



C&O Canal Association

# along the towpath ...

concerned with the conservation of the natural and historical environment of the C&O Canal and the Potomac River Basin

VOLUME XII

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1980

NUMBER 4

## C&O CANAL ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING NOTES - JULY 1980

### Development Concept Plans

Great Falls: A "Finding of No Significant Impact" was drafted by the NPS based upon the Assessment of Alternatives prepared last year. Controversial items were the nature of the bridge or other structure to be used in re-establishing continuity of the towpath at Widewater, and NPS' desire to allocate space at Great Falls for storage of maintenance equipment. The Commission will review the "Finding" (so that the final report by the NPS will reflect the Commission's views) before a 30 day public comment period.

Williamsport: Implementation of a Plan is to begin in October 1980.

North Branch/Cumberland: This area, from just west of Oldtown to the Cumberland terminus, includes a visitor center, barge replica, two lockhouses, four liftlocks, the Evitts Creek aqueduct and the remaining masonry at the terminus.

Proposal alternative #1 - \$165 thousand - Maintain present facilities.

Proposal alternative #2a - \$591 thousand - Clear canal prism between Lock 73 and Candock; remove "non-historical" structures.

Proposal alternative #2b - \$900 thousand - In addition to improvements 2a, rewater the cleared section.

Proposal alternative #3 - over \$10 million - Rewater canal from Spring Gap to Cumberland; establish parking lot near Lock 72 and rent canoes and bicycles; establish parking, johns, walkways and an information kiosk at Cumberland.

The NPS is currently distributing this Plan to the public.

### Money for Land Acquisition

The Park has \$.9 to \$1 million for FY 80 land acquisition. The Park Service's tentative list of sites includes the Golden Commissary tract, Georgetown, a small area below Brunswick, the Berkson property in Washington County, the Western Maryland right-of-way, and a PEPCO property near Monocacy aqueduct.

### The Western Maryland Railroad Abandoned Right-of-Way Acquisition

The abandoned section of the Western Maryland Railroad right-of-way, extending for 36 miles from Hancock westward, encompasses between 550 and 600 acres. 30 miles are in Maryland and 6 are in West Virginia. The right-of-way crosses the canal and river 7 times, often on high trestles. The estimated 1976 cost of acquisition was \$400 thousand, and the estimated 1978 cost for annual maintenance was \$300 thousand.

The NPS' proposed acquisition of the 30 miles in Maryland apparently is not contested. To say merely, however, that local West Virginia officialdom is enraged over the proposed acquisition is to considerably understate its vituperative feelings. The texts of resolutions by two august governing bodies follow, in order to properly convey the virulence with which the West Virginians oppose the acquisition.



Morgan County Commission, Berkeley Springs, W Va, July 10, 1980.

"Be it resolved that the County Commission of Morgan County, West Virginia, does hereby oppose the acquisition by the C & O Canal National Historical Park of any and all real estate situate in Morgan County, West Virginia, for any and all purposes, for the reason that, among other things, such aggrandizement by the C & O Canal National Historical Park would result in a lesser tax base for the county itself, and that such aggrandizement would amount to various infractions of the land itself, which are inconsistent with the private ownership of such land; and for the reason that, on the basis of past experience, this acquisition would result in a full fledged malignancy embracing the Western Maryland Railroad and various other pertinences to the land involved." /s/ Commissioners JB Norton, NP Kesecker and MA Ours.

Eastern Panhandle Regional Planning and Development Council, Region 9, September 19, 1979, resolution #1-80, adopted by a vote of 11-0.

"...The Region 9 Council, representing the three counties and nine municipalities that comprise the region, opposes any intervention or takeover of land along the Potomac River and its tributaries by the Federal Government; and be it further resolved that this resolution be sent to the Governor of West Virginia and the Congressmen representing West Virginia urging them to oppose and halt the efforts of the Federal Government to include Region 9 rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System." /s/ JB Norton, chairman.

It is ironic to note that these ardent champions of local sovereignty open their local newspapers to real estate ads encouraging the purchase of West Virginia shoreline property because the Maryland side of the River is protected forever by the Federal Park.

The Advisory Commission approved a motion requesting that the Park Service not acquire any land from the Western Maryland Railroad in West Virginia until after public hearings have been held on the issue, such hearings to be held before the Commission's next meeting.

#### Tree Cutting Policy

The Commission endorsed the tree cutting policy of the NPS, which provides for maintenance of healthy trees and removal of dead or diseased trees in the interest of public safety. Trees are not to be cut down at random. "Roots on the towpath surface should be cut out only when a public hazard exists and no towpath resurfacing is possible."

