

# ALONG THE TOWPATH

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL ASSOCIATION

*An independent, non-profit, all-volunteer citizens association established in 1954 supporting the conservation of the natural and historical environment of the C&O Canal and the Potomac River Basin.*

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Number 3

## 2024 Heritage Hike, Ride, and Dinner

By Jonnie Lefebure

Join the Association's members and guests in Western Maryland for a hike or bike ride followed by dinner on Saturday, October 26, 2024. This year's hikes will center on the Paw Paw Tunnel and the recently reopened Tunnel Hollow. Beautiful fall foliage and distinctive canal structures will be a highlight of this event. The Tunnel Hollow reopened last fall after a two-year closure for repairs with a new boardwalk and an impressive systems of pins and netting to stabilize the rock wall. Persons intending to enter the tunnel should note that a headlamp or flashlight is recommended for hiking the tunnel.

Hikers and bikers will gather at the Paw Paw Tunnel campground for treks of varying lengths. The long and medium hikers will meet at 10:00 a.m. and the short hikers and bike riders will meet at 11:00 a.m. The long hikers will embark on a shuttle van, but medium and short hikers will not need a shuttle as they will be exploring the tunnel area. The routes for the medium and short hikers are flexible to suit their own wants. Many participants are veterans of the area and can guide newcomers to the tunnel area. All participants must sign a waiver before hiking or biking.

### Long Hike

Long hikers will board a shuttle van at 10:00 a.m. After signing a waiver and arranging for a volunteer sweeper, they will ride the van up to the Town Creek Aqueduct for a 6.3-mile hike back to the parking lot. Interesting features that long hikers will pass as they start their walk are the Town Creek Aqueduct and Lock 67.

For the next several miles the abandoned Western Maryland Railway (WMRY) bed is on the canal berm. Stopped up box culverts in the railroad bed often cause water to flow down ravines and overflow the bed, washing sediment into the canal. The Little Cacapon River flows into the Potomac from West Virginia at Mile 159.5. Hikers may catch a glimpse of the stone arches of the CSX railroad bridge over the Little Cacapon if leaves are off the trees. A mile further from this point the canal swings directly north as it approaches the tunnel, making the upstream tunnel portal south of the downstream portal. The Purslane Run Culvert passes under the canal just

*Continued on Page 8*



*Paw Paw Tunnel – Photos by Steven Dean*

# President's Report

By Bill Holdsworth

Recently the C&O Canal Association has been able to take advantage of opportunities to improve the visitor experience with the canal.

We were able to fund four new wayside exhibits for Ferry Hill plantation. The park had completed the time-consuming design process for the exhibits. They were relying on a grant to fund production of the displays. When that grant fell through, the Association donated \$8,600 to fund production. The exhibits describe life on a slave-owning plantation in the 19th Century. We hope to see the waysides installed soon.

We are funding repairs to the replica canal boat in Cumberland. The boat is owned by the Canal Place Preservation & Development Authority, not the park. The boat was constructed in 1976 to help celebrate the nation's bicentennial. As a wooden boat exposed to the elements, *The Cumberland* requires regular maintenance. These repairs will cost about \$35,000 and should ensure the boat is available to help celebrate the United

States Semi-quincentennial (250th) in 2026. If all goes according to plan, the repairs should be complete by the time you read this.

September 14 might be a good date to visit Cumberland, Md. You can see the repaired canal boat. In addition, you can cheer on the Association's team of cyclists competing against a steam locomotive in the 3M Challenge (Man, Machine, Mountain). Competitors will climb Mt. Savage along the 15.3-mile stretch of the Great Allegheny Passage alongside the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad tracks from Cumberland to Frostburg. Details are on page 6 of this issue.

In Williamsport the park plans to make greater use of the Trolley Barn at Cushwa Basin for visitors. The Association has agreed to donate \$6,000 to fund five new windows and new exhibit panels.

As always, we rely on volunteers to make these things happen. If you have time available, we can make use of your talents.

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## Board Meeting Highlights

By Jane Hanna

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### June 2 and August 4, 2024

The beautiful new library in Middletown, Md. was the setting for the June 4 meeting. On August 4 we met via Zoom. Meetings generally alternate between in-person and on-line.

- NPS representatives continue to thank us for our support with the hiring of interns, development of indoor and outdoor exhibits, funding repair projects, and reprinting and revising park publications. New outdoor exhibits at Ferry Hill focus on the C&O Canal's African American History. The exhibit panels will include our organization's logo along with the NPS arrowhead.
- Association representatives visited Canal Place in Cumberland on July 9 to assess the deteriorating condition of the replica canal boat and discuss

repair options with a local contractor. The board authorized funds for the repairs, which should be completed within a few months. Stay tuned for before and after photos!

- We are sponsoring a six-person team competing in the 3M Challenge on September 14. Cyclists will race a vintage steam engine along a 15-mile stretch of the Great Allegheny Passage Trail in Western Maryland. Info is in the article on page 6 of this issue
- The board voted to support Association presence at the music festival in Hancock on September 7.
- Vacancies on the board and committees include one Director position and Archivist. Contact Bill Holdsworth if you'd like more information about these or many other volunteer positions.

The next board meeting is October 6.

# Donors to Association Funds

*May 1 to July 31, 2024*

**C&O Canal Association donation policy.** The Association is grateful for the generous support provided by donors over the years. If a donor specifies one of the special purpose funds listed below, we add the donation to that fund. With the exception of the General Fund, we will use the money in accordance with the goals of the fund and not for administrative costs.

**General Fund.** If a donor doesn't specify a fund, we add that donation to the general fund, which can be used for any purpose, including the Association's administrative costs.

**Help the Association by paying online.** The Association website makes it easy to pay on-line using your credit card. Processing on-line payments is more secure and easier for our volunteers. You can renew your membership, purchase event meals or bus tickets, or make donations. We use PayPal to process our payments, but you don't need a PayPal membership. You can use your credit or debit card. *Note – PayPal will encourage you to sign up. That is unnecessary. You can deselect the button "Save info and create your PayPal account."*

## Association Funds

### A – Nancy C. Long Aqueduct Fund

– Supports restoration and preservation of the 11 aqueducts on the C&O Canal. The fund was established with a generous donation made by C&O Canal advocate Nancy Long.

### C – The Cumberland Repair and Maintenance Fund

– Donations specifically identified for repair and maintenance of the historic canal boat replica in Cumberland.

### D – Davies Legal Fund

– Supports the Association's involvement in activities such as the opposition to the transfer of public land to any individual or enterprise for private use.

### G – General Fund

– General funds that are used for any purpose.

### R – Ken Rollins C&O Canal Fund

– Supports current projects and programs in and for the C&O Canal National Historical Park.

### S – Rachel Stewart Swains Lock Area Fund

– Funds improvements around Swains Lock as they are identified in conjunction with the National Park Service.

### Donating Funds

Scan the QR code with a mobile device or visit the below link below for further information about Association funds or to contribute now.



