



100 YEARS

FIELDREPORT

Mid-Atlantic Region | Fall 2019 - Winter 2020



NPCA Continues Our Fight for Clean Air for Parks and People

By Joy M. Oakes

OH, SAY CAN YOU SEE?

I've advocated for clean air protections for most of my professional career, starting with a campaign during the 1980s to reauthorize and strengthen the Clean Air Act. We

celebrated when Congress adopted the Clean Air Act Amendments in 1990. I joined NPCA's staff in 2001 in part because of the opportunity to leverage America's love for our national parks to push for stronger federal protections for clean, clear air for our national parks, people and planet.

Over the past decades, overall air quality has improved in our national parks and in our communities because of enforcement of those and other hard-won protections. However, in just two years, enforcement actions against polluters have dropped by 85%. "We're seeing a reversal in trends," says attorney Stephanie Kodish, NPCA's clean air program director.

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OXON COVE

A Green Oasis Next to the Nation's Capital

By Katie Morgan

Nestled along the Potomac River and extending from Prince George's County, Maryland into Washington, D.C., Oxon Cove Park and Oxon Hill Farm foster a diversity of wildlife and habitats. Though this park protects one of the largest remaining open spaces along this stretch of the river, few know the park exists and even fewer work to protect it. NPCA wants to change that. Together, we're striving for a brighter future for this green oasis.

Oxon Cove Park has a rich history. For thousands of years, the lands where the park stands today were occupied by Native American Indians. During the War of 1812, the DeButts family, who occupied these lands, heard the Battle of Bladensburg underway on the nearby Anacostia River and saw the smoke and flames as British soldiers burned America's capital. In 1840, an enslaved man named Jacob Shaw escaped the property, then called Berry Plantation. The discovery of this feat prompted Oxon Cove Park to be added to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom in 2005. A few decades after its use as a plantation, and fueled by Dorothea Dix's mental health

reform advocacy, the land was converted into a therapeutic farm maintained by St. Elizabeth's Hospital.

Today the park is home to an educational farm where visitors learn about the park's storied past. Bike riders and hikers travel through the park, experiencing wide open fields, wetlands and forests. Anglers casting lines along the river's edge share the cove with bald eagles, herons, and other birds and wildlife. Oxon Cove Park is a place for visitors to enjoy a bit of nature in the midst of urbanization.

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Top: Oxon Cove Park, one of the largest remaining federally protected areas along a heavily urbanized stretch of the Potomac River, faces many threats. ©Katie Morgan | NPCA **Above:** Interactions with farm animals are among the delightful experiences offered at Oxon Hill Farm. ©Melanie McDowell | NPCA

FIELD REPORT

FALL 2019 - WINTER 2020

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Maryland, Pennsylvania,
Virginia, West Virginia

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100 YEARS

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OXON COVE A Green Oasis Next to the Nation's Capital

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Unfortunately, Oxon Cove Park and Oxon Hill Farm face challenges exacerbated by the National Park Service's \$12 billion system-wide backlog of overdue repairs.

Over \$3 billion, or one-fourth of the total deferred maintenance backlog, is concentrated here in the Mid-Atlantic region. Parks in the immediate area, stretching from Piscataway Park in Accokeek, Maryland upstream to Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens in southeastern Washington, D.C., account for \$200 million of the repair needs.

Maintaining and repairing infrastructure requires resources, including staff and materials, that Congress needs to provide to the National Park Service. A chronic under-investment in our parks has compromised some of our nation's most treasured places and can lead to the false perception that these parks are not valued. It is this failure to adequately appreciate their importance that has led to various schemes from other interests, including state governments, seeking to acquire our public lands and develop them for private interests.

In late 2018, a *Washington Post* story revealed that Governor Larry Hogan (R-Maryland) and then-Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke signed a memorandum



©Karen Minot

of understanding in 2017 that could result in the transfer of Oxon Cove Park to the State of Maryland.

Initially, Governor Hogan planned to use Oxon Cove as the site for a new professional football stadium. Due to swift, strong public outcry, he has stepped back from those plans. However, he continues efforts to acquire the land with a new plan to build a "Gateway to Maryland." He has yet to elaborate on this plan or engage the public.

NPCA is working to build community support for Oxon Cove Park so we can defend this special place from these and other threats. Want to stay informed? Contact us at midatlantic@npca.org.

