

A “Greening” of Catoctin Mountain Park

**-James Voigt
Resource Manager, Catoctin Mountain Park**

Throughout the summer, green is the dominant color of Catoctin Mountain Park as it is mostly covered by eastern hardwood forest. And it just got even greener! The parking area at Park Headquarters has been converted from asphalt to turf block. Turf block is a cinderblock type material filled with dirt and seeded with grass. Once established, the turf block area looks like a grassy field but is a hard, stable surface suitable for parking cars and small trucks. This change has produced several environmental improvements over the old asphalt pavement. Besides having a natural and more park-like appearance, the amount and the temperature of surface runoff into Big Hunting Creek has been reduced which directly benefits the trout population in one of Maryland’s best-known trout streams. Additionally, the entrance road to the parking area has been moved back about 20 feet from the edge of the stream. The old road surface was removed and the area was planted with native trees and shrubs, enhancing the riparian zone. Ultimately the Monocacy River and the Chesapeake Bay will also benefit from this small watershed improvement high on Catoctin Mountain. For further information on this project, contact Resource Manager Jim Voigt at 301.416.0536.

Catoctin Mountain Park is a unit of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.