[www.candocanal.org/contributions/](http://www.candocanal.org/contributions/)

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## Individual Donations

C&O Bicycle Hancock, LLC – **G**

Carolina Kenrick – **R**

Michael J. Kurman – **A**

Michael Marmer – **A**

Rodney P. Rempt – **R**

James A. Ronan, Jr. – **A**

Joel R. Schulman – **A**

Frank Valentine – **A, D, R, S**

Rachel Weisz – **G**

Kristine M. Wilson – **A, C, D, G, R**

Linda B. Worthington – **R**

Keith and Esta Yoder – **G**

# Help Spread the Word

## *The Association Needs Volunteers*

The Association's mission includes raising public awareness about the canal. That effort requires efforts on multiple fronts. If you have communication skills, we could use your help.

Seventy years ago, communication efforts were simpler, but they weren't easier. Publishing a newsletter required a mimeograph machine and postage stamps. Spreading the word beyond our membership meant using a typewriter and mailing press releases to the local newspapers.

Today we have multiple channels available. Each of them reaches a slightly different audience. Overall software and the internet have made communication easier, but each platform requires slightly different skills. The good news is that diverse channels provide multiple opportunities to help.

Writing and editorial skills are useful with each platform. Newsletter and book production requires knowledge of desktop publishing and photoprocessing applications.

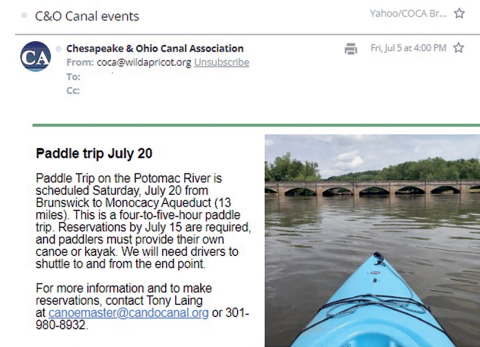
### Social Media

Tiffany Ahalt coordinates the Association's social media. If you're comfortable with Facebook, you could offer to lend a hand, preparing posts concerning Association events or news about the canal.



### Email Blasts & Website

Bill Holdsworth has managed the website for 12 years. Those duties include periodic broadcast emails to the membership and interaction with PayPal. Many tasks, such as updating the calendar or preparing email blasts, don't require technical skills. Of course, if someone has technical skills, there are more ways to help.



*If you can help in any of these or any other volunteer areas, please contact us at [volunteer@candocanal.org](mailto:volunteer@candocanal.org).*

## The Association Welcomes New Members

*Lisa Angstadt*

*Katharine Harvey*

*Jeff Powers*

*Gloria and Clyde Ballard*

*Sharon Leighton*

*Brian Talbert*

*(President, Inland*

*Waterways International)*

*Thank you for your continued support of our organization! If you have any membership related questions, please contact Pat White, Membership Chair, at [membership@candocanal.org](mailto:membership@candocanal.org).*

*Membership information is available at [candocanal.org/membership/](http://candocanal.org/membership/) or by using the QR Code to the right.*



# Volunteers in Parks

By Jim Heins

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## Old News

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There has been a fair amount of discussion recently about aging or the effects of aging.

Your VIP group is experiencing some of this as well. What was once a well-oiled and smooth-running machine, now looks like some of its parts are starting to show wear. As a result, we continue to encourage new volunteers to join us.

In June, we had a good turnout to cut, prime and then give a final coat of brown paint to a large number of boards. The purpose of this was to prepare for building and repairing picnic tables throughout the park. As a follow-up to this exercise, a few tables were repaired and six new tables were built.

At that point, the heat of summer set in and we all sought shelter under the nearest shade tree and have not been productive since. Now we are venturing out from under that tree and are preparing to install 14 additional benches in the park, mostly in the Western District.

In an effort to get loosened up, we are out helping in various parts of the park while we wait for final word on the new benches. We are assisting others with a sign installation, a dehumidifier issue and supporting a project of the C&O Canal Trust at Fletchers Cove.

If you are interested in being included on our email list for possible help as needs arise, please contact me at [vip@candocanal.org](mailto:vip@candocanal.org).



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## Edward Wenschhof Named Deputy Superintendent

### C&O Canal National Historical Park Press Release

Edward “Ed” Wenschhof has been named the new deputy superintendent of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (C&O Canal).

Wenschhof previously served as the Chief of Visitor and Resource Protection for the C&O Canal. He has also held acting superintendent roles at Antietam National Battlefield, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Catoctin Mountain Park and Gettysburg National Military Park. He has worked with federal, state and local agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations and philanthropic partners.

“Ed’s a well-respected leader who has dedicated his career to public service,” Superintendent Tina Cappetta said. “His wealth and depth of experience, coupled with his knowledge of the C&O Canal and its challenges and opportunities, makes him uniquely suited to serve as the next deputy superintendent of this park.”

In his new role, Wenschhof will work with the park’s senior management team to oversee operations and planning. His career includes managing natural resources and historic landscapes at Gettysburg and Antietam, fighting fires on public lands, serving as the National Capital Regional chief ranger, and leading teams during hurricanes, oil spills and floods, as well as at commemorative

events and presidential inaugurations. As Chief of Visitor and Resource Protection of the C&O Canal, Wenschhof focused on protecting the park’s natural and historical resources and its nearly 5 million annual visitors.

“I am very appreciative of the opportunity to serve as deputy superintendent at Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park,” Wenschhof said. “I look forward to working in this new role with the park’s staff, cooperators and partners to continue the stewardship and protection of the C&O Canal’s cultural and natural resources and recreational opportunities. The national park not only preserves a story of transportation history; it also serves as a corridor that connects the resources of other public lands, trails and the Potomac River for broader benefit.”



*Ed Wenschhof – Image courtesy of the C&O Canal NHP, National Park Service*

Wenschhof replaces John Noel, who retired in December. A Pennsylvania native, Wenschhof holds a master’s degree in geo-environmental studies from Shippensburg University and a bachelor’s degree in agriculture education from Pennsylvania State University. He and his wife, Lisa, live on a farm in Pennsylvania, where their children and grandchildren often visit to help with the land and animals. Wenschhof volunteers with Scouting America, the local fair association and the Pennsylvania 4H.

# C&O Canal Association Team Competes in the Muscle, Machine & Mountain “3M” Challenge

The C&O Canal Association announces its first-ever cycling team sponsorship. The six-person team is competing in the 7th Annual Man, Machine, Mountain “3M” Challenge on September 14, 2024, in Allegany County, Maryland. The event, organized by Mountain Maryland Trails, raises awareness and funds for the Maryland portion of the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) Trail. “The GAP trail is a tremendous asset to Allegany County generating millions of dollars to the local economy each year” said Larry Brock, president of Mountain Maryland Trails.

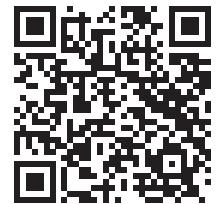
The C&O Canal towpath covers 184.5 miles from Georgetown in Washington, D.C. to Cumberland, Md., where it connects with the GAP trail, which ends 150 miles west in Pittsburgh, Pa. “Supporting a cycling team for the 3M Challenge was an easy decision. The C&O Canal and the GAP combine for a continuous trail of over 330 miles creating fun and awareness for both trails. Bikepacking and gravel cycling are fast-growing outdoor activities, and these trails provide a safe venue.” stated Darius Mark, C&O Canal Association director.

