

MARYLAND PARKS AND WILDERNESS COMMISSION

RANGER INCIDENT REPORTS

2018 Q2

APRIL 4

A 34-year-old man, identified by artifacts on his person, was found drowned in the eastern fork of the creek. Rangers believe it likely he slipped from a rock overlooking the creek and fell to his death. The man's body showed a state of decay that suggested being left in elements for over a year--despite the fact that he was only reported missing two days prior. The body was removed from the location by coroners.

APRIL 10

A hiking couple arrived at a ranger station and reported one of them had suffered a snake bite from a timber rattlesnake. As it is a known hazard, rangers had antivenom on hand and were able to successfully administer it. The victim is expected to make a full recovery.

APRIL 16

A youth group from St. Dianas Church reported the theft of two backpacks and a canteen while on a daytime trip. The theft occurred when the group had left their camp near Chimney Top Landing to go birdwatching. After reporting the incident to MPWC, the group ended their outing early and left the forest. As of this report, the culprit has not yet been identified, though one of the boys claimed the thief was "the antler-man" he claims to have seen while birdwatching.

APRIL 20

A boy fell into a shallow ravine during an early morning run with his father. The father reported that the child slipped on a rock due to the previous night's rain. Rangers treated the boy at the scene for a sprained ankle and wrist, and then marked the area as hazardous.

APRIL 20

Several hikers reported hearing screams near Jones Camp Falls. When rangers investigated, they were unable to find anyone in distress. Patrols plan to investigate the area regularly for the next few weeks.

MAY 1

An elderly hiker arrived at a ranger station under his own power, staunching severe lacerations on his neck and head. He claims that while walking, he was struck by an owl. The lacerations were consistent with the talons of some of the local birds in the area, and a ranger was able to tend to his wounds and escort him back to town without further incident.

MAY 3

A group of archaeology students have handed over to MPWC rangers property uncovered during a dig. Rangers in turn released these items to the Burkittsville Sheriff's Office. Recovered items included various film production equipment contained within a duffel bag.

MAY 14

A 19-year-old woman was rescued from a 20-foot gully in the eastern half of the forest. After rescue, the hiker insisted she had been in the ditch for four days with no supplies. However, her hiking permit indicated that she began her trek earlier that morning. This area is well marked as a danger zone and has been for centuries; early settlers planted a circle of *quercus alba* to mark the spot as a potential hazard for passers-through. The woman claimed to have seen a distant figure watching from the trees too far away to properly identify: "I couldn't see their face, but it looked like they were covered in twigs and leaves. Like a cheap scarecrow." Her experience is likely a combination of malnutrition and the shock of the incident. No one else was reported passing through the area that day.

MAY 15

A young couple reported finding a hole in the ground with a foul smell emanating from within. They stated that the smell was akin to rotten meat or spoiled milk. Rangers were sent out to investigate and believe the spot to be an abandoned skunk den. No carcasses were discovered, though rangers reported the smell lingered, and quickly became overpowering enough to drive them to sickness. When a second pair of rangers investigated the area, there was neither a smell, nor a den. The first pair of rangers recovered quickly after departing the area.

MAY 20

While on patrol, rangers came across a woman who had wandered from the path. She appeared disoriented and possibly violent, but the rangers were able to calm her down and treat her for mild dehydration. By the time they had escorted her back to Burkittsville proper, she was able to articulate that she'd become lost on an afternoon hike, and was able to return home under her own power.

MAY 2

Hikers reported being approached by a young boy around 6-8 years of age near Rocky Flats. He reportedly told the hikers he came from "the house with the handprints," but ran away before they could question him further. The child did not match the description of any missing boy, and there are no intact houses in the forest.

JUNE 7

A 43-year-old woman reported being chased through the woods by a "monster with long, stretched limbs." When asked for a more detailed description, the hiker fell into a state of shock and was unable to provide further actionable information. Rangers suspect the "monster" may have been an *ursus americanus* suffering from mange. However, this incident will remain open pending further investigation.

JUNE 9

Several food containers and beer cans were found near Chimney Top Landing by patrolling rangers. Rangers cleaned the area and issued a community statement on keeping the woods clean, as well as safe hiking procedures. Later, sources indicated that a group of high school students skipped a day to "party with the witch." Proper citations were issued.

JUNE 15

A visiting family of three reported seeing a soft flare of red light in the trees to the south while hiking on Dutch Hill. Frightened by this display, they decamped and left before nightfall, reporting the incident to rangers upon their exit.

JUNE 21

The skeletal remains of a human hand missing its index finger was found by Ranger Harold Brennan near Dead Man's Rock. Brennan radioed the nearest tower and kept watch as authorities traveled to the scene. When officers from the Burkittsville Sheriff's Office arrived, the hand was nowhere to be found, though Ranger Brennan swore it had not moved since he discovered it. The incident is being investigated.

JUNE 27

A 23-year-old man reported a dead family of raccoons near his "sittin' spot" by the river, around the southernmost bend in the creek. The carcasses were fresh and strewn about. He speculated that it could be signs of large predatory animals nearby and informed the rangers.

JUNE 30

A broken drone of unidentified make and model with a camera attached was found by hikers near Pine Hollow and reported to MFWC. When rangers arrived, the drone was no longer at the scene.