sediment. Banks of the river were stripped of trees and vegetation. The strong current carved out a new path for the river in some places, showing obvious scars. While the natural processes cannot be altered, park staff and hundreds of volunteers have been working countless hours to clean-up the debris.



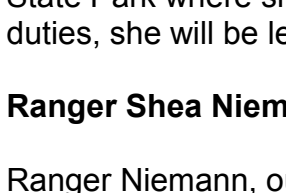
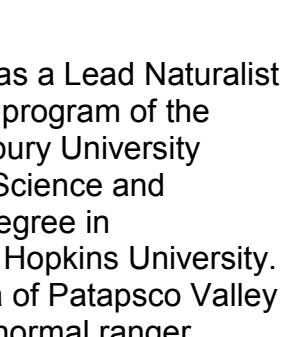
Bloede Dam was little more than a swell in the river when storm waters from Tropical Storm Lee raged down through the valley.

Welcome to our new Rangers

We are pleased to welcome three new rangers to our Patapsco Team this fall. Look for these new faces out and around the park:

Ranger Mike Burditt

Ranger Burditt comes to us after nearly six years with the Maryland Park Service as a Park Ranger at Sandy Point State Park. Mike attended Michigan State University where he earned his BS Degree in Parks, Recreation and Tourism. Ranger Burditt is currently the Area Manager for the Northern areas of Patapsco Valley state Park.

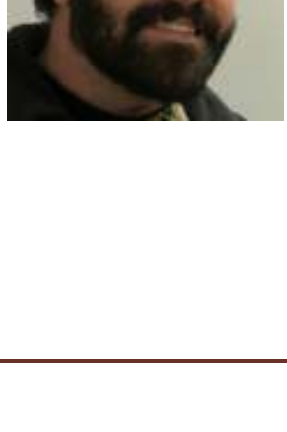


Ranger Alyssa Henn

Ranger Henn joins our team after three years as a Lead Naturalist with Outdoor Discovery, an outdoor education program of the Maryland Park Service. Alyssa attended Salisbury University where she earned her BA degree in Exercise Science and Outdoor Education. Alyssa also holds a MS degree in Environmental Science and Policy from Johns Hopkins University. Ranger Henn is assigned to the Southern area of Patapsco Valley State Park where she works as a Park Ranger. In addition to her normal ranger duties, she will be leading interpretive efforts in the southern areas.

Ranger Shea Niemann

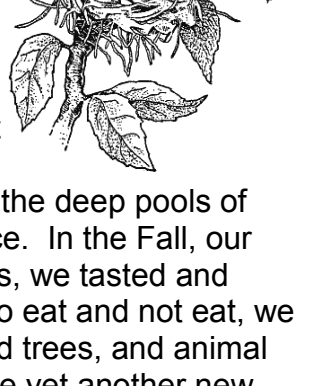
Ranger Niemann, our latest addition, recently transferred from the Maryland Park Service Headquarters in Annapolis, where he spent the last six years as Program Coordinator for Outdoor Discovery. Shea attended Frostburg University where he earned a BA degree in Parks and Recreation. Ranger Niemann also reports to the southern area of Patapsco. In addition to his normal ranger duties, he will be serving as co-leader for the Maryland Conservation Corps Crew assigned to our park.



Robin's Nest

A Walk in the Woods

The Upstate New York is a fond memory from my childhood. I grew up in Upstate New York in the foothills of the Adirondacks, where the outdoors was basically my playground. My Dad owned his own business and was an avid fisherman. So on his only day off during the week, Sunday, as long as the weather cooperated, we would do a Sunday drive and the Sunday walk. Occasionally our walks occurred in State Parks, but more often than not they were paths that he had traveled when seeking out his latest fishing hole. Walks in the summer, always lead to water, we never swam in traditional swimming areas, but found the deep pools of flowing creeks or small rivers to be our swimming spots of choice. In the Fall, our hikes were for a walk and for a little education on the outdoors, we tasted and smelled our way along these walks, as my dad taught us what to eat and not eat, we enjoyed the flavors of Beechnuts, and Elderberries, we identified trees, and animal tracks and bird songs while making our plans to revisit to explore yet another new find along the way. Our winter hikes were limited by many feet of snow, but it was not without time spent in the outdoors, we became assistants during this time of the year, as my Dad was a rabbit hunter – so we strapped on the snowshoes, and off we would go, functioning as the retrievers or the haulers for the day. Spring hikes took us to old house foundations, to look for bottles and other treasure. We would reap the harvest from the woods as my Dad collected field mushrooms, and dug up horseradish root, along with scouting out his favorite fishing holes for the coming season.



I encourage you to build a family tradition and take a walk in the woods. Patapsco, Soldiers Delight, and Morgan Run offer unique opportunities for outdoor exploration. Our trails lead to babbling brooks, cascading waterfalls, dark secret caves, fine fishing holes, and swimming holes for the warmer months, as well as a treasure trove of flora and fauna. We offer programs throughout the year that share survival skills, help you identify our plants and animals, as well as share the unique features of our public lands.

As winter comes to the Patapsco River Valley your walks above and along the river valley have a whole new view. No longer filled with green and colorful foliage our trees are bare, opening up little secrets hidden during the warmer months. From Valley View Trail you can see the entire river valley through Avalon. You can see Buzzards rock and other outcroppings; you can get a clear view of our bird life and other forest wildlife. You can see reminders of Patapsco past, a shelter in the middle of no where, or a campsite of days gone by, or perhaps an old foundation or quite possibly a piece of our rusted past in old farm equipment or the remains of a Model T. Visit the Camels Den Trail in Daniels, and hear your voice clearly echo in the cave you will find along the way. So bundle up and take a walk in the woods this winter, enjoy the crisp, clear air, and make a new family tradition for 2012.

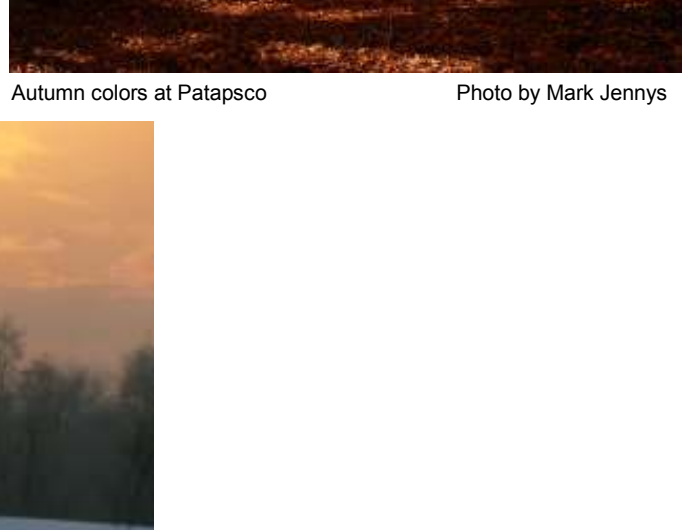
Check out the article in this issue on First Day Hikes, a movement in State Parks across the Country to get you out in the great outdoors on the very first day of the New Year. Check out the hikes Patapsco Valley and Soldiers Delight are offering and come join us! What a perfect opportunity to begin your family tradition, of that Sunday Walk in the Woods!

See you on the trail.....

Robin Melton, Patapsco Valley State Park Manager

A Patapsco Snapshot

Look here each edition for seasonal photos of Patapsco Valley State Park. Re-discover what makes this beautiful park so special.



Autumn colors at Patapsco

Photo by Mark Jennys



A Patapsco winter sunset

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