The team, led by Association member Denny Sloppy of Woodland, Pa., includes experienced Great Allegheny Passage and Chesapeake and Ohio Canal cyclists who have ridden the entire length of these trails multiple times. Team members include: Emil Moskovich from Bloomsburg, Pa.; Kathy Merchant from Berkley

Springs, W.Va.; Missy and Patrick Pope from Martinsburg, W.Va.; and Melody Miles from Greencastle, Pa. Team members agreed to participate in the challenge and to support the C&O Canal Association and Mountain Maryland Trails organization. Team member Emil Moskovich stated, “I have seen the steam engine before and hope it is still slow.”

A timed challenge between cyclists and the train, the 3M Challenge will follow a 15.3 mile stretch of the Great Allegheny Passage alongside the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad from Cumberland to Frostburg. Riders will depart from the Western Maryland Railway Station every 10 minutes, starting at 8:00 a.m. The 1309 steam engine will depart from the station at 11:30 a.m. with each team challenged to have a better climb time than the train. Teams and individuals who beat the train’s time will receive a prize, and all participants will receive a souvenir gift. It is exciting to watch from start to finish as the teams race to beat the steam train. For more information about the event, visit the link below.

[www.mountainmdtrails.org/  
3m-challenge](http://www.mountainmdtrails.org/3m-challenge)



C&O Canal Association 3M Challenge team members at the Cumberland Western Maryland Railway Station, (L-R) Denny Sloppy, Kathy Merchant, Missy Pope, Patrick Pope (Missing – Emil Moskovich, Melody Miles)



C&O Canal Association 3M Challenge team members, (L-R) Denny Sloppy, Kathy Merchant, Missy Pope, Patrick Pope (Missing – Emil Moskovich, Melody Miles) – Both photos courtesy of Darius Mark

# World Canals Conference Returns to the United States in 2025

By Jean Mackay, Deputy Director of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

Two hundred years after the Erie Canal's grand opening, international inland waterways experts and enthusiasts will gather in Buffalo, N.Y., bringing that same transformative spirit of innovation to drive the next century of service for canals everywhere. During September 21–25, 2025, the World Canals Conference (WCC) will return to the United States for the first time since the C&O Canal Association hosted the 2021 event in Hagerstown, Md. Buffalo and the Erie Canal provide the backdrop this time around, where attendees will dig deep into how canals around the world are using new technologies, sustainability, tourism, and heritage development to address our shared challenges and thrive.

Buffalo is a shining example of canal reinvention. When the Erie Canal opened in 1825, Buffalo became a commercial and industrial powerhouse, only to see the Canal's use wane in the mid-20th century and trigger a period of disuse and disrepair. Beginning in 2005, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation successfully spearheaded an era of waterfront transformation and reclamation. Today, the revitalized Canalside area

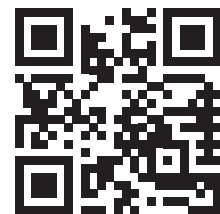
in downtown Buffalo bustles with new energy, business, and tourism. The city's famous grain elevators have been repurposed to host live performances, events, and historical tours. Buffalo is receiving recognition for its vibrant art scene, diverse dining, outstanding outdoor recreation, treasured architecture, and dramatically transformed canalside waterfront.

Buffalo and the Erie Canal Bicentennial create an ideal setting and moment for the World Canals Conference 2025. Built around the theme of *Sustaining our Multidimensional Waterways*, WCC 2025 will bring together the leading minds in diverse fields to discuss, debate, discover, and inspire. Attendees will partake in expertly guided field sessions, gain access to exclusive tours in the days leading up to or following the conference, and witness history repeating itself with the send-off ceremony for the replica canal boat *Seneca Chief*. This traditionally built, full-size replica of the same boat that opened the Erie Canal two hundred years ago departs Buffalo for New York City, replicating the 1825 journey that became known as the Wedding of the Waters.



Buffalo Canalside aerial view – Image courtesy of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

*Sign up now at the link below for updates and be the first to hear about registration, the call for presentations, and pre-and post-tours.*



[www.wcc2025buffalo.com](http://www.wcc2025buffalo.com)

over a quarter mile before Milepost 157. The walkers will pass under two bridges as they approach Paw Paw. The first is an iron truss bridge of the abandoned WMRY. The second bridge is the modern Maryland Route 51 highway bridge at the campground.

Once long hikers return to the Paw Paw area they have the option of continuing on either of the short or medium hike options described in the following paragraphs.

### **Medium Hike**

The medium hike is approximately four miles, depending on if participants want to explore the locks below the tunnel. Medium hikers will gather at the campground at 10 a.m. to walk through the tunnel and hollow, then will hike back over the Tunnel Hill Trail. This trail is two miles from its end in the hollow to the top of the ridge and down to the towpath near the upstream portal. It is steep and rocky in place and the elevation change is 435 feet. Sturdy boots and hiking poles are recommended for those who intend to hike the Tunnel Hill Trail. Near the upstream end of the trail there is an option to take a less steep, but less scenic, trail down to the towpath.



*The Tunnel Hill Trail – Photo by Paul Petkus*



*Lock 64 2/3 – Photo by Steven Dean*

### **Short Hike**

Short hikers will meet at 11 a.m. to walk through the tunnel and hollow and return via the same route. The round trip from the campground to the end of the hollow and back is about 2.5 miles. Hikers may opt to increase their walking distance slightly by exploring the locks below the tunnel.

### **Locks 62 through 66**

Hikers may choose to extend their walks by exploring the locks below the tunnel. At the end of the hollow are Locks 62, 63 1/3, 64 2/3 and 66, over a span of just over one-half mile. The fractional numbering arose because contracts had already been awarded for Locks 70 to 75 before the design of the locks above Lock 62 was completed and changing the existing designations would have been too difficult. It was then determined that the level of the canal through the hollow could be raised in three steps instead of four. For that reason the additional locks through there were numbered 1 1/3 steps apart – 62, 63 1/3, 64 2/3, and 66 – so that the other locks, already planned, did not have to be renumbered.

### **Bike Ride**

A bike ride led by Darius Mark will start at the Tunnel Campground at 11:00 a.m. The bikers will ride upstream and back to for an out and back round trip of about 30 miles. There will be stops on the ride to talk about features and history. Persons interested in a ride through history and beautiful foliage may contact Darius at [dariusmark@comcast.net](mailto:dariusmark@comcast.net).

### **Dinner and Happy Hour**

The dinner and program will be held at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Hancock, Md. Happy hour starts at 4:00 p.m., with a catered dinner starting about 5:00 p.m. The dinner will feature spaghetti with meatballs or meatless sauce, salad, garlic toast, and desserts. The cost is \$35 and includes the happy hour cost. Reservations must be made in advance. An after-dinner speaker will be featured.



