



*a guide to the Patapsco Valley,
Maryland's most dramatic river valley*



*Photos courtesy of AAIC Visual Perceptions,
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Patapsco Valley Heritage Area



@patapscovalleyheritage

What is the Patapsco Valley Heritage Area?

The **Patapsco Valley Heritage Area** (PVHA), located in central Maryland and spanning parts of Baltimore County and Howard County, lies at the heart of a network of protected lands along the Patapsco River. It is representative of Maryland's Piedmont forest and industrial heritage, offering a blend of natural beauty, historic towns, and recreational opportunities for visitors to explore.

The river has played a pivotal role in shaping the region's development, driving industrial growth, inspiring scientific advancements, and influencing historic events that transformed both Maryland and the nation. As a result, the PVHA is rich with historic sites and stories that illuminate the region's past. Notable landmarks include the **B&O Ellicott City Station Museum**; the **Thomas Viaduct**, a remarkable example of 19th century engineering spanning the Patapsco River connecting the communities of **Relay** and **Elkridge**; **Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum** in **Oella**, which honors the life of Banneker, an African American astronomer, mathematician and surveyor; and the **Nike Missile Site** in **Granite**, which highlights an important aspect of Cold War history.

At the center of the PVHA is **Patapsco Valley State Park**, Maryland's oldest state park and an early example of conservation efforts. This expansive natural area features miles of natural surface trails, scenic landscapes, waterfalls and historic ruins nestled among woodlands.

Visitors to the PVHA enjoy diverse arts and cultural experiences, including unique exhibits, engaging lectures, dance and theater productions, festivals, and live musical performances. **Ellicott City's Main Street** is lined with boutiques, galleries, and restaurants while nearby **Korean Way** offers a multitude of dining and shopping experiences. **Catonsville's Arts District** is known for live music, music-centered businesses, art studios and public art displays. Nearby **University of Maryland, Baltimore County** hosts public performances and lectures throughout the year.

For outdoor enthusiasts, the PVHA offers a wide range of recreational activities. Hiking, biking, birding, horseback riding, camping, climbing and fishing are popular in the region's parks, while paddling along the Patapsco River provides a different perspective of the valley. Trails such as the **Trolley Line #9 Trail**, **#8 Streetcar Path**, and the **Grist Mill Trail** as well as sites like the **Howard County Conservancy** offer opportunities to explore both the nature and history of the area.

The PVHA is managed by **Patapsco Heritage Greenway** (PHG), a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, interpreting and restoring the environment, history and cultural of the Patapsco Valley for all. PHG fosters environmental stewardship, supports the preservation of the valley's heritage, and highlights the interconnectedness of history, nature, arts, culture, and outdoor recreation. PHG hosts events throughout the year, including lectures, family and school programs, site visits, tours, open houses, exhibits, tree plantings, cleanups, invasive plant removals and water quality monitoring.

For PHG's full event schedule, visit patapsco.org/events



Annual Events & Festivals

January First Day Hikes

March Patapsco Days

March-June
PHG's Spring Environmental Events

April Ellicott City SpringFest

April-June Friends of Patapsco
Valley State Park (FPVSP) Spring &
Summer Outdoor Recreation Events

May-November
Catonsville Farmers Market

June OEC & Catonsville Pride

June Arts and Drafts Festival

June Paint It! Ellicott City

June Pollinator Fest at Howard
County Conservancy

June 6 Hours at Woodstock

June-August
Frederick Road Fridays

June-August
Lurman Woodland Theatre Concerts

July Catonsville Fourth of July
Parade and Celebration

July PHG's Festival del Río

August Music City Maryland Festival

September Patapsco Trailfest

September-November
PHG's Fall Environmental Events

September-November
PHG's PaSNAPsco Photo Contest

September Catonsville Fall Festival

September
Ellicott City Main Street Music Fest

October FPVSP Patapsco 50k and 25k

October Trick or Treat on Main

December
Ellicott City Midnight Madness

PHG's Annual Wagandt Lecture
(Date varies year to year)