Other issues included notice that the Army is helping to locate a bailey bridge to be put across the Catoctin, discussion of a Parcourse for Georgetown, horse facilities on the towpath and a possible denial of towpath access at Brunswick.

For a copy of the minutes, or to correspond with the Commission, write c/o the NPS, PO Box 4, Sharpsburg, MD 21782. The next meeting is scheduled for October 18, 1980, in Montgomery County.

Along the Towpath is published from time to time by the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Association, a non-profit organization, PO Box 66, Glen Echo, MD 20768.

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President: Barbara Yeaman, 104 Valley Road, Bethesda, MD 20016

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Secretary: Shirley Haigh: 4926 Herkimer St., Annandale, VA 22003

Treasurer: Emmie Woodward, 9017 Old Dominion Dr., McLean, VA 22102

Association Dues: One year \$8, patron \$15



## A NIGHT AT THE SYMPHONY

The National Symphony Orchestra is offering Association members a 20% discount on tickets for its concert on Friday, January 9, 1981, at 8:30 PM in the Concert Hall of the Kennedy Center in Washington. The concert will be conducted by Rostropovich, and will feature violin soloist Silvia Marcovici. On the program are "Variation and Song for Orchestra" by Makris, "Symphonie espagnole" by Lalo, and Symphony No. 3, Opus 10 by Dvorak. The discounted price is \$11 per ticket. Send your check payable to the NSO for the total amount, along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope (the tickets will be mailed to you), to Emmie Woodward, Treasurer, 9017 Old Dominion Dr., McLean, VA 22102, by December 30, 1980.

## 93 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE...

93 members(as of Oct. 5th) have returned the completed questionnaire that appeared in the last issue of Along the Towpath. An analysis of the responses will appear in the next issue. To those of you who have been putting off filling in and returning your questionnaire: Please do so by December 1, 1980.

## ...AND ZERO RESPONSES TO THE REQUEST FOR ORGANIZERS

Despite the front-page plea for potential activity organizers among the membership to identify themselves, not one member has volunteered to set up an activity of any sort, with or without a request for co-organizers.

## FALL HIKE AND MEETING WILL NOT BE HELD

It is not by chance that this article appears just below the one about the dearth of volunteer organizers. Barbara Yeaman, who was the principal organizer of the 1980 reunion hike, who took on the Association Presidency in April, and who thought she could find the time to arrange a fall meeting/hike, was unable to do so. Two principles suggest themselves: 1) One person should not be expected to shoulder the entire burden of leadership of the Association, a group of 200 members. 2) When the success of an activity depends on the amount of free time available to a single volunteer organizer, the probability of the occurrence of that activity is low.

Lyman Stucker and the Level Walkers(not a rock band) provide an excellent example of sharing the chores of arranging hikes and meetings. In fact, other than the annual reunion hike(which the officers feel obliged to arrange under the pressures of tradition), the Level Walker events are the only regular Association-sponsored events.

We are apparently content with depending heavily on few to do the work that could be shared by many, so let's not tamper with the system. It's nice to know, nevertheless, why there won't be a fall hike.

## BOARD MEETING NOTES

Newsletter: The officers and Board members voted to start mailing Along the Towpath first class. Several factors were involved in this decision, including complaints by members of receiving issues late or not at all, and the small difference(11.5¢) in mailing cost between first class and third class.

Douglas Memorabilia: The Board and officers voted to send a letter to Sheldon Cohen, executor of the estate of William O Douglas, asking for a meeting on the possibility that C&O Canal related memorabilia not peremptorily acquired by the Government or retained by the estate could be acquired by the Association for display. These memorabilia consist of photographs, plaques and other mementos. The Board discussed the possibility of building a traveling exhibit which would spend 3 months a year at each NPS Canal visitor center.



## LEVEL WALKER NOTES

The Level Walker reports are very interesting and informative. Not only are you aiding the Association and Park Service, but the tone of your reports indicates that you are having a "lot of fun." Our towpath activity has slowed during the hot weather but we are looking forward to our walk on September 27.

We only publish excerpts of the reports but your complete report is forwarded to the Park Service.

Section 3 - Lock 5 to Cabin John Creek - Phil Stone - 5/3

The towpath is now in first class condition throughout my section. All locks (5, 6 and 7), the two lockhouses (6 and 7), and the footbridge at Cabin John are in good shape. The old high-level bridge at Sycamore Island is structurally weakened and in need of imminent repair, which I understand is programmed for the near future.