*Town Creek Aqueduct – Photo by Steven Dean*





**Hike and Bike Ride Details.** The Heritage Hike features walks of three lengths and a bike ride. The hikes and ride are described in the article starting on Page 1. Participants will meet at the Paw Paw Tunnel parking area. A shuttle is provided for the long hike and departs at 10:00 a.m. A shuttle is not required for the medium and short hikes or the bike ride. The shuttle leave promptly at the scheduled time and cannot wait for late arrivals. Food and drinks are not provided for the hikers and bikers.

The shuttle bus is free of charge, but **registration in advance is recommended to ensure a place on the van.** Seating on the van is limited and space is available for unregistered persons on a first-come, first-serve basis on the day of the event until the bus is full. All participants must sign a liability waiver prior to boarding the bus or participating in the hike.

**Dinner and Program.** The Heritage dinner and program are St. Peters Catholic Church, 16 East High Street, Hancock, Md. A happy hour will be hosted from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and includes beer, wine, sodas and water. The happy hour is included with a paid dinner. The catered dinner will be served from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The dinner will feature spaghetti with meatballs or meatless sauce, salad, garlic toast, and desserts. The cost is \$35 and includes the happy hour cost. **Registration and payment in advance required by October 17. The Association cannot accommodate late reservations or walk-ins.**

**Contact: Jonnie Lefebure at [programs@candocanal.org](mailto:programs@candocanal.org) for further information.**

### Register for the Heritage Hike and Dinner – Three Methods

1. Register on-line on the Association’s web site by **October 17.** Use the QR code below for access to the registration site or visit [andocanal.org/events/heritage-hike-and-dinner/](http://andocanal.org/events/heritage-hike-and-dinner/).
2. Download a registration form from the Association’s web site at the same link, complete and mail with your check to **C&O Canal Association, P.O. Box 366, Glen Echo, MD. Mail registration in time to be received by October 17.**
3. Send a letter with the below information and your check to **C&O Canal Association, P.O. Box 366, Glen Echo, MD 20812-0366. Mail registration in time to be received by October 17.**

Number of dinner guests: \_\_\_\_ X \$35.00 = \_\_\_\_

List names of dinner guests.

Number of 10:00 a.m. shuttle riders: \_\_\_\_

Total amount paid: \_\_\_\_



[candocanal.org/events/heritage-hike-and-dinner/](http://candocanal.org/events/heritage-hike-and-dinner/)

## Schedule

- 10:00 a.m. Departure of long hike shuttle for drop-off at the Town Creek Aqueduct
- 10:00 a.m. Start of medium hike
- 11:00 a.m. Start of short hike
- 11:00 a.m. Start of bike ride
- 4:00 p.m. Happy Hour
- 5:00 p.m. Dinner
- 6:00 p.m. Program

## Directions

**Paw Paw Tunnel  
Parking Area**



**St. Peters Catholic Church  
Hancock, Md.**



**Using Direction QR Codes:** Open the camera app on your phone or tablet. Hold your device so that the desired location’s direction QR code to the right appears in view. Tap the notification near the QR code to open Google Maps. Within the app select **Directions** to enable navigation guidance.

# Pedal, Paddle and Hike

By Trent Carbaugh



## Waste Weirs

If you have spent any time out on the towpath you have no doubt crossed a waste weir, but you may not have noticed or paid much attention, (except for the uncomfortable bump or tripping hazard). The waste weirs were and still are a necessary and very important part of the canal's water management system.

A waste weir is a type of gate usually built into the towpath side of the canal prism but due to the necessities of terrain could be built into the berm side. Every level of the canal

had at least one waste weir. *Note: In this context a level is the section of canal between lift locks or, for practical purposes, groups of lift locks.* Weirs were closed off with boards stacked edge-to-edge and fitted into slots, and the number of boards could be used to adjust water levels. Some waste weirs were also fitted with cast iron “butterfly” valves in a frame in the lower part of the gate.

The butterfly gates were similar to the gates in the lower part of lift lock gates, and a special long handled wrench was



*That concrete bumpy thing on the towpath – All photos by Trent Carbaugh*



*Waste weir exit side with concrete replacement gate and bridge and original stone work on the walls.*



*Butterfly gates in the bottom of a waste weir. The modern steel supports under the bridge portion are visible in the foreground.*

used to operate both of these devices. The square recess in the head of the wrench fit onto a squared off section on the vertical iron rod that operated the butterfly gates on both mechanisms. It was the local lockkeeper's responsibility to operate waste weir gates as well as monitor local conditions in the canal prism and adjust water levels when needed.

Originally waste weirs were built with stone walls and stone abutments with timber frames and supports and a timber bridge for the towpath. Most waste weir gate structures and towpath bridges that you see now are 19th century concrete replacements or modern restorations. Some waste weirs retain their original stone abutments and entrance/exit courses. There are some waste weirs that also still have the wooden plank flooring in the bottom of the raceway that smoothed the flow of water and prevented wear. In most cases the concrete replacements are the same dimensions as the original wood gates and supports.



*A typical waste weir on a sunny day.*



*Timber and steel supports reinforcing the later concrete bridge replacement. Note that the original stone support walls were retained.*

A canal needs water (and gravity) to work, but too much water can cause problems. *Too much gravity can also cause problems, but we don't need to worry about that.* Thunderstorms and the occasional hurricane could add excess water quickly to the canal prism. Excess water, when not dealt with, could cause erosion of both the towpath side as well as the berm side of the canal prism. Water could be removed relatively quickly by opening a waste weir or multiple weirs.

By using a combination of lift locks and stop locks, sections of the canal could be isolated and drained through a waste weir for making repairs. This saved water volume for quicker refilling of the repaired section. This system allowed canal repairs and maintenance with as little disturbance as possible to boat traffic. See the article *How to Save Water and Fix a Broken Canal* in the June 2024 issue of *Along the Towpath* for more information.



*Waste weir built into the berm side in an aqueduct superstructure. In this case the water was drained into the creek that the aqueduct crossed.*

Like culverts moving water under the canal, waste weirs still fulfill their intended function of removing water from the canal prism. The modern C&O Canal does not cater to commercial watercraft any longer and it is now a home for nature in all its infinite variety and a monument to the ephemeral spirit of history as well as the incredible ingenuity of those who came before us. But the elemental power of water still needs to be dealt with.

The gravity that once helped operate the canal now causes uncontrolled flows of water during extreme weather events. This can cause serious erosion and in the recent past has washed out sections of the towpath. The waste weirs passively vent much of this water to the Potomac River thereby lessening overall damage. No operator required.

I hope this has been a little enlightening as to how the 19th century engineering masterpiece that is the Chesapeake & Ohio worked and in a different sense continues functioning today. I also hope that you will have a bit more appreciation for that lumpy concrete thing on the towpath that often slams your bike saddle into tender areas or trips you up whilst you are watching a bird.