Historic Sites, Landmarks and Museums

- **#8 Streetcar Path (28)** is a short, paved trail through woodland scenery featuring murals and interpretive signage that highlight Catonsville's transportation history.
- ⦿ **B&O Ellicott City Station Museum (20)** is the oldest surviving railroad station in the United States. This free museum offers exhibits on early railroad history and showcases the station as it appeared in the mid-1800s.
- ⦿ **Belmont Manor and Historic Park (44)** includes an 18th century manor, historic outbuildings, carriage house and barn. The site is primarily used for private events.
- ⦿ **Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum (21)** tells the story of Benjamin Banneker, considered the first African American man of science and is located on the site of Banneker's 18th century home.
- ⦿ **Bloede Dam Site (35)** is the former location of a hydroelectric dam built in 1906 and removed in 2018. The site features informational signage and scenic river overlooks.
- ⦿ **Brumbaugh House (47)**, ElkrIDGE Heritage Society headquarters, is a historic home and former doctor's office that houses materials documenting ElkrIDGE's history.
- 🌊 **Cascade Falls (37)** is a scenic waterfall in the Orange Grove area of Patapsco Valley State Park, accessible by a short hike.
- 🌀 **Catonsville Arts District (30)** features music venues, art studios and galleries, unique boutiques and maker spaces.
- 🌀 **Catonsville Clubhouse (29)**, run by Baltimore County Arts Guild, is a community space that hosts performances, concerts, workshops, classes and other events.
- 🌀 **Community College of Baltimore County (33)** offers public events and amenities, including Banneker Planetarium presentations, art exhibits, dance, music, and theater performances, as well as a self-guided walking tour of its historic grounds.
- ⦿ **Diggs-Johnson Museum (4)**, located in a restored church, displays artifacts, photographs, and exhibits about African American life in Baltimore County.
- ⦿ **ElkrIDGE Furnace Inn (48)** is a restaurant and event venue that occupies historic structures dating to the early 1800s.



Scenic Parks and Natural Areas

- ⦿ **Ellicott City Firehouse Museum (16)**, located in a restored 1899 firehouse, explores the challenges of fighting fires in late 19th- and early 20th-century Ellicott City.
- ⦿ **Ellicott City Historic Courthouse (13)**, built in the 1840s and used as a courthouse until 2021, is now home to Howard County's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Cultural Center and the Howard County Center for the Arts.
- ⦿ **Ellicott City Jail (12)**, located near the historic courthouse, was built in 1851 and was used until 1983.
- ⦿ **Ellicott Mills Children's Museum (15)** features interactive themed rooms that showcase the history and culture of a 19th century mill town.
- **Grist Mill Trail (41)**, located in Patapsco Valley State Park, is a paved path along the Patapsco River with scenic views, historic sites, and access to the Swinging Bridge.
- ⦿ **Guinness Open Gate Brewery (49)**, located on a historic distillery site, offers a tap room, food and outdoor seating.
- ⦿ **Historic B&O Oliver Viaduct (19)**, recognizable by the red painted bridge that greets visitors to the Ellicott City historic district, was built to transport trains across the Baltimore-Frederick turnpike.
- ⦿ **Historic Ellicott City Colored School (10)** opened in 1880 as a school for African American children. The restored one-room schoolhouse is furnished to represent an early 20th century classroom.
- ⦿ **Historic Oella Cemetery (24)**, Maryland's only known company cemetery, was established in the early 19th century as a burial place for mill workers and their families.
- ⦿ **Historic National Road (26)**, originally constructed to support America's westward expansion, includes a five-mile segment running between Catonsville and Ellicott City.
- 🌊 **Howard County Conservancy (5)** is a 232-acre historic farmstead with trails, gardens, historic buildings, farm animals, and public events and programs.
- ⦿ **Howard County Welcome Center (17)**, located in a renovated post office, provides information about Howard County's attractions, as well as space for exhibits.