Throughout my section water depth in the canal was in the 18"-24" range. Since my previous report the delta formed by a small stream just above the Sycamore Island Bridge has been dredged out, a distinct improvement to navigation.

(Phil included in his report an extensive list of wild flowers and birds he observed. His knowledge and perception of these things help make an interesting report. L.S.)

Section 7 - Great Falls to Swain's Lock - John Anderson - 4/26

Condition of towpath was actually muddy but there were joggers, bikes and dogs besides those that were hiking.

Plenty of water was in the canal and the condition was excellent. There was plenty of surface on the towpath although it tended to muddy up easily.

In spite of intermittent rain there was plenty of evidence of wildlife.

Section 8 - Swain's Lock to Pennyfield Lock - Al Stanley - 6/21

Considerable storm droppage from storm of previous Sunday. River calm and of medium height - canal high. Canal proper has much storm floatsam.

Towpath showing bicycle ruts, not deep but prevalent. Towpath passing through W.S.S.C. construction has several spots of very loose red soil. It is extremely difficult to hikers.

Met new association member Joe Loughran, 938-3679. He's a possible new level walker.



Section 12 - Sycamore Landing to Edwards Ferry - Charles Otstot - 5/26

The section was hiked on Memorial Day, early in the morning: a beautiful day, clear blue sky and just warm enough to be comfortable. The rains of this last week helped the wild weeds grow, but the path was in pretty good shape. The erosion at the culvert at Mile 29.2 is progressing. I might say that the debris placed on the river side of the low spot at Mile 28.3 should help the erosion at that point.

The HBO is in slightly better shape than it was last fall. The pump is working and there is a new picnic table (chained to a tree). Someone has also salvaged the old table. There is still no grill and the toilet's deposits were a week or so ahead of the chemicals; there was paper. The trash pick-up was very over due! The place was still very damp, and you had to get your feet wet to go to the toilet. This is just not a good location for a camp site!!!

Section 16 - Lock 26 to Monocacy Aqueduct - Anson Courter - 4/11

Trash was picked up from the prism of the Monocacy Aqueduct, the Monocacy picnic area and along the Canal. The Outerspacers who came all that way for a Strohs, and others of that ilk\*, had a picnic in the prism. Trash was dumped in the old dumpster, which needs emptying. Crows may have got into dumpster, and dogs and raccoons into picnic cans-a racoon could get off the top. (\*Ilk-of the same clan and place, according to the Scots.)

The Little Monocacy was clear, the Potomac and Monocacy about two to three feet in flood. Plastic trash will be left when the flood drops.

Lockhouse #27 is in good condition for an unused building. The lock will require extensive rebuilding if the canal is ever rewatered. The outdrain just above the lock is slowly breaking up, but workable.

Carpet thick spring beauties were in lot sized patches on the riverside banks between the Canal, the Monocacy and the Potomac. Large patches of Virginia Bluebells and Dutchmans were along the towpath, the latter just starting to bloom.

The spring migration of warblers had hardly begun. Myrtle warblers, a few, were probably winter residents. There were a few Juncos and White-throated Sparrows, no Fox sparrow heard, a few flocks of Goldfinches, no Thrashers heard near Lock 26, where they have always nested during the summer, no Bluebirds.

(Anson presented an interesting description of plant and wildlife on his level. Sorry to "excerpt" it, Anson. L.S.)

Section 17 - Monocacy Aqueduct to Nolands Ferry - Bob & Terry Ledley - 7/27

This section has been beautifully maintained by the Park. The picnic area and boat ramp at Nolands Ferry were lovely, with freshly gravelled parking lot and road. The two mile stretch down to the aqueduct however was another story. Kids, otherwise known as vandals, had placed log and brush barricades at intervals along the towpath, perhaps 12-15 in all, at what must have been great effort on their part, and which took great effort on our part to remove. Aside from this, however, the section was beautiful, clean, well maintained and thoroughly enjoyable.



Section 19 - Point of Rocks to Catoctin Aqueduct - Marie Grenan - 10/7/79

At mile 49 and 51.5 two large trees down, lying across towpath. Park Service had already begun to cut them up into small sections. Lots of debris lying in canal and along towpath probably from the recent severe storms we've had recently, especially from tropical storm David.

Bald Eagle Hiker-Biker still inundated from the above mentioned storm. Picnic table now close to towpath bank. Latrine in good condition. River still very high.

Some muddy spots on the towpath, but is in good condition otherwise. Saw no one on the towpath this Sunday, which was the day the Pope came to town.