**References:**

*Historic Resource Study, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal*, Harlan Unrau, 2018; available on-line at:

[www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online\\_books/choh/unrau\\_hrs.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/choh/unrau_hrs.pdf)

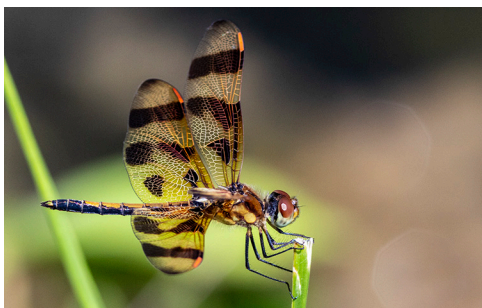
*Towpath Guide to the C&O Canal*, Thomas F. Hahn, Harpers Ferry Association, 2015 revised edition

*Handbook 142, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Official National Park Handbook*, C&O Canal Association, 2015

*How to Save Water and Fix a Broken Canal or The Perils of Geology*, Trent Carbaugh, article in *Along the Towpath* Volume LVI June 2024 Number 2



*Detail of timber cribbing supporting a waste weir bridge*



## 2024 Odonate Walks

The Association hosted two odonate walks in 2024. Dragonflies and damselflies were plentiful on both dates.

The first event was in Oldtown on June. Extreme heat limited the walk. Weather was more favorable for odonate watchers in Dickerson in July, and a larger group turned out. Numerous species of dragonflies and damselflies were noted.

*Photos: Upper left – halloween pennant; upper right – banded pennant; lower left – spangled skimmer; lower right – common white tail – photos by Steven Dean*



# Rosa Multiflora, A Wicked Invader

By Trent Carbaugh

## Yet Another Misadventure in Uninformed Nature Meddling

If you have spent any time out walking on the C&O Canal towpath you have assuredly seen a multiflora rose bush and quite possibly have had an altercation with one of its long, tough, and thorny canes. If you're a level walker and have ever cut one back you've also experienced the effects of the multiflora rose.

Multiflora rose is also known as the baby rose, Japanese rose, many-flowered rose, seven sisters rose, Eijitsu rose, rambler rose, and probably quite few names which would be quite poor form to express in the pages of a fine publication such as *Along the Towpath*. This plant was introduced to North America from China, Japan, and Korea in the 1860s through the 1890s and perhaps in the early 20th century. Nobody seems to be sure when or who imported it. Perhaps those responsible invented stories to shift blame once they realized the horrors they had unleashed on the future. The reason it initially was imported was for use as a hardy



*Multiflora rose fruit or pips – All photos by Trent Carbaugh unless otherwise indicated*

root stock for ornamental rose grafting. It does serve admirably for that purpose once you get rid of the nasty bits above the roots.

Like many things that are probably bad ideas to begin with, it only gets worse. Someone decided that multiflora rose would make a great natural fence material to keep wandering livestock in their fields. The problem here is that our intrepid invader rose is *very, very good* at invading and spreads out quite quickly. The backward curving razor sharp thorns of the multiflora rose guided by the small serrated thorny edges on the nefarious plant's leaves can leave deep scratches and puncture wounds on an animal's skin. These wounds can easily become infected and in some cases cause death. While researching this noxious plant I could find no information on any kind of secretion or mild poison on the thorns that hinders healing. But I know from vast experience punctures or scratches from the thorns often become inflamed quickly and seem to heal slowly.

Someone else thought that the multiflora rose would be great for providing a protected habitat for pheasants (another introduced species, albeit mostly benign), bobwhite quail, and cottontail rabbits. This was embraced wholeheartedly in many places and our

## *Rosa Multiflora*

*Common Name: Multiflora Rose ... Family: Rosaceae ... Genus: Rosa*

*Multiflora rose is a climbing rambling shrub with a single thick stem or alternatively multiple stems from the same root. The canes or branchlets spring from the stems and can reach 10 to 15 feet in height and fall gently over to produce thick hedges that can rapidly take over large areas. The understory is made up of dead stems that do provide some cover for smaller birds and mammals. The canes have very sharp strong backwards curving thorns that are difficult to remove once embedded into clothing or skin. Young canes often reach out from the main plant to reach sunlight and can become a hazard to bicyclists and walkers. In prime conditions canes can grow up to two feet per day; the speed which this plant can spread cannot be understated.*

*Leaves are alternate and compound (five to eleven leaflets together) are oval with a pointed tip and serrated edges. Starting in May and through June white flowers appear evenly spaced on the canes. Red or purplish fruits, berries or hips, depending on who is describing the plant, appear in August and generally stay on the plant till midwinter. The hips have a tough outer covering and the seeds are difficult to access until they dry out enough to provide winter food for small birds.*



*The backward curving, needle sharp thorns of the multiflora rose.*



*A typical multiflora rose hedge along the towpath*



*A cut back section of hedge showing a cross section of what the plant looks like through all of the thorns and leaves.*



*The serrated leaves of the multiflora rose, in dry or wintery conditions the serrated edges can be stiff enough to catch on fabric or animal fur.*



*This is an area where a dead ash tree fell through the hedge and the protruding bits were cut away by park maintenance. This break in the thorns was used by deer to cross through from the towpath to the forest on the other side. About three weeks later it is already grown back enough to keep the deer out.*



*The understory of a multiflora rose hedge. Most of the canes die off but remain as dry thorny sticks. This does provide shelter for very small mammals and song birds.*

pointy rose was encouraged to grow. Unfortunately for the game birds, fluffy rabbits and us this was another bad idea. Pheasants, quail and rabbits continue to decline in numbers, especially the game birds and don't seem to benefit from living in a thorny hedge. What's worse is there are still some unenlightened jurisdictions that still *encourage* this practice, though fortunately they are few.

Multiflora rose was also widely thought to be beneficial for erosion control. Which it sort of is at the cost of rapidly taking over areas where it is undesirable. In some jurisdictions it was planted on median strips on highways to act as a screen for oncoming headlights. A thick hedge of our rose was also thought to be a great crash barrier for out-of-control cars. The question is, though, how did rescuers get into the hedge to get the crash victims out of their cars? To top it all off some misguided folks used it as an ornamental plant. That's a bad idea on top of bad idea...

***So, you ask: "Are there any benefits to this plant?"***

Aside from keeping the purveyors of rose grafting happy, the multiflora rose does provide a protected habitat for songbirds



*Multiflora Rose Blooms – Public domain image from Wikipedia*



*On the left side of this photo is a hedge of multiflora rose along the towpath. It extends off the towpath towards the river for about 40 feet until it is overshadowed by trees.*

*Along the Towpath, September 2024*

and food for them in the fruiting season. Oh, and they do have pretty white flowers. Other than that, I just can't think of anything else.

A special concern for the C&O Canal park is the death of so many ash trees due to the emerald ash borer – yet another invasive species. With the fall of the dead trees or their removal, large areas of otherwise shaded land is now open to sunlight and the first plant to move in is the multiflora rose. This increases carbohydrate production leading to a stronger, bigger plant or multiples thereof. In many areas of the park the hedges are directly on the edge of the towpath, and this makes life interesting for towpath users and especially for the level walkers in these areas.

