

talks presented to civic groups, clubs and other organizations. This Division also processes requests for information which come through the mail. The Division also endeavors to keep forests and parks personnel abreast of developments by way of a monthly newsletter.

Recognizing a long-standing need for a full-time attorney to handle the legal problems arising from land acquisition, condemnations, oil and gas leases and similar matters, the 1966 General Assembly authorized the creation of the position of Special Assistant Attorney General for the Department. The Legal Section, also advises the Commission on Forests and Parks and renders opinions to all divisions of the Department.

The Parks Division provides a well-distributed and accessible system of parks throughout the State. These areas include scenic and historic sites, plus a variety of informal types of outdoor recreation. Included in the system are facilities for camping, picnicking, swimming, boating, fishing, horseback riding, and similar activities.

Last year, more than seven and one half million visitors utilized the facilities administered by the Department, from Swallow Falls in Western Maryland to Assateague on the Atlantic Coast. By 1976, the Department expects a total visitor load of twelve million persons each year. The Department also expects that this figure will zoom to twenty-five million by the year 2000, an increase of 625 percent over the present use.

At the present time, there are twenty-seven State parks in full operation. Three additional parks are open on a limited basis while they are under development and five are in the acquisition stage.

The Department has parks located in every section of the State. In Western Maryland are Cunningham Falls, Dan's Mountain, Deep Creek Lake, Fort Frederick, Fort Tonoloway, Gambrill, Gathland, Washington Monument, New Germany, Big Run, Herrington Manor, Swallow Falls, Greenbrier and Rocky Gap. Those in Southern Maryland include Cedarville, Sandy Point, Smallwood, Patapsco and Point Lookout, Shad Landing, Wye Oak, Martinak, Milburn Landing, Assateague, Janes Island and Tuckahoe are located on the Eastern Shore. Elk Neck, Deer Creek, Gunpowder and Susquehanna are located in northern Maryland. Maryland, like other States, is faced with a steadily increasing population. This factor, combined with anticipated boosts in personal income, automobile registration and leisure time, has created a pressing demand for more recreation areas. Recognizing this, the Department has compiled a master plan for outdoor recreation to study the demands and needs for these facilities and to present an action program to provide them.

The Department's land acquisition program continues to expand. Last year, more than 5,000 acres were purchased for State park purposes. In addition, some 150 tracts are now in various stages of acquisition.

The Planning Division was created in 1964 to plan and design forests and parks facilities. Planning personnel also collect and amass data to determine future needs, perform all phases of planning from reconnaissance of the area to inventories of its resources, compile master development and site plans for proposed new parks, do the necessary field work, prepare maps for land acquisition and supply the working drawings submitted to contractors for bidding.

To study and appraise the recreation needs of the State, the Department has established a recreational service which cooperates in the promotion and organization of local recreation systems for political subdivisions, and assists the State and Federal agencies and other groups in the promotion of recreation programs. These functions are performed by the Recreation Division without charge and its services are available upon request.