Flowers seen: yellow jewel weed, daisy fleabane, phlox, choke berries.

Sections 30 and 31 - Snyders Landing to Marsh Run Culvert - Harold Cramer, Sr.,  
Harold Cramer, Jr. and William Cramer - 4/19

Both levels are in very good condition. The filling and resurfacing that has repeatedly been performed between miles 77 and 79 is holding rather well, but as usual, there are some bad ruts for cyclists at 78.9 and 79.1. The resurfacing performed in the Horseshoe Bend area (80.0 to 80.7) is holding up very well. We encountered many cyclists, including one family just starting out at Snyder's Landing who were involved in a serious discussion about their ride -- should they begin riding east and have to pedal "uphill" on the return, or riding west and get the "uphill" part over first.

Section 37 - Falling Waters to Williamsport - Sylvia Geller & Ellen Holway-5/4

Walked from Falling Waters Road to Mile 96 and return in a very leisurely manner. Towpath in good shape; any trees downed by previous storms have been cleaned up.

Pileated woodpecker may have nest in dead stub which is quite tall, near mile 95 milepost.

Pump at Cumberland Valley Hiker-Biker worked OK; water good. John clean and campground neat.

GOTTA GET BACK UP THERE!

Section 42 - Lock 47 to McCoys Ferry - Kretzer McGraw - 4/2

Towpath in excellent condition - no damage or vandalism noted on this section. Lock 50 continues to lean in a precarious position (walls) masonry coming apart (photos enclosed). Should be stabilized as soon as possible. Mule Barn is starting to peel. Suggest a new coating be put on this summer by one of the maintenance crews (photo enclosed) if possible. (Mac enclosed more excellent pictures. Thanks. L.S.)



Section 44 - Fort Frederick to Ernestville - Jane & Harold Larsen - 5/26

A holiday (Memorial Day) and a perfect day not only for a walk (low humidity, clear blue skies, mild temperatures) but for introducing new friends, recently arrived from California, to the Canal.

Towpath was quite muddy in spots, thanks to recent heavy rains, but quite passable. There was very little trash and not much debris to pick up. In fact, we had to go out of our way (to the shore line of Big Pool) to find enough litter to fill one leaf bag.

Wildflowers were not as numerous as they probably were a few weeks ago and will be a few weeks hence.

Our friends responded enthusiastically to this outing--and helped pick up debris. Maybe we can recruit them as level walkers.

Section 52 - Sideling Hill Aqueduct to Little Orleans - Dale Jackson - 6/6

The entire level in exceptionally good condition. There were a few ruts holding puddles from previous evening's rain but they were not deep and not very muddy. Heard a pileated woodpecker call but could not locate him.

On return, I walked on WM Railroad right of way. It is covered with crushed stone and shows evidence of vehicular traffic - though not recent.

Saw two black snakes sunning on shale. One was 5' long and had ingested a large (rodent?) which had passed halfway into the snake's body.

Section 54 - Lock 59 to Lock 60 - Robert Woodall - 5/23

Towpath condition for entire stretch between Lock 59 and 147.59 had many low spots, most all full of water. Should fill these low spots to prevent further sinking of path. Mile 147.59 to about mile 149.3 in good shape. Mile 149.3 to waste weir in fair shape. Mile 149.45 to mile 150.10 has been built up with rock and soil, presumable to bring in equipment to build new waste weir.

Canal prism. The canal bed had plenty of water for almost the entire distance. There did not appear to be any breaks in the calverts. Levee on berm side appeared to be in good shape. Break still at about mile 148.8. Stickpile Hill Hiker Biker very neat, did not appear to have had much use lately. Broken board had been replaced on bridge to towpath.

Section 55 - Lock 60 to Green Ridge Station - Charles & Sylvia Diss - 5/27

We walked and biked our level on May 17. The crushed rock & clay surface as we came out of Little Orleans, further downstream, was most unpleasant for bicycling and we noted a pile of the same material upstream. The intent is apparently to further surface the canal with this material, which is quite unsatisfactory for bicycling. Perhaps a more thorough rolling to finish off the surface would suffice.

We saw a duck which accompanied us upstream for a ways, and bluebirds, finches, and a pileated woodpecker. A deer jumped out in front of us, and there were also some horses and cows. A very busy place!