Below: Bike riders and walkers use Oxon Cove Park trails for recreation and commuting.
©Katie Morgan | NPCA



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**

Industrial-Scale Solar Projects Put Parks at Risk

By Brock Williams, *Mid-Atlantic Intern*

As solar panels have become more affordable in recent years, solar energy output has increased significantly. Last year, in fact, the U.S. expanded its solar capacity by 20% (for a total of 62.4 gigawatts of solar direct current). And total solar capacity is expected to double in the next five years with the installation of industrial-scale solar infrastructure projects. While solar energy has many benefits, these projects can have harmful environmental impacts if not properly sited. Like all development, solar developers must consider the suitability of the site and the project's impact to the landscape.

Two large solar projects were proposed this year near Shenandoah National Park that would detract from the park's viewshed. Proposed by Dogwood Solar and Cape Solar, affiliates of Urban Grid Solar Projects,



these projects would cover nearly 900 acres. Viewshed analysis has confirmed that these projects would be highly visible from the park and would detract from Skyline Drive, the park's 100-mile, high-elevation road that provides spectacular views.

Additional harmful impacts include sedimentation and toxic runoff which could affect streams in local communities and waterways connected to the park. The projects would also disrupt wildlife corridors, fragmenting wildlife habitat.

Although members of the public voiced concerns at hearings, Page County's Board of Supervisors approved the proposal by Dogwood Solar. They postponed the vote on Cape Solar's proposal to a future date. NPCA continues to urge county planning commissions to develop guidelines for the siting of large-scale solar projects so that they protect our national parks while generating renewable energy.

If approved, two proposed large solar projects near Shenandoah National Park would harm wildlife habitat and disrupt scenic views along Skyline Drive. (Above) ©PhotosbyAndy (Below) ©Stockshooter | Dreamstime



SAVE THE JAMES JUSTICE FOR JAMESTOWN



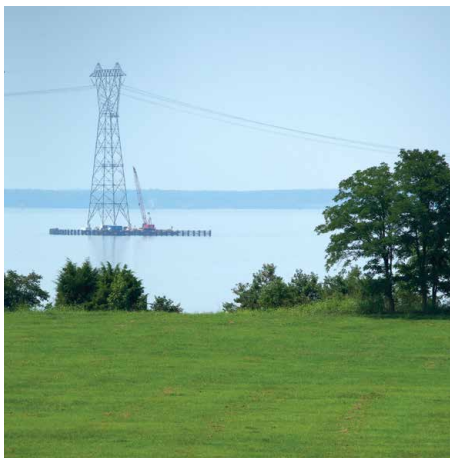
CAMPAIGN UPDATE

By Pamela Goddard

NPCA won a major victory this March in our battle to protect Jamestown when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled in our favor, finding that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers illegally granted Dominion Energy a permit to build a 500-kV transmission line across the James River near Jamestown in Virginia. The court ordered that the permit be vacated and instructed the Army Corps to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The court then sent the matter back to the U.S. District Court to order the EIS and decide whether to vacate the permit as the EIS gets underway. The EIS process is intended to examine all impacts, costs and alternatives to provide electricity to the peninsula after Dominion closes the outdated Yorktown facility.

NPCA and our partners are working to highlight alternatives that could provide needed electricity more cheaply than the \$430 million spent by Dominion on the James River line and with far less impact on protected environmental and historic resources than Dominion's preferred overhead transmission line.

Below: Illegally constructed electric transmission towers disrupt the historic landscape across the James River ©Ismael Gama | NPCA



New River Gorge in the News

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

By Joy M. Oakes

New River Gorge National River in West Virginia provides remarkable natural and cultural resources and opportunities for outdoor activities, including hiking, rock climbing, biking, hunting and boating. Its approximately 70,000 acres include structures from the region's mining and railroad history, a historic camp for the children of factory workers, and a rich

diversity of plants and animals such as the endangered peregrine falcon.

A locally led campaign to redesignate the park as New River Gorge National Park and Preserve to boost visitation raises complex issues related to its future management. We're working with congressional offices and partners to explore how the park may be affected should the redesignation move forward.

Below: New River Gorge National River, WV ©Zrfphoto | Dreamstime



Connecting the Dots at Fort Monroe

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

By Pamela Goddard

Fort Monroe became part of the National Park System when then-President Barack Obama designated it a national monument in November 2011, using his power under the Antiquities Act for the very first time. In 1619, the very first people traded into slavery in English North America

were enslaved at this site. Remarkably, Fort Monroe later became known as “Freedom’s Fortress” when it became a refuge during the Civil War for people escaping enslavement. In August 2019, commemorations were held to honor the history of this special place.

