



Growing Park Advocates for the Second Century of the National Park System

by Stephanie Heidbreder

The national parks celebrated a milestone birthday in 2016—a time to revel in the accomplishments of the past 100 years but also an opportunity to envision what the second century of the National Park System might look like. Since the youth of today will be the park stewards of tomorrow, how can the Park Service and NPCA inspire the next generation to protect America’s most special places?

Baba Dioum, a Senegalese conservationist, once said, “In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.” In the Mid-Atlantic, we recognize that creating the next generation of park advocates will take significant effort and that awareness of the national parks in our region is the first step to producing lasting stewards. NPCA has partnered with the Park Service and local organizations on several annual

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Repair Backlog Threatens Mid-Atlantic Parks

by Melanie McDowell

As the National Park Service (NPS) enters its second century, our country’s most special places continue to face the challenge of insufficient funding. Our nation’s more than 400 national parks tell the story of America’s diverse and inspiring people, heritage and landscape; protect critical habitat and biodiversity; and provide spaces for scientific research, discovery and youth engagement.

After years of critical and chronic funding shortfalls, the Park Service infrastructure repair backlog tops \$12 billion, with almost \$3 billion of that total attributed to parks in the Mid-Atlantic region. Addressing this repair backlog needs to be a priority for the new administration.

In his campaign, President Trump pledged to push for a \$1 trillion program to make investments and repairs to our nation’s infrastructure. In light of their multi-billion



dollar backlog, parks should be included in this infrastructure plan. Congress and the president need to work together to make funding our parks a priority so NPS has the resources it needs to continue protecting America’s favorite places, including the 78 sites here in the Mid-Atlantic.

What does the backlog mean for our parks? Without adequate funding, park staff are

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Top: Opened in 1932, Arlington Memorial Bridge connects the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington House as a symbol of reconciliation after the U.S. Civil War. Today this major commuter and visitor access route between Washington, DC and Virginia needs critical repairs totaling \$250 million. ©Sean Pavone | Dreamstime.com **Above:** Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, one of the most visited parks in the National Park System, sees millions of visitors annually. Repairing the park’s three major roads has a price tag of \$90 million, a necessary investment to improve road surfaces and safety. ©Dawn J. Benko | Dreamstime.com

FIELD REPORT

SPRING-SUMMER 2017

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Maryland, Pennsylvania,
Virginia, West Virginia

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America's Best Idea Deserves Our Best Efforts



by Joy M. Oakes,
Senior Director, Mid-Atlantic Region

My first week at NPCA, I visited Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in West Virginia to learn about an adjacent proposed development. Dennis Frye, now the park's chief historian, led community leaders on a tour of the park and the threatened site, explaining their significance and roles in our nation's history. That tour remains indelibly imprinted in my memory, and for the next 15 years it has fueled my efforts to protect the park.

As park visitors know, contacts with rangers can make long-lasting impressions. However, after years of insufficient funding, not only are parks understaffed, but the physical structures in many parks are crumbling.

The National Park Service (NPS) has identified more than a dozen roadway or bridge "mega-repair projects"—part of a

\$12 billion backlog of needed repairs that grows each year. Any one of these mega-projects would use a significant amount of the NPS's annual transportation projects budget.

After a 10-year campaign, last December NPCA and our partners celebrated enactment of a Centennial bill that sets up a Second Century Endowment for the national parks and establishes the Centennial Challenge Fund, which provides federal funds to match philanthropic dollars for specific projects. It's a good step, but we must and can do more.

As the National Park System begins its second century, we're continuing our fight to preserve America's shared history and heritage in our national parks for our children and grandchildren. We are now calling on Congress to establish and robustly invest in a dedicated fund to directly address the repair needs of our national parks whether as part of the national infrastructure investment or as a stand-alone issue. "America's best idea" deserves America's best effort.



HAVE A PHOTO OR COMMENT TO SHARE?

We welcome photos from members enjoying national parks, particularly those in the Mid-Atlantic region. We also appreciate feedback on our *Field Report*. Share your digital photos, comments, and ideas with us via email at midatlantic@npca.org

Left: Increased park funding will help preserve the historical, cultural and natural value of parks, like Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, WV. ©Steveheap | Dreamstime.com

Repair Backlog Threatens Mid-Atlantic Parks

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unable to properly handle trail maintenance and operations. Roads, bridges, tunnels and visitor centers crumble, and the visitor park experience suffers.

