

Greetings State Legislators,

If you will, please imagine with me a scenario... It is a bright fall day and there is a crisp in the air. The leaves are turned to beautiful reds, oranges and vibrant yellows. You are a mile and a half into your hike which should take roughly two to three hours. You brought along a family member and a friend, carefully chosen, because you know their trail experience. The trail is rugged, rocky and still wet from recent rains.

As you lead the way, you look to the right of the trail and see a sun ray beaming onto the exposed forest floor. It creates a column of swirling steam rising from the heated earth. This is the beauty you knew you would find on this excursion. Just then, you hear a snap and gasps from your trail companions. Something has happened. Something is not right and you turn to see what is the matter. You follow their gaze down to your own leg. It's you. The pain hits. The image of your bone protruding from your leg sears into your mind. You look up and black spots grow to total darkness. You pass out from the pain.

"DNR to any park ranger at Cunningham Falls State Park...."

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"Park 705 to DNR go ahead"

"Park 705, I have an injured hiker on the blue trail. A 40 year old male with a broken leg, bleeding and experiencing chest pain."

"705 to DNR we are aware of the incident and are en route. Can you please relay to the county that the extraction point will be at the Peniel Lot along Maryland Route 77? That's across from NPS headquarters. Our ETA to the patient is 15 minutes."

"Park 705, 10-4"

This is any given Saturday in a Maryland State Park. We respond to emergencies with the utmost professionalism and tact. If you have a medical emergency or a traumatic injury while visiting a park in Maryland, you can rest assured that a ranger is headed up the trail, out on a boat, into the campground or wherever you may be to render aid.

The visiting population of a state park during summer weekends and holidays can be equal to the major towns and cities of the state. Folks visiting state parks engage in activities that extend beyond their normal experiences including: building fires in the campground; exerting themselves on extended hikes; remaining in the sun for extended periods; swimming and boating; climbing rocks and cliffs; mountain biking; ice fishing; cross country skiing. These are just a few examples of the accident prone activities that park rangers deal with on a daily basis.

Within the MD Department of Natural Resources each agency shares emergency responsibilities with their county colleagues. The MD Forest Service leads wildland fire efforts with local fire companies. The MD Wildlife and Heritage Service is the lead for wildlife complaints along with county animal control units. The MD Natural Resources Police lead law enforcement efforts on public lands, along with county sheriffs. Within state parks, the Maryland Park Service Ranger represents the department and the state when it comes to emergency medical response (EMS) on park/public lands. It is just us and the counties.

These incidents continue to be handled by park rangers in state parks, but without the pay and recognition that park staff deserve. We know how to respond within our parks. Ask any ranger and they will tell you that county units are often out of their element and struggle to affect a proper response without our help. However, there is a growing trend within the park service to move away from EMS response and let the counties try and fill the void. If this bill fails, I fear that more park rangers will push back on work requirements to respond to the level of their training. That will leave you and your loved ones waiting on the trail. Who will be coming to help? Who can you count on to be there like we always have been and in a timely manner? The answer is the Maryland

Park Service Ranger. Please see attached (tiny sampling) thank you letters from the public, addressed to the Maryland Park Service and please vote yes on HB -1438.

Ranger Jeremiah Corbin, NREMT

On Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 5:16 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Ranger Mr. Corbin,

This is [REDACTED] who was at your Cunningham Falls State Park camp last weekend and had sprained my ankle during hiking. Luckily no fracture and I am doing okay now. I wanted to express my sincere Thanks to you and your team (Ranger Ms. Shea, didn't get the name of the off duty staffs with their family and other officers onsite) who took great care of me during the emergency. It was very unfortunate that I sprained my ankle and Given the location of the incident, you and your team arrived timely and went above and beyond call of duty to help me with my situation. I was amazed by the Off duty staff who hopped in with you to assist carrying me down the hill. My sincere Thanks to the EMT team as well. This is a great example of heroic American Emergency Care service that I ever experienced. Hats off to you all for your great dedication and service.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Physical Therapist
[REDACTED]