Fort Monroe National Monument includes only seven historic buildings out of over 175 buildings on the 565-acre peninsula, and several miles of beachfront to the north of the star fort. Much of the peninsula’s land

and buildings is managed by the Fort Monroe Authority, established by the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 2016, Virginia offered about 40 acres of land to the National Park Service to unite the star fort with the beaches to create a contiguous national park but this land transfer has languished. Senator Mark Warner is working with NPCA to facilitate the land transfer, and we will continue to work with our decision-makers until this is accomplished.

Commemorating Enslavement in America at Fort Monroe

By Alan Spears and Joy M. Oakes

In 1619, the English privateer the White Lion intercepted a Spanish ship in the Gulf of Mexico, taking more than 20 Africans captured and enslaved from villages in Congo and Angola. In August 1619, the ship arrived at Point Comfort near present-day Hampton, Virginia and traded its human cargo to English settlers for food.

Among that first group of Africans were Anthony and Isabella, who became the parents of William, the first child of African ancestry known to have been born in Virginia. Other African men and women were sold into slavery throughout the English colony of Virginia, including to Jamestown settlers. Thus began the long, perilous sojourn from enslavement of Anthony, Isabella, and William to freedom for their descendants hundreds of years later.

To commemorate this solemn 400th anniversary, in August the National Park Service, Fort Monroe Authority, City of Hampton and Hampton 2019 Commemorative Commission hosted an inspiring, educational, and emotional series of events at Fort Monroe National Monument. A few of many highlights:

- Elegba Folklore Society drummers and dancers awed spectators with their skill.
- Diverse speakers inspired listeners with stories of resilience and strength, and exhorted participants to act in recognition of our common humanity.
- Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Tribal Chief Walter D. “Red Hawk” Brown III prayed for healing the Earth.

- Hundreds of participants intensely sang the Black National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”
- Fort Monroe Superintendent Terry E. Brown led a robust call-and-response: “Healing! Excellence! Appreciation! Love! Integrity! Never again! Growth! Diversity! Achievement! Youth!” followed by bells ringing out at Fort Monroe and at parks and other sites across America for four minutes—one minute for each of the four centuries since this seminal event in our American history.

To learn more, please visit www.fortmonroe.org or www.nps.gov/fomr



Top: Park advocate Phil Adderly interprets the life of William Roscoe Davis, who escaped enslavement to serve as lighthousekeeper at Fort Monroe. ©Joy Oakes | NPCA **Bottom:** Fort Monroe National Monument preserves the beginning and the end of enslavement in the United States of America. ©Wikimedia

Nature-Based Design Benefits Delaware River Park and Communities

By Sharon Davis

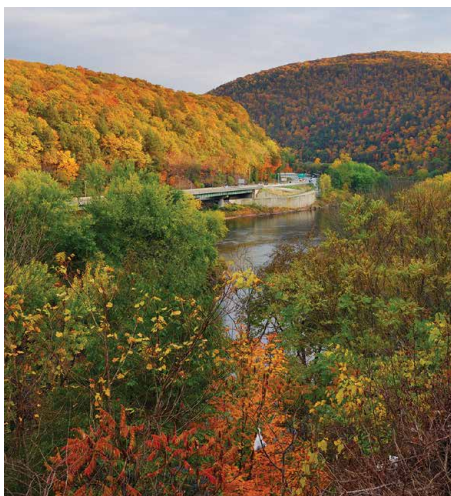
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in Pennsylvania and New Jersey includes dozens of Delaware River tributaries. The vitality of park streams depends in large part on management practices on private lands upstream of the national park.

To highlight sustainable stormwater management in the park's watershed, NPCA's Scenic Wild Delaware River Geotourism Program partnered with Monroe County Conservation District and Brodhead Watershed Association in April to see firsthand examples of stormwater management best practices.

Engineers, planners and local officials visited four sites in Monroe County, Pennsylvania that have implemented nature-based design practices and green infrastructure techniques. Each site offered opportunities to engage in discussion about the environmental and financial benefits of green landscaping.

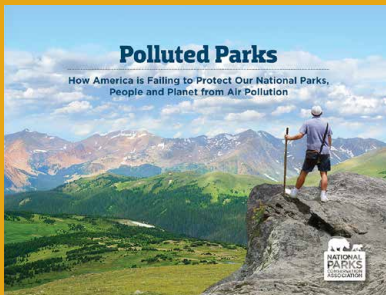
Participating sites included Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Northampton Community College - Monroe, Ray Price Auto Dealerships and Mountain View Winery.