Park underfunding also undermines the economies of gateway communities, local businesses and outfitters. In 2015 park visitors spent an estimated \$982.9 million in local gateway regions while visiting NPS lands in Virginia alone. This spending supported 15,500 jobs, \$487.9 million in wages and \$1.3 billion in economic output in the Virginia economy. Parks can act as a major economic engine for many gateway communities, but as long as the repair backlog goes unaddressed, visitors' experiences, and the tourism dollars that come with them, are threatened.

The backlog affects all of our Mid-Atlantic parks, including the Arlington Memorial Bridge, part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The bridge was built as a symbol of reconciliation between the North and South, connecting Arlington House,

the Robert E. Lee Memorial, and the Lincoln Memorial. It also stretches to the Arlington National Cemetery on the Virginia side. The bridge is an important symbolic and historic site for our country, and also is a major road for commuters in the metro DC area. Over 68,000 vehicles cross the bridge between Washington, DC and Virginia daily, making its current state of degradation alarming. The bridge is in poor shape and needs a major \$250 million rehabilitation. The Park Service needs funding to support this large-scale project, which is essential for safety, regional transportation and historic value.

Unfortunately, the Mid-Atlantic region is not alone in facing this challenge: nationwide, \$6 billion of the repair backlog projects are transportation-specific.

Increased funding for our parks is an investment in safe transportation, clean water and air, healthy land, education, recreation and historic preservation. Congress needs to prioritize park funding to preserve our country's natural, cultural and historical treasures.



TAKE ACTION

Help Make National Parks a National Priority

Please contact your representatives and senators and ask them to make funding our parks a national priority through requesting robust annual funding and dedicated funding for park infrastructure repair needs, whether as a stand-alone bill or as a part of an infrastructure package.

Capitol Switchboard: 202.225.3121

Right: The \$250 million Arlington Memorial Bridge rehabilitation is just one of many nation-wide repair backlog projects that total over \$12 billion. ©Leungphotography | Dreamstime **Below:** The Lockwood House at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in West Virginia served as headquarters for Union generals Henry H. Lockwood and Philip H. Sheridan during the U.S. Civil War. After the war, the Lockwood House hosted classes for one of America's first schools for freed slaves. NPS needs \$1 million to stabilize the building's interior to preserve this important piece of U.S. history. ©Library of Congress



Growing Park Advocates for the Second Century of the National Park System

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events to teach students about their birth-right: the national parks.

In Baltimore, the Kids in Kayaks program introduces hundreds of eighth-graders to the national historic water trail in their hometown—the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Each fall, with support from the Baltimore National Heritage Area, the Park Service and Baltimore City Parks and Recreation, students learn to safely launch and maneuver kayaks along the Patapsco River and then gain confidence in their paddling skills with a follow-up visit in the spring. While half of the class is kayaking, the remaining students rotate through land stations led by partner organizations including NPCA, the Star Spangled Banner Flaghouse and the Baltimore Zoo. At the land stations, students learn about the historical, cultural and ecological heritage of Baltimore, and they gain a greater appreciation of the Chesapeake Bay and its recreational opportunities.



For the third year in a row NPCA partnered with the Park Service and Friends of the Lower Appomattox River to host Wilderness Inquiry's Canoemobile in Hopewell, Virginia. In handmade 24-foot Voyageur canoes, hundreds of area fourth-graders paddled the Appomattox River near where Gen. Grant established his headquarters during the Siege of Petersburg. Students also rotated through land-based stations, learning about the 9½ month siege, interacting with Virginia wildlife such as corn snakes, and testing the water quality of this tributary of the James River.

At Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, NatureFest provides year-round programming for close to 100 elementary school students living in the nearby Kenilworth-Parkside neighborhood

of DC. Hosted by the Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, the Park Service and the DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative, NatureFest provides safe and educational activities for children during school breaks. Last year, NPCA and partners led environmental activities for small groups of students, focusing on the importance of parks and the incredible resource the students have in their own backyard at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens.

As NPCA approaches its own centennial in 2019, we remain committed to cultivating the next generation of park advocates. By partnering with the Park Service and other groups working in and around our national parks, NPCA continues to educate, engage and empower new national park advocates to ensure America's favorite places continue to thrive for the next hundred years.