➞ Recreational Opportunities



🌀 Arts & Cultural Experiences

🌿 **Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area (1)** provides habitat for wildlife including deer, wild turkeys and songbirds and is used by visitors for outdoor recreation.

🌀 **Korean Way (9)** is a 5-mile stretch along Baltimore National Pike (Route 40) in Ellicott City that highlights Korean and Asian culture, heritage, businesses and culinary experiences.

🌀 **Lurman Woodland Theatre (32)** is an outdoor music venue in Catonsville that hosts free concerts throughout the summer.

🌀 **Museum of Howard County History (14)**, operated by the Howard County Historical Society, features exhibits and artifacts that tell the story of Howard County.

🌀 **Nike Missile Site BA-79 (3)**, in operation until 1972, is a remnant of the Cold War defense system for Baltimore. The site hosts public open house events.

🌿 **Oella/Ellicott City Entrance Garden (21)** was planted by volunteers to honor the bicentennial of the historic mill town of Oella. This scenic garden alongside the Patapsco River features pollinator-friendly native plants and flowers.

🌀 **Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park (22)**, located on a hilltop overlooking Ellicott City, was once a school for young women during the 19th century and is now a stabilized ruin open to visitors.

🌿 **Patapsco Valley State Park (2, 6, 7, 8, 36, 39, 40, 43, 51)**, Maryland's oldest state park, spans 32 miles along the Patapsco River. It offers over 200 miles of trails for hiking, biking, and outdoor exploration, as well as historic sites, including some of Maryland's earliest mills and factories.

🌿 **Rockburn Branch Park (45)** offers 9 miles of trails, a playground, and sports fields including an 18-hole disc golf course.

🌿 **Serenity Ridge Natural Burial Cemetery and Arboretum (52)**, adjacent to the PVHA in Windsor Mill, is dedicated exclusively to natural burials with grounds that include fields, wooded areas and scenic vistas.

➞ **Short Line Railroad Trail (31)** is a 2.2 mile woodland trail through Catonsville converted from a former railroad.

🌿 **Southwest Area Park (50)** is located on the Patapsco River and includes a boat ramp, picnic areas, trails and playgrounds.

➞ **Swinging Bridge (38)** is a popular suspension bridge that spans across the Patapsco River located in the Avalon/Orange Grove area of Patapsco Valley State Park.

🌀 **Thomas Issac/Levi Gillis Log Cabin (11)**, was originally constructed in 1780 by Levi Gillis and purchased by Thomas Isaac in 1858. The cabin's interior currently reflects a late 18th century home.

🌀 **Thomas Viaduct (46)** is a granite railroad bridge spanning the Patapsco River considered an innovation in engineering when built by the B&O Railroad in the 1830s.

🌀 **Tonge Row (18)** is a row of townhouses built in the early 1800s by Ann Tonge for mill workers in Ellicott City and now the location of **PHG's Office**.

➞ **Trolley Trail Line #9 Trail (23)** is a paved pathway converted from a trolley rail line that connects Ellicott City and Catonsville, suitable for walking, running and cycling.

🌀 **University of Maryland, Baltimore County (34)** offers public access to facilities and events, including the Albin O. Kuhn Library and Gallery, exhibitions at the Center for Art, Design, and Visual Culture, and concerts and performances.

🌀 **Whipps Garden Cemetery (53)**, located near the PVHA, is a historic cemetery established in 1855 and preserved as a small public garden with native plants and flowering trees.

🌀 **William Offutt Johnson History Center (42)** provides insights into the region's industrial history and is located in one of the few surviving buildings from the historic Avalon Iron and Nail Works.

🌀 **Winters Lane Historic District (27)**, founded in 1867, developed into a thriving neighborhood that remains the largest and most intact mid-19th century African American community in Baltimore County.

