

# Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park



Working to beautify, preserve and protect  
Patapsco Valley State Park  
and its rich history.

Ninety years after the park was born Patapsco Valley State Park and its visitors received a long overdue gift. In the 1990s a group of volunteers, assisted by businesses, boy scouts, volunteer groups, and the Maryland Park Service, renovated one of the park's oldest structures, a former iron worker's dwelling, into the Avalon Visitor Center. This unique volunteer effort crystallized the formation of the Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park, Ltd. Since celebrating its grand opening in May 2000 the visitor center has served as an information resource, interpreting the remarkable heritage of Patapsco's "Maryland's River of History" and providing vital services for the park's growing visitor population.

Patapsco Valley State Park stretches over 32 miles along the river through four counties and encompasses over 16,000 acres of land in five distinct developed areas, connected by over 170 miles of trails. As the population of the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. area expands, new recreational trends place additional demands on the park. As a non-profit group, we work to support Maryland's Department of Natural Resources in meeting the demands on this natural resource in the face of state's budget and staffing constraints. Now, more than ever, the park needs dedicated volunteers to ensure that its natural, scenic, historic, and recreational qualities remain ready for future generations to enjoy.

*When we develop a pride in our past, we are inspired to preserve a natural legacy for the future.*

*"As a Boy Scout, I had many opportunities to camp, hike and canoe in Patapsco State Park. As an adult Scout Leader, I was able to renew my 'friendship' with the Park and introduce a whole new generation to the incredible opportunities for fun in the outdoors at Patapsco."*

*– Don Wecker,  
FPVSP, Member*

*"We're a family that loves the outdoors and feels fortunate to have Patapsco in our community. We've taken advantage of so much that Patapsco has to offer: camping, hiking, fishing, cycling, Junior Rangers and Hooked on Fishing programs. I just wanted to give something back."*

*– Linda Dobson,  
FPVSP, Member*



*Left: Thomas Viaduct, largest multiple arched stone railroad bridge with an arc., circa 1835.*

*Front: Swinging Bridge, a 300 foot suspension bridge that spans the Patapsco River in Orange Grove.*

Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park, Ltd.  
8020 Baltimore National Pike  
Ellicott City, MD 21043





*“Growing up in Ellicott City, Patapsco Valley State Park was literally just outside my backyard. I have fond childhood memories of exploring the park. Getting involved with FPVSP is my small way of recognizing what a treasure this park is to so many people, young and old, and how vital it is that this treasure be protected for future generations.”*

– Bruce Clopein,  
FPVSP, President

# Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park

The establishment of the visitor center was just the first of many park improvement projects undertaken by the Friends. In addition to staffing the visitor center, volunteers continue to improve access, recreational opportunities, and education for visitors to beautify the park and to address environmental concerns. Most recently we have planted trees, removed some non-native plant species, coordinated the removal of discarded railroad ties along Grist Mill Trail, and removed large sewer pipes from Patapsco River, debris resulting from Hurricane Agnes in 1972. We’ve added parking areas, walkways, and interpretative signage that highlights the valley’s rich Native American, military, and industrial histories.

Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park members come from a variety of backgrounds, care deeply about the park, and want to make a difference. Our list of projects is not limited by our drive or enthusiasm, only by budget and support. We are always looking for opportunities to raise funds, bring in more volunteers, and establish partnerships with local businesses. With strong support from the community, we can do more to help Patapsco Valley State Park, 100 years old and counting

Staffed by volunteers, the Avalon Visitor Center serves to orient visitors to the park, interprets Patapsco’s heritage, conservation, and natural history, and offers general information through exhibits, trail information, books, maps, and park memorabilia.

The center is located in the Avalon section of the park, just up river from Elkridge. From Rte. 1 just north of Elkridge, turn west on South Street and left into the park. Follow the entrance road one mile, then make two right turns. Please call (443) 517-9963 for current center hours.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources’ web site, [www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/patapscohistory.html](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/patapscohistory.html), offers more information Patapsco River Valley history.

*Do you share a love for Patapsco?* Now is the time to lend your support. Please help us keep Patapsco Valley State Park vibrant and beautiful.

## Goals & Accomplishments

- Avalon Visitor Center restoration and staffing
- Beautification through landscaping, invasive plant removal, tree planting, and storm debris removal
- Restoration and protection of historic artifacts
- Interpretive exhibits and directional signage
- Funding interpretative and educational programs
- Working with park staff and elected leaders supporting park programs and activities

**To learn more about the Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park, visit our web site, [www.fpvsp.org](http://www.fpvsp.org) or call (443) 517-9963.**



Above: Avalon Visitor Center, originally housed Avalon Iron and Nail Works iron workers, circa 1830.



### I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TIME & TALENT:

- Grounds / Trails
- Educational Programs
- Visitor Center Staffing
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Visitor Center Plans and Renovation

### I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE FUNDS:

- |                                                     |                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Individual / Family:                                | Organization / Corporate:                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 to \$50 - Contributor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 to \$500 - Bronze   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$51 to \$100 - Protector  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$501 to \$1,000 - Silver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$101 and up - Sponsor     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,001 and up - Gold     |

### ADD ME TO THE FRIENDS’ MAILING LIST:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Please detach this form and send it with your tax-deductible contribution to:

**Attn: Treasurer  
Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park, Ltd.  
8020 Baltimore National Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21043  
or call (443) 517-9963**