Below (Top): At the Kids in Kayaks program, eighth graders from Baltimore City Schools head toward the Patapsco River for their first kayaking experience on the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. ©NPCA **(Bottom):** Students from the Hopewell school district are all smiles as they paddle the Appomattox River at Petersburg National Battlefield as part of Wilderness Inquiry's Canoemobile. This was many students' first time in a canoe. ©Ken Newman **Left:** Students in the NatureFest Bug Club use a net and sifting screen to search for insects and other interesting creatures that live in and near a pond at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. ©Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens



Upcoming NPCA Events in the Mid-Atlantic

Contact midatlantic@npca.org, 202.454.3328 or check out <https://www.npc.org/events> for more information on any of these events.

For more information about events in your area sponsored by the National Park Service, go to www.nps.gov, click on "Find a Park," and search for the park by name or state. For an updated list of NPCA-sponsored events in the region, go to www.npc.org/midatlantic and click on "Events and Travel." • For updated information about NPCA's advocacy campaigns, contact any of our offices (see p.2).



SAVE
THE
DATE

APRIL 5

36th Annual Salute to the Parks: This annual event celebrates our national parks and the people around the country who speak up on their behalf. **Washington, DC**

MAY 6

Fort McHenry Spring Field Day: Join NPCA and the National Aquarium Conservation Team for a field day at the Fort McHenry wetland! Volunteers will plant trees in celebration of Arbor Day, remove debris from the wetlands, maintain the pollinator and rain gardens, and more. **Baltimore, MD**

MAY 13

BioBlitz: Join NPCA and the Park Service, for biodiversity inventory activities at Petersburg National Battlefield. Volunteers will work with experts to identify as many species of plants, animals, and other organisms as possible. **Petersburg, VA**

MAY 20

Shenandoah Kids to Park Day: Kids to Parks Day is a day full of events that get you up close and personal with the wildlife and nature of Shenandoah National Park. Come celebrate this nation-wide day of outdoor exploration and play in our national parks! **Shenandoah National Park, VA**

MAY 23-24

Choose Clean Water Coalition Conference. Learn about clean water solutions at the local, state and federal levels while participating in workshops and field trips. **Charlottesville, VA** • www.choosecleanwater.org/our-conference/2017/

JUNE 3

National Trails Day Celebration: Join NPCA, the Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape and partners to get out on the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail, learn about our heritage, and explore our natural and cultural resources. **Columbia Crossing, PA**

JUNE 3

National Trails Day at Greenbelt Park: Come celebrate trails at Greenbelt Park! Volunteers will work on trail maintenance and invasive plant removal projects. **Greenbelt Park, MD**

JUNE 7

Paddle the Potomac: Join NPCA and Potomac Conservancy at an alternative happy hour. Participants will learn about the Potomac River and ways to advocate for clean water and Washington DC's national parks before getting to canoe, kayak or stand-up paddleboard. **Washington, DC**

JUNE 24

Nanticoke River Eco-Paddle: Come paddle on the Nanticoke River Water Trail, one of the most iconic and scenic rivers in the Chesapeake. Learn about wildlife, water quality and the river's history. **Laurel, DE**

SEPTEMBER 23

National Public Lands Day: Join us for volunteer projects, including trail restoration, at Greenbelt Park. **Greenbelt Park, MD**

SEPTEMBER 30

Fort McHenry Fall Field Day: Join NPCA and the National Aquarium Conservation Team for a field day at the Fort McHenry wetland! Volunteers will remove debris from the wetlands, maintain the pollinator and rain gardens, and more. **Baltimore, MD**

OCTOBER 28

Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens Volunteer Event: Join the Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens and NPCA with a day of volunteer service to protect, restore and promote Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens! Volunteers will help the garden staff winterize the ponds and grounds and help remove litter and invasive weeds. **Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens, Washington, DC**

Above (Left to Right): Over 70 enthusiastic volunteers helped out with trail restoration and park maintenance projects to celebrate National Public Lands Day at Greenbelt National Park in Maryland last September. ©NPCA | Patrick Hogan

Campaign Updates | Pennsylvania

Valley Forge National Historical Park

by Amanda John

NPCA is challenging a permit recently granted by the state to the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to widen the turnpike along a six-mile stretch that includes the park's southern border. The Commission's plans lack adequate controls for increased stormwater volume and pollution that would degrade Valley Creek, a state-designated "Exceptional Value" Trout Stream flowing through the national park for two miles. To curb threats of flooding and degradation of stream-side recreational trails, wildlife habitat and historic structures, including George Washington's Headquarters, NPCA, our partners, and our pro-bono attorneys are preparing for trial. This spring, we will host public meetings and keep NPCA members updated as action is needed.