**Resources:**

National Invasive Species Information Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture – [www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/terrestrial/plants/multiflora-rose](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/terrestrial/plants/multiflora-rose)

Wikipedia – [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosa\\_multiflora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosa_multiflora)



*This photo is looking towards the river, you can get an idea of how impossible this stuff is to get through.*



*Hedges tend to send out limbs that extend out into the towpath and interfere with the travel path. This area was cut by park maintenance a few weeks prior using a mechanized scythe blade mounted on a tractor.*

# Bike Trippin' on the C&O

By Steve Nelson

Whether “glamping it” by staying at a B&B, hotel or historic lockhouse — or “roughing it” by backpacking to the primitive hiker-biker sites along the towpath — taking a multi-day bike trip in the C&O Canal National Historical Park can be a magical experience for riders of all ages and skill levels.

The 184.5-mile gravel/limestone/clay multi-use trail has riders following the towpath that mules used to pull canal boats and their goods from Washington, D.C. to Cumberland, Md., and back. In the late 18th Century, George Washington championed the concept of a commercial waterway to connect the Potomac and Ohio rivers. In pursuit of this idea, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company was formed, and ground was broken on July 4, 1828. The canal made it as far as Cumberland in 1850 and transported goods until 1924. On January 8, 1971, the C&O Canal was officially designated as a National Historical Park.

Modern-day users can enjoy the canal as a National Historical Park; a living museum with over seven hundred historic structures, including locks and blockhouses, abundant and varied wildlife. The park also offers much natural solitude, despite hosting over five million visitors every year. Adjacent to the park are charming towns featuring unique history, a lively arts scene, dining, accommodations, and a plethora of outdoor recreation opportunities.

At some point, most cyclists who have ridden the C&O will wonder what it would be like to ride the towpath on an overnight or multi-day trip “thru-ride.” My wife Cheryl and I were causal day-use trail cyclists when we first entertained the idea of a “thru-ride.” I do not recall what motivated us to undertake our first ill-fated attempt to cycle the entire length of the C&O in the late 1980’s. The first ride was fraught with poor judgment and lack of preparation. As there was relatively little information available in the pre-internet world at the time, many of the available guidebooks were outdated or overly optimistic in their descriptions of the trail conditions and available services. We had difficulty finding the canal in Georgetown and we were misdirected by someone we asked, adding another 10 miles to the planned 60-mile first-day ride! The hotel (at the top of the hill, no less!) in Harpers Ferry lost

our reservation. And, despite guidebook assurance otherwise, the Big Slackwater towpath section was not passable on bikes or easily on foot. Add a mid-summer downpour, a case of poison ivy, a twisted ankle, and projectile vomiting (geesh, I thought it was a good idea to eat chicken livers for lunch then ride in ninety-degree heat), and you have all the components of a great comedic movie! Brad Pitt should play me, please (okay, maybe Danny DeVito). Despite the challenges, we still look back fondly at our first ride and chuckle at our numerous missteps and misfortune.

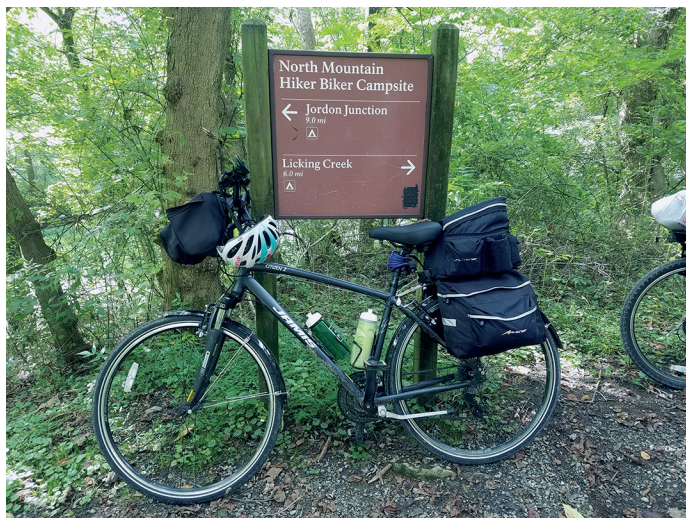
You do not need to hire a guide or an outfitter to make your dream of a thru-ride a reality. Since our first ill-fated ride in the 1980s, we have done: over a dozen complete C&O thru-rides; several Cumberland to Pittsburgh on the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) rides; and several 335-mile D.C.-to-Pittsburgh rides which combine the C&O and the GAP.

We have also done many other multi-day rides on other wonderful trails. The one common theme throughout all the rides is that planning, a sense of humor, and excellent travel partners are the glue that holds together the components of a successful trip.

Questions to answer before developing a travel plan will revolve around the size of the group, levels of experience of the individual members, and whether to choose camping, B&B/hotels, or a combination.

Will your ride be supported or unsupported? Most importantly, what are the expectations the riders have from the experience? An individual who wants to see how fast and how far they can go in a day would not mesh with desires to enjoy a relaxed ride, observe the scenery, and experience as much as possible of what the trail offers.

If camping, do you have the necessary equipment and skill sets? Bikepacking may be second nature to individuals who have backpacked and acquired those specialized skills and equipment. That six-person Coleman tent and 64-quart cooler you use when you pull up to the state park campground campsite are just not going to cut it when bikepacking. Bikepacking can be incredibly freeing in that it does not tie you down to reservations, time schedules, restaurant availability, etc. It also means no hot showers, air conditioning,



*North Mountain Hiker-Biker*



nor indoor plumbing. You must also know how to store and prepare your food, treat water, and keep your campsite “critter-proof” from the occasional bear and more frequent rodents and raccoons that call the C&O home.

My years as a Boy Scout and Scoutmaster taught me how to enjoy the virtues of lightweight camping, although I appreciate a soft bed and hot shower at a hotel or B&B. An excellent resource for anyone who would like to try bikepacking on the C&O is a book about backpacking titled *Allen and Mike's Really Cool Backpackin' Book*. It is an enjoyable read and can teach you a lot. Topics range from skills in cooking to water treatment techniques and “poopin” in the woods. Imagine how you can lighten up at that next dull cocktail party when someone asks if you have read any good books lately!

There is considerable information about the C&O Canal National Historic Park available on the internet, with most of it reasonably accurate. I have found that I mostly rely upon the National Park Service's website for closures and warnings, the C&O Canal Trust's mobile app, and Google Maps for detailed information about trail towns, park access, restaurants, etc. And, while not “real-time,” a good portion of the towpath can be viewed as Google Street View, a virtual representation of panoramic images “stitched together” of the C&O on Google Maps. (*Note: Much interesting information about the past and present of the canal is available on the C&OCA's website, [www.candocanal.org](http://www.candocanal.org).)* I also like to review, read, and re-read books from my library related to the history, wildlife, and operations of the C&O Canal. My wife Cheryl is a bird lover, and she added a bird app to her mobile device that identifies birds by their sound. So yes, it sometimes takes us a while to get where we need to be for the day, given all there is to experience!

