

mutual assistance among the states in the event of a fire emergency.

Fire preparedness involves maintenance of a forest fire organization of forest wardens and volunteer fire companies, and the provision of training and equipment to combat these emergencies.

The State Forest System (formerly State Forest Management) serves to develop the multiple use and sustained yield of all forest resources. It provides timber production, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, and natural beauty.

Since proper management of forest resources represents a long-term investment, State forests serve as examples to local woodland owners in the management of their lands. They provide timber products for local industry, public hunting and fishing areas, open spaces for hikers and campers, and a place to appreciate the natural environment (Code Natural Resources Article, secs. 5-101 through 8-1318).

There are nine State forests administered by the Department, located at Savage River, Cedarville, Doncaster, Elk Neck, Green Ridge, Pocomoke, Potomac-Garrett, Wicomico, and Seth. These multiple-use forest areas produce wood fiber for industry and provide hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, wildlife habitat, soil and water protection, and area for research and demonstration. Forest Service studies encompass projects on insects and diseases, plant genetics, site studies, and various elements of timber management.

The main goal of the Service's Resource Utilization Program is to extend Maryland's decreasing forest resources through the improved use of recreational, aesthetic, environmental, and economic resources. Centered in Annapolis, the Program works with forest products manufacturers on a request basis.

Forestry boards were created by the enactment of the Forest Conservancy District Act of 1942. There is a five-member forestry board in each of Maryland's twenty-three counties. The volunteer members are private citizens who work cooperatively with the Maryland Forest Service to promote sound forestry practices and conservation.

Maryland's State Park system comprises scenic, historic, and natural environment areas located in all regions of the State. Land presently owned by the State and managed as parks totals 80,000 acres.

Thirty-five State parks are operational, most of

them providing a wide variety of interests from day-use activities such as picnicking and hiking to camping and cabin occupancy, which permit more extended enjoyment of these unique areas. Swimming, fishing, nature study, and sightseeing are also popular. The facilities contained in State parks, along with the roads, land, and utilities, represent a fixed asset totaling approximately one hundred and thirty million dollars.

Each year approximately six million people visit the State parks in Maryland. Construction activities are under way at many of these areas where new facilities are being installed to improve existing and provide additional recreational opportunities for the park visitor.

Interpretive programs designed to increase visitor awareness are conducted in the majority of parks and annually serve more than 300,000 people.

A variety of general and specific parks and recreational activity brochures are available at each park and upon request from the Maryland Park Service, Tawes State Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.

NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE FORCE

Roy W. Rafter, *Superintendent*

Tawes State Office Building
Annapolis 21401

Telephone: 269-2247
269-3181

This agency, created by Chapter 348, Acts of 1972, traces its beginnings to the establishment of the State Oyster Police Force in 1868 for the enforcement of the oyster laws of the State. Legislation enacted in 1874 brought all forces afloat under the Commission of Fisheries and named the new unit the State Fishery Force. In 1922 the Force became a part of the former Conservation Department and was known as the Maryland Patrol and Inspection Fleet. In 1941 the Patrol Fleet was incorporated into the Department of Tidewater Fisheries and its name was changed to the Division of Inspection and Patrol. In 1960 the Force became a part of the Division of Law Enforcement of the Department of Tidewater Fisheries, and was renamed the Marine Police Division in 1962.

The Natural Resources Police Force enforces State laws and regulations pertaining to commercial seafood harvesting and sport fishing, boating,