Growing Greener III

by Amanda John

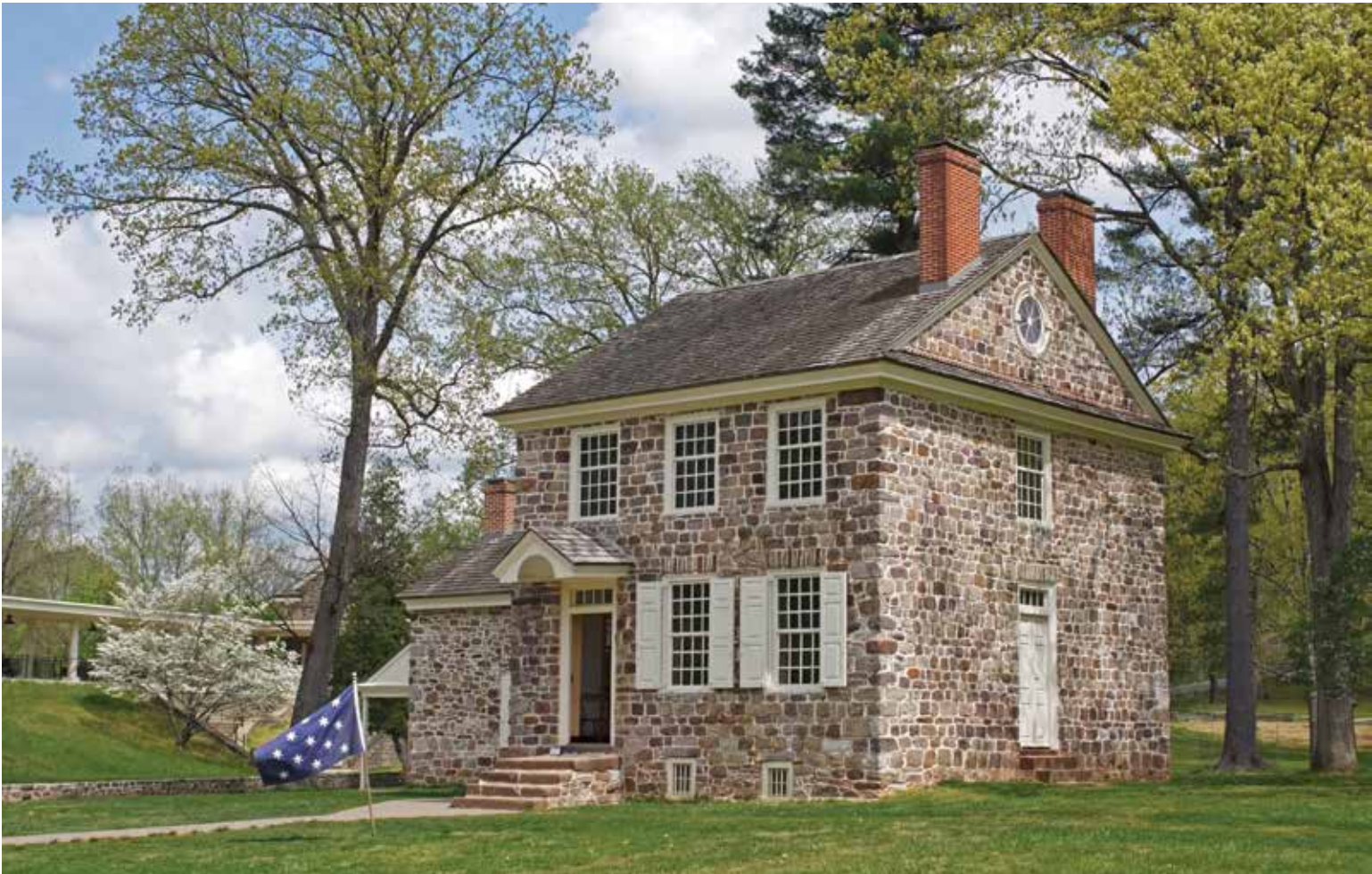
NPCA and many partners are working to renew "Growing Greener III," a conservation, recreation and historic preservation funding package formally called the Growing Greener Environmental Stewardship Fund. Established in 1999 under Gov. Tom Ridge, Growing Greener has been funded historically at \$615 million annually. Now at record funding lows, these programs have enriched national park landscapes by protecting wildlife habitat, air and water; preserving open space and restoring historic assets that bolster tourism, recreation and other economic activity. NPCA will continue working to protect our national park landscapes and watersheds in Pennsylvania.