Below: "Nature-based infrastructure" installed by businesses near Delaware Water Gap NRA to manage stormwater runoff helps preserve clean water in the Delaware River, which flows for 40 miles through the national park. ©Songquan Deng | Dreamstime



NPCA Continues Our Fight for Clean Air for Parks and People

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This and other information can be found in "Polluted Parks: How America is Failing to Protect Our National Parks, People and Planet from Air Pollution" which NPCA released in May with an interactive web platform where one can learn more about the air pollution and climate challenges facing our treasured places, shared history and heritage.

Almost all of America's more than 400 national parks "... are being seriously threatened by climate change and other effects of air pollution," says Kodish.

LEARN MORE

www.npca.org/reports/air-climate-report

**OH, SAY
CAN YOU
SEE?**

Ask Congress to Stand Up for Clean Air for Parks and People

Air pollution harms our national parks. A new NPCA assessment (see above) found that almost all national parks are plagued by pollution that harms nature, drives climate change, and makes the air hazy and unhealthy to breathe. Unfortunately, instead of working to strengthen clean air and climate policies to protect people and parks from pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is rolling back protections and undermining the role of science in decision-making.

Congress has the authority to prevent this. Would you please ask your congressional representatives to hold EPA accountable to its mission? Ask them to defend science and protect and enforce existing protections that reduce air and climate pollution and benefit people and parks.