I love the research and logistics involved with planning a multi-day tip on the C&O. Aside from the Washington, D.C. area and maybe Cumberland, accommodations in the other towns are limited and typically fill up quickly.

Reservations should be made in advance. Amtrak and or other travel schedules need to be confirmed. Food availability and rest stops relative to infrequent trail towns must be considered. And for my wife and I, the question of where we can catch the Orioles game on TV and grab a beer is vital!

Others I know just wing it and rely upon karma and whimsy. These free spirits do better with bikepacking and camping at the primitive hiker-bikers, typically spaced about every five miles. These do not require reservations and are seldom full.

Want to do an over-nighter but are a little overwhelmed? Invest in a couple of racks and some panniers (saddle bags) and maybe a trunk or handlebar bag and plan a simple overnight ride to a town within a distance that you are comfortable riding and do a return ride the next day. Plan on adverse weather and know what to do. Pack a simple repair kit and understand how to do basic repairs, including fixing the inevitable flat tires. Carry a first aid kit and know how to use it. Burn lots of calories so you can eat and drink lots of calories! Wear padded shorts. Avoid weekends if you can. Identify a bird or animal that you have not noticed before. Smile and wave at those you pass. Let your mind wander. You will age in reverse as you ride, I promise!



*Taking a break along the river*



*The Nelson family at Cumberland*

If you need additional information, contact [tristate-townplanner@gmail.com](mailto:tristate-townplanner@gmail.com)

#### *About Steve:*

*Having recently sold his publishing business, Steve has more time to devote to family and outdoor recreational pursuits including flyfishing, skiing, and cycling. He is a C&O Canal Bike Patrol member and serves as a Commissioner on the C&O Canal National Historical Park Federal Advisory Commission. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Tri-County County Council of Western Maryland and is Past Chairman of the Board of First Peoples Credit Union, Rotary Club of Cumberland, Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce, and the Cumberland YMCA.*

# On the Level

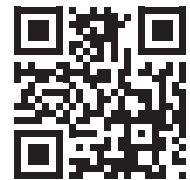
By Steven Dean

*This report covers level walker activity for May through July. Earlier reports are included in some cases. Any reports for activity performed during August or later will be in the December Along the Towpath.*

*The Level Walker program is a long-term Association volunteer activity and the oldest volunteer program on the park. Level walkers periodically visit their levels and assess conditions, pick up trash and perform light trail clean-up. Many level walkers are long-time volunteers. Level walkers must be members in the C&O Canal Association, comply with NPS regulations and walk at least once a year to remain active level walkers.*

*Recent level walker findings are typical for winter and early spring. Level walkers observed conditions on 26 of the 69 levels and noted extensive summer throughout the park. Of note was the competition of the towpath bridge over the site of the collapsed Culvert 82. Projects and responses to weather events and emergent conditions from weather or structural issues can affect towpath travel. Park visitors, whether for recreational or volunteer purposes, should always check the Plan Your Visit link (provided on page 23).*

*Thanks to all who participate in our volunteer program! As a team, your efforts make a significant contribution to the park. For information about the Level Walker program, please email [lw@candocanal.org](mailto:lw@candocanal.org) or visit [candocanal.org/level/](http://candocanal.org/level/).*



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## May to July 2024 Level Walker Activity

**Level 2 Incline Plane to Lock 5: Kamile Kay reports April and May:** I went on multiple walks each month. The towpath was in good condition. Moderate trash was typically found. The previously reported graffiti on the Custis Trail pedestrian bridge by Arizona Ave was had been removed but was back already.

**Level 4 Cabin John Creek to Lock 14: Larry Heflin reports May through July:** The towpath was monitored over numerous walks, through all conditions. No significant issues were reported during this period.

**Level 5 Lock 14 to Bridge at Cropley: Mindy Ginsburg reports May 22 and 27:** I covered all of Level 5 in two outings this time, with similar gorgeous clear mornings that followed some heavy rain. I have walked Level 5 too many times to count but this was the first time I noticed a fair amount of graffiti and an increase in trash along the route. The ongoing construction along with the diversion of the path along MacArthur Blvd. may be the cause of the increase in trash. As for the graffiti, it may have been there all along, but I never noticed it before and see it now for the first time. I reported the graffiti to the NPS and the graffiti removal team of volunteers and expect it will be removed over the next few weeks. Despite the trash and graffiti, the towpath was still beautiful and populated with walkers, runners, bikers and great wildlife. The wildlife seen included a sighting of an indigo bunting as well as two large and gorgeous families of ducks and at least two dozen turtles of all sizes sunning themselves.

**Level 6 Bridge at Cropley to Great Falls Tavern: Alice Mayo reports May 8:** The towpath was surprisingly free of trash. I found a dog waste bag by a bench and some miscellaneous paper on the towpath. The towpath was in generally good condition, with some ruts and puddles but not an excessive amount. There are some rocky areas that might affect bikers. Orange netting is prevalent along the towpath at Widewater – there are at least nine patches of netting to protect walkers/bikers from eroding towpath. There was a small amount of water in the overgrown canal prism. The *Mercer* canal boat was sitting on blocks among the weeds.

**Level 7 Great Falls Tavern to Lock 21: Carol and Joe Hayes report May 29:** The towpath was in good condition. Paw Paw trees no longer flowering; we looked for small fruits on the trees but did not see any. The canal was full of water with turtles and a great blue heron. Trash was light and the towpath was in good conditions. No issues were noted with structures. Many patches of fortune's spindle, garlic mustard), and autumn olive were noted.

**Level 8 Lock 21 to Lock 22: Rinze and Sue Roosma report June 12:** It was a warm June afternoon on the trail. We spotted two young barred owls sitting together in a tree, probably waiting for some food from one of their parents. The smell of honeysuckle in the air and the pickerelweed was starting to flower. The water level in the canal was at the regular summer level. Resurfacing was finished on the level. There were six tents at the Swains Lock camp area. Bikes were observed passing at high speeds.

*Level 9 Lock 22 to Seneca Aqueduct: Louis Robbins reports May 5:* Issues noted included: a log jam at Inlet Lock 2; minor blockage of the Seneca Aqueduct center span; poor condition of beams on both bridges at Violettes Lock; pot holes in Seneca parking lot; Lock 24 and Inlet Lock 2 both need pointing of stone work; Seneca lock house doors have water damage; and fencing on the southwest corner of the aqueduct is not secure.

*Level 10 Seneca Aqueduct to Mile 25: Judith Walton reports April 14, May 31 and June 7:* A very large snake was noted sunning on the towpath in April. The towpath was generally smooth and in good condition. Potholes are an issue in the Seneca parking lot. Most trash was found in the picnic areas and parking lot. The area was generally busy with joggers, walkers and bicyclists along with people using the picnic area.

*Level 12 Edwards Ferry to Harrison Island: Liz Wagner reports June 7:* Access to the parking lot and boat ramp remained closed as work to replace the bridge over the Lock 25 continued. The C&O Canal NHP website notes that historic bridge abutments were found during the construction process, and this has necessitated a redesign of the bridge. No completion date has been posted. The detour around the work area is clearly marked. There was more than usual trash along the towpath. Several pieces of trash removed at Broad Run Trunk and in the closed parking lot at Edwards Ferry. The wooden bridge deck at the Broad Run Trunk continues to show wear on the deck and railings.