Below: Proposed expansion of the Pennsylvania Turnpike near Valley Forge NHP threatens park habitat, wildlife and significant historic structures, including George Washington's Headquarters. ©Delmas Lehman | Dreamstime.com

Not again! Another Casino Proposed at Gettysburg

by Amanda John

Ten years after the first proposal to build a casino within cannon range of Gettysburg National Military Park, the same developers are at it again. The "racino" would be built just off the first Gettysburg exit after entering Pennsylvania from Maryland—roughly three miles from Gettysburg National Military Park—and would include a horse-racing track. Once again, NPCA and partners will contest this attempt to build a casino near this sacred place in American history.



Virginia

Victory for Petersburg National Battlefield

by Pam Goddard

Battlefield preservationists celebrated the holidays early when President Obama signed the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act into law on December 23, 2016. Included in this 969-page bill was the Petersburg National Battlefield Boundary Modification Act that will allow up to 7,238 currently unprotected acres to be added to the Petersburg National Battlefield. Land that saw action at Five Forks, Peebles' Farm



and the Petersburg Breakthrough is now eligible to be added to battlefield park once it is acquired from willing sellers or by donation. This victory culminates years of advocacy by NPCA, the Civil War Trust, the Conservation Fund and the Petersburg Battlefields Foundation along with congressional champions U.S. Sens. Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Mark Warner (D-VA) and U.S. Reps. Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Randy Forbes (R-VA).

Above: Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) and NPCA Director of Chesapeake and VA Programs Pamela Goddard celebrate the 7,238-acre expansion of Petersburg National Battlefield, a major park victory for our region. ©NPCA

CREATURE FEATURE

Brown Trout



by Amanda John

The Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, flowing from Hancock, New York to Mill Rift, PA, boasts verdant mountainsides and gin-clear waters. The predominantly undisturbed headwaters of the longest undammed river in the eastern U.S. are managed from bank to bank by the National Park Service and are home to teeming brown trout populations with adult fish commonly reaching 23 inches in length.

Thriving in the cold, clean and well-oxygenated tail waters released from the lowest depths of reservoirs on tributaries managed for New York City's water supply, the Upper Delaware's brown trout annually lure devoted fly fishermen from far and wide to experience pristine waters and "tight lines."

A European species brought to America in the late 1800s, brown trout have established wild reproducing populations that relish eating terrestrial macroinvertebrates that live in the tall weeds of the river's main-stem and upper branches. Their diet of insect larvae, pupae, nymphs, and adults allows anglers the welcome challenge of "matching the hatch" (trying to imitate the insects that are currently hatching). The fish lay their eggs in redds (nests) within silt-free gravel in the slower tributary branches between October and December, and the eggs incubate for around four months. Brown trout generally live for six to eight years. Their lifespan is influenced by growth rate and how many times they successfully spawn, which is dependent upon access to the smaller tributary waters in which they were spawned.

Despite robust river management by the Park Service, these brown trout populations are threatened by low river flows due to unpredictable reservoir releases resulting from outdated and inefficient flow regulation managed by an interstate commission and New York City. Far too often, large portions of the river's bottom are exposed or the river becomes too shallow to navigate, decreasing the trout's survival rate and hampering spawning. NPCA and partners such as Friends of the Upper Delaware River and Trout Unlimited continue to advocate for improvements to this flow management plan.

While Valley Forge National Historical Park's abundant brown trout population in Valley Creek is strictly a catch and release fishery, some areas on the Delaware River allow catch and take fishing. Trout can be a great meal for humans as well as for the river's booming bald eagle and heron populations. Fishing licenses are required, and, because the Upper Delaware is a border river between New York and Pennsylvania, special regulations apply.

Above: NPCA and partners continue working to improve the flow management plan for the Upper Delaware River, which will benefit the currently threatened brown trout. ©Stormy Ellis | Dreamstime.com



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Climate Impacts at Assateague Island National Seashore



Above: Assateague Island National Seashore ©Zack Frank | Shutterstock **Left:** Last fall, NPCA members, including NPCA's Mid-Atlantic Leadership Council, and staff enjoyed a tour of Assateague Island National Seashore's beautiful beaches—now threatened by climate change and sea level rise. ©NPCA