TAKE ACTION

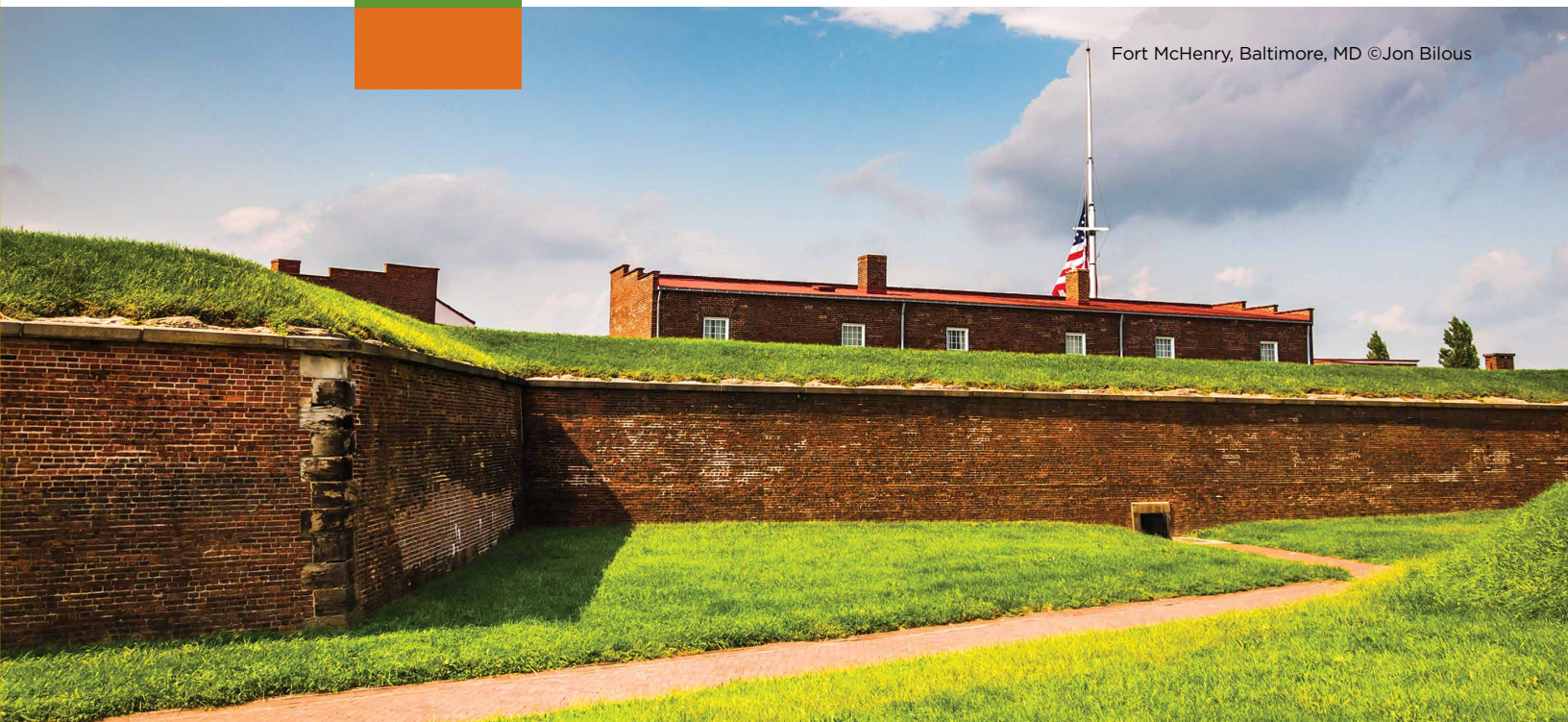
www.npca.org/act4cleanair

Above: Enforcement of clean air protections has improved air quality significantly at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, once one of the most polluted parks in America. ©Nickolay Khoroshkov | Dreamstime

JOIN US AT AN UPCOMING EVENT NEAR YOU!

Contact midatlantic@npca.org or check out www.npca.org/events for updated info on any of these events.

International Coastal Cleanup	SEPT 21	Join NPCA and the Ocean Conservancy to help keep our oceans clean! Volunteers will collect and record trash items on Kingman and Heritage Islands. Kingman Island, Washington, D.C.
National Parks Trivia Night	SEPT 25	Join NPCA and Mappy Hour for a national parks-themed trivia night at Penn Social. Grab a friend and get ready to test your knowledge of our National Park System! Washington, D.C.
Warren County Preservation Day	SEPT 28	Come learn about organizations working to protect open space, farmland and historic sites in and around Warren County, part of the Scenic Wild Delaware River. There will be fun for the whole family, including activities, food and music. Hardwick, NJ
Fort McHenry Field Day	SEPT 28	Join NPCA and the National Aquarium Conservation Team to celebrate National Public Lands Day! Volunteers will help remove debris, restore wildlife habitat, and maintain rain and pollinator gardens at this historic star-shaped fort. Baltimore, MD
National Public Lands Day at Greenbelt Park	SEPT 28	Join Greenbelt Park and NPCA for a volunteer day to celebrate our public lands and keep our parks clean! Greenbelt, MD
Oxon Cove Public Lands Day Cleanup	SEPT 29	Join NPCA and NPS in a Public Lands Day Cleanup at Oxon Cove Park. Oxon Cove Park and Oxon Hill Farm, MD
7th Annual Delaware River Watershed Forum	OCT 16-17	Join conservation policy professionals and volunteers for a forum focused on professional development, water quality, agriculture, community engagement and other topics. Allentown, PA
Salute to the Parks	APR 1 2020	Join us at Salute to the Parks at Union Station. This annual event celebrates our national parks and the people around the country who speak up on their behalf. Washington, D.C.



Fort McHenry, Baltimore, MD ©Jon Bilous



100YEARS

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Show Your Park Love

Your passion for and dedication to national parks continues to make a tremendous difference—thank you! As we celebrate our centennial year and look ahead to the next 100, we hope we can count on you to recommit to NPCA and our parks. Here are some impactful ways you can show your love for our national parks.

Make a Gift

Your generous support is more critical than ever. To learn more about how you can support NPCA financially, visit npca.org/give.

Leave Your Park Legacy

Leaving a gift to NPCA in your will or trust is a personal way you can ensure national parks thrive for generations to come. To learn more about making national parks a part of your enduring legacy, visit MyParkLegacy.org.

Top: Over 100 volunteers picked up 38,690 pieces of debris at the National Aquarium's Spring Ft. McHenry Field Day. ©Chiaki Kawajiri
Bottom: High school students learned advocacy skills in a Civic Voice Workshop as part of the James River Association's James River Expedition in June. ©Katie Morgan | NPCA

Volunteer

Partnering with us as a volunteer is a hands-on and fun way to support your favorite national park. See “Upcoming Events” for volunteer opportunities or contact Melanie McDowell mmcdowell@npca.org.

Become an Online Activist

Learn more about the threats facing our parks and take action online at npca.org/advocacy.

Attend an Event

We continue to celebrate our centennial in a big way this year, and you're invited! See “Upcoming Events” or visit npca.org/events to learn about other activities happening around the country.

Travel with Us

Join us on one of our small-group educational land adventures or small-ship cruises and experience the very best of our national parks. Land tours are limited to just 16 participants plus two guides and include meals, accommodations and on-trip transportation. Find details at npca.org/trips.

