

Forest Canopy Walkway

Coming to Deep Creek Lake State Park

Written by: **Dan Whetzel**

Imagine seeing Deep Creek Lake and surrounding flora, fauna, and wildlife from an exciting location 85 feet above ground level. From that location, birds, butterflies, flowers, and various species of animals and insects that live in the roof of the local forest could be observed in their natural environments. The Forest Canopy Walkway will allow imaginations to come alive because the upper parts of the forest will be within reach of residents and visitors who may investigate Garrett County at their own pace and in a unique way.

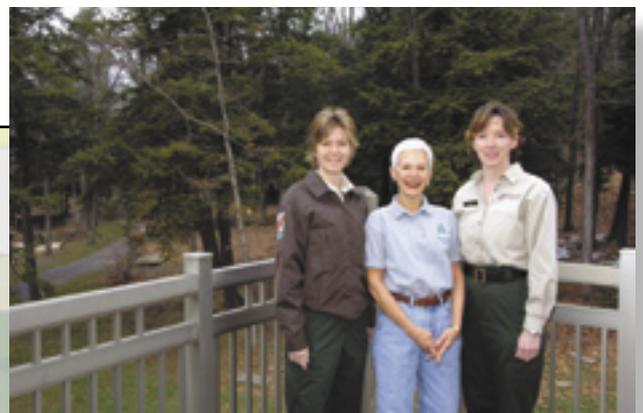
The proposed Forest Canopy Walkway is a project coordinated by the Western Garrett County State Park Volunteers in partnership with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Park Service and Forest Service. Plans call for the canopy walkway to be located at the Deep Creek Lake State Park Discovery Center on State Park Road. Three sections are planned for the facility: a canopy bridge, a catenary or swinging bridge, and a canopy tower.

The canopy bridge will attach to the rear deck of the Discovery Center and make a 200-foot loop to the public parking lot. The swinging bridge will attach to

that canopy bridge and run approximately 85 feet to the Forest Canopy Tower. In keeping with local surroundings, the tower will be a replica of fire towers the Forest Service historically used to locate fires. Visitors may ascend to the top of the tower or descend to the ground at this point. The Canopy Walk will offer proximity to the Discovery Center and access to trained staff, who will facilitate an understanding of the local forest canopy. Local school groups, researchers, and ecotourists are expected to regularly use the venue.

The costs associated with the proposal must be raised from private sources. A plaque donation campaign has been initiated and a donation box has been placed at the Discovery Center. It is hoped at least the first section of the canopy walkway will be constructed by the summer of 2008.

For more information, contact Caroline Blizzard, Director, The Discovery Center, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Deep Creek State Park, 898 State Park Road, Swanton, Maryland 21561; 301-387-7067 or e-mail, www.cblizzard@dnr.state.md.us



Left to right: Caroline Blizzard, Director, Discovery Center, DNR; Wendy Mopsik, President, State Parks Volunteers; and Becky Wilson, Urban and Community Forestry Program, MD DNR Forest Service, stand on back deck of the Discovery Center next to where the walkway is going to be.

Left: Plan view of walkway development—red dot is where the group in the above photo is standing.