Section 56 - Green Ridge Station to Lock 61 - Jeremy Parker - 6/7

Fairly good condition at Mile 151.2. One or two bricks dropped out of culvert over Roby Hollow Stream. Mile 152, towpath in good physical condition considering yesterday's rain. Potholes (few) are now filled with shale from tunnel - would be better if crushed. Mile 157.1, lock - no change - well maintained. Outdoor Club Hollow Road Foot Bridge looks a bit more rickety but still quite sound.

Section 60 - Culvert Opposite Little Cacapon to Town Creek -  
Muriel Olszewski - 4/19, 5/16

Being new at this I know that eventually I shall come to the point that nothing will surprise me. I thought I had come prepared, but of course there was a difference from my last visit in October. At that time the path was void of trash, this time I did not bring a bag bit enough and found myself making piles along the way to pick up the next day. Broken limbs and twigs were in abundance, I'm assuming from the damaging winds that had been reported twice during March and April. Picked up and threw towards the river the largest so that bicyclists would hopefully not be inconvenienced.

Found hiker, biker area clean. Toilet facilities clean and well stocked, water oh so good.

(Thanks Muriel for a beautiful set of pictures. L.S.)

Section 62 - Lock 68 to Oldtown (Lock 71) - Bruce Wood - 7/13

No other towpath users seen. Tire tracks in mud indicate bicycle not long before. Some people using picnic area at Oldtown parking lot at end of hike, approximately noon. Hoof prints on towpath downstream.

Relatively little trash throughout. Picked up three handfulls en route. Towpath in excellent condition. Water lillies taking over more of the lower section. Rhododendron in blossom, though mostly gone by. Jewell-weed in full bloom. Poison Ivy doing just splendidly throughout the level, all off towpath. Green Heron, Kingfisher, Bobwhite, many Chipmunks, Rabbit, many Turtles.

Hiker-Biker at Potomac Forks in good shape, though area I originally had thought to be camping area now completely overgrown. Room near pump and table for one or two tents, maybe room for others nearby. Outhouse very clean and toilet paper present.

Generally, NPS is doing an excellent job (or nature is not causing much problem - let's give NPS credit).



Section 64 - Kellys Road Culvert to Spring Gap - Ed Vernon - 6/6

The towpath was in good condition though rutted in many areas. Due to the recent rains, the towpath was muddy and contained puddles in the rutted areas. There was only one evidence of hiker's litter. There was minimal brush and debris on the path. Any of the latter that would impede transit by a bicycle was removed.

The Kelly Road Culvert at mile 170.84 is in extremely bad condition. To my untrained eye, it appears that the abutments are near collapse. The pictures at the end of this report show the culvert as of December 1979. It appears that further deterioration has occurred since then.

In summation, Section 64 appears to be in good, near wilderness condition. The lone exception is the Kelly Road Culvert which should be inspected by someone who could give a judgment more professional than mine.

(Ed is also a good photographer and included a couple of very clear pictures. L.S.)

\* \* \* \* \*

We continue to receive cards from Butch Henley who is on the hike from California. Her most recent one says:

"This is really a super trip. We've been in Zion National Park the past 3 days. It is spectacular. Really only hiked one day here, sight-seeing one and today I stayed in Willis Creek Canyon along with 4 others due to one of the group being too ill to hike.

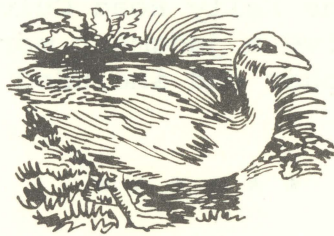
I just got back to hiking after a 9-day break due to a very sore foot. Had to have an infected blister which covered about 40% on the sole of my foot removed by doctor. I'm sure glad I was able to get back for hiking through this gorgeous but difficult canyon. We've come 771 miles and are well into Utah." /s/ Butch - 6/20/80



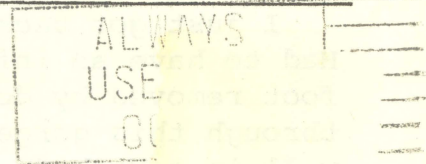
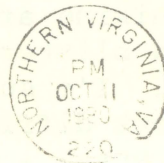
NEXT LEVEL WALKER MEETING AND WALK - Saturday, January 10, 1981,  
Williamsport, MD, Town Hall (in center of town). Meeting: 10:30 a.m.  
Hike: 11:30 a.m.

We will walk downstream to Falling Waters where hot coffee will be served  
to supplement your bag lunch. Supper stop enroute home (on your own).

ALL C&O CANALERS WELCOME. SEE YOU THERE! Lyman



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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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- o Meeting notes
- o Symphony night
- o Sorry, no fall hike
- o Many Level Walker reports