**Camp David Presidential Retreat Site**

Located 70 miles from the White House in the Catoctin Mountains of Maryland, Camp David was established in 1942 as a place for the President to relax and entertain. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt wanted to escape the summer heat of Washington, D.C., and the higher altitude of the Camp provided cool breezes and good security. President Roosevelt called the Camp "Shangri-La" after the mountain kingdom in James Hilton's book Lost Horizon. It was renamed Camp David in 1953 by President Eisenhower in honor of his grandson.

The Camp is operated by Navy personnel, and troops from the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C., provide permanent security. Marine One carries the President during the half-hour helicopter ride from our Nation's capital. Guests at Camp David can enjoy a pool, putting green, driving range, tennis courts, gymnasium, and the many guest cabins -- Dogwood, Maple, Holly, Birch, and Rosebud, to name a few. The presidential cabin is called Aspen Lodge.

Camp David has been the site of many historic international meetings. It was there, during World War II, that President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill planned the Allies' invasion of Europe. Many historical events have occurred at the Presidential Retreat; the planning of the Normandy invasion, Eisenhower-Khrushchev meetings, discussions of the Bay of Pigs, Vietnam War discussions, and many other meetings with foreign dignitaries and guests. President Jimmy Carter chose the site for the meeting of Middle East leaders that led to the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt.

Camp David continues to serve as the Presidential Retreat. It is a private, secluded place for recreation, contemplation, rest, and relaxation. Maintaining the privacy and secluded atmosphere of the retreat is an important role for Catoctin Mountain Park. The Presidential Retreat still remains within park boundaries but is not open to the public. It is a place where presidents can relax, unwind, contemplate, entertain distinguished guests in an informal setting, and cope with the pressures of modern day society.

The Presidential retreat is not open or accessible to the public, but the eastern hardwood forest of Catoctin Mountain Park has many other attractions for visitors: camping, picnicking, fishing, 25 miles of hiking trails, scenic mountain vistas, all await exploration.

Catoctin Mountain Park was originally submarginal land purchased by the government in 1936, to be developed into a recreational facility. The facility was to demonstrate how rough terrain and eroded soil could be turned into productive land again. The New Deal's Works Progress Administration, WPA, began the work in the newly created Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area, joined by the Civilian Conservation Crops, CCC, in 1939. Camp Misty Mount was first used by the Maryland League for Crippled Children. After the first year, the League moved to a second camp in 1938, Camp Greentop, because Camp Misty Mount's terrain was difficult to negotiate in a wheelchair. A third camp, Camp Hi-Catoctin, was completed in the winter of 1938-1939 and was used for three years as a family camp for federal employees.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was accustomed to seeking relief from hot Washington, D.C. summers and relaxing on weekends, aboard the presidential yacht "Potomac" or at Hyde Park, NY. In 1942 the U.S. Secret Service were very concerned about the President's continued use of the "Potomac." World War II had brought an attack on Pearl Harbor and German U boats close in Atlantic waters. Presidential safety was a concern and Presidential health was also a concern. The muggy climate of Washington, D.C., was considered detrimental to his health, affecting his sinuses. A new retreat, a place to relax, within a 100 mile radius of Washington, D.C. and in the cool mountain air was sought. Several sites were considered but Camp Hi-Catoctin in the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area was selected after the President's first visit on April 22, 1942. A camp was already built on the site and the estimated conversion cost was $18,650. It was also almost 10 degrees cooler than Washington. The camp for federal employee's families became the camp of one federal employee, the President of the United States. Roosevelt quickly renamed the camp to "Shangri-La" from James Hilton's 1933 novel, Lost Horizon.

At the close of World War II, there was some debate over the future of Shangri-La. Should it be returned to the National Park Service? Should it be maintained as a national shrine or monument? Should it be transferred to the Maryland State Forest and Park System as was the original plan of the demonstration area? In 1952 Truman approved a compromise under which the land north of Maryland Route 77 would remain Catoctin Mountain Park operated by the National Park Service and the land south of Maryland Route 77 would become Cunningham Falls State Park. The official transfer took effect in 1954. President Eisenhower renamed the retreat, after he took office in 1953, "Camp David," after his grandson.