*Level 15 Whites Ferry to Lock 26: Jon Wolz reports May 16, June 12 and July 18:* The undergrowth in different sections effectively makes the towpath narrower. Graffiti was removed from the restroom at the Marble Quarry hiker biker camp. Small trees are growing from the granary ruins that need to be cut down. They can't be cut during the summer due to the extensive presence of snakes. There are also plants growing from the Whites Ferry bridge abutments. This level appears to be very tropical because of all the dense greenery. There are numerous stinging nettles plants along the towpath. Japanese stilt grass is growing along the towpath in different sections of this level. In July it was noted that the NPS had cleared numerous downed trees on the level. It was also noted in July that the Potomac River water level was very low and the Native American fish weir could clearly be seen in the river from the towpath at Mile 38.5.

*Level 16 Lock 26 to Monocacy Aqueduct: Jon Wolz reports May 28, June 14, and July 19:* The giant maple tree at Lock 26 is still standing, but it is severely rotting out. On the towpath side, inside the lock, an animal has dug and possibly has a burrow. There is no stone where it dug. It left a small pile of dirt on the grass inside the lock. It was noted that the cliff swallows are present at the Monocacy Aqueduct. Japanese stilt grass is thick along the towpath from Lock 27 to near the entrance of the towpath near the parking lot at the aqueduct. Most of the trash picked up was in the Monocacy Aqueduct area and parking lot. The water continues to be extremely low

from the old power plant entrance to Lock 27. There was no detection of any leaks. Toppled stones need to be placed back at the Monocacy granary ruins. Also, plant growth needs to be removed growing from within the ruins.

*Level 18 Nolands Ferry to Point of Rocks: Bob Carpenter reports July 23:* It was a typical summer day along the Potomac for a walk on the towpath – sunny, hot and humid. Overall, the towpath was in very good condition with very little trash. As usual, there was a bit more trash at the Nolands Ferry Boat Ramp, with most of the trash collected at the Point of Rocks parking lot. The wildflowers of spring have given way to the taller plant life along the towpath. There was a light to moderate volume of walkers, runners, and bicyclists for a hot summer weekday. Width of the towpath at places is narrowing due to intermittent mowing. Trash levels at Point of Rocks were lighter than normal. Restrooms were clean and had been serviced recently. Graffiti on the inside walls of the restrooms was still visible. Large potholes in the Point of Rocks access road are an issue.

*Level 19 Point of Rocks to Catoctin Aqueduct: June Miller and Cathy Guzauskas report May 2:* It was a lovely spring day! It was the first time in a while that we level walked, due to safety incidents in recent past. There was only light trash. Surprisingly there was water in Point of Rocks prism and at Mile 49. There are two large potholes in the Point of Rocks access road that are a tire hazard. We saw three birders looking for peregrine falcons by the Point of Rocks cliffs. **Don Peterson reports July 2:** No significant issues were reported and there was no trash visible. Two tents were at the Bald Eagle hiker biker camp. **Louis Robbins reports July 27:** It was a cool summer day. All canal infrastructure was in good condition. The level walk was good, with clean, beautiful scenery and friendly bikers and walkers. There are possible sink holes in the prism over Culverts 78 and 79. One of the towpath rub rails on the Catoctin Aqueduct supports is rotting. Graffiti was observed at Lock 28 and the Point of Rocks area restroom. It was reported to the dedicated graffiti e-mail.

*Level 20 Catoctin Aqueduct to Lock 30: Bob Carpenter reports July 24:* It was an overcast, warm, and very humid summer day along the towpath. The walk was my first opportunity to walk across the recently completed footbridge over Little Catoctin Creek. Finally, some six years after a flash flood took out the previous footbridge over Little Catoctin Creek in May 2018, this culvert breach can once again be safely crossed in all conditions. Along with the beautiful Catoctin Aqueduct roughly a mile downstream, these two structures are the highlights of Level 20. Trash along the towpath was heavier than is typical, with many cans dumped near the construction site. As previously reported, the build-up of tree debris behind the Catoctin Aqueduct is somewhat alarming. The debris is also clearly visible from the river side of the aqueduct. The waste weir near Milepost 55 has become a victim of graffiti activity. Sinkholes continue to develop at the edges of the towpath at the weir and present a safety risk. **Louis Robbins reports**

**July 28:** Several issues were noted. The outlet side of Culvert 87 has a very steep drop from the towpath. It is a potential danger to both bikers and motorists. There is a large stagnant pool from 100 ft north of the treatment plant to Milepost 54 in the prism. It is unsightly and a major mosquito breeding ground. As previously noted, the waste weir near Mile 55 has sink holes along the towpath west edge that indicate subgrade failure. The rub rail on the west side is also rotted. There is a large 10-foot diameter sink hole draining the prism at Culvert 83 and smaller sink holes at Culvert 84. Access road crossing of tow path at Lock 30 parking area has dangerous sight distance to the north. Stop signs at the road crossing would help ensure safety.

*Level 22 Lock 31 to Lock 33:* **Paul Durham reports May 30 and July 20:** Great conditions were noted in May. Park users included three hikers northbound on the Appalachian Trail headed to Maine. In July minor trash was found except for a large amount at the intersection with the Keep Tryst Road exit from the towpath. I witnessed an uncomfortable and unfortunate incident between a person who accused a family at Keep Tryst Road of ruining what was once a nice place. The family was preparing for a picnic and reacted well to the verbal abuse they received. The incident went on for about three to four minutes and then the person left. The matter was reported to the NPS. *Paul is a new level walker on Levels 22 and 23 – we thank him for joining and supporting the canal.*

*Level 23 Lock 33 to Dam 3:* **Paul Durham reports May 30 and July 21:** Revegetation at the Harpers Ferry Road construction site is progressing well. Minor trash was found but no other problems were observed. The wayside sign at railroad bridge is illegible. In July numerous hikers and bikers were observed. Most hikers were heading up to Maryland Heights. Three “penny farthing” high wheel bikes observed. Most hikers were coming over the railroad bridge from Harpers Ferry, while most bikers were traveling through from other starting points. **Arthur Tsien reports June 14:** This was my second walk of this level in 2024. It was a nice summer day, sunny and warm but not too humid. The level is in good condition. I did not see any significant impediments to foot or cycle travel. I had my usual positive experience walking the towpath. The NPS stone wall project downstream of Lock 34 appears to be done; construction traffic damage to the towpath has been fixed. The resurfaced towpath continues to be in good condition. The historical sign on downstream side of Lock 33 continues to be difficult-to-impossible to read. Others waysides were in good condition.

*Level 27 Antietam Aqueduct to Lock 38:* **Jonnie and Joycie Lefebure report July 20:** The towpath was busy on a temperate July day. Mostly bikers and campers, fewer walkers and joggers. Only one biker did not give a warning. There was almost no trash. The paved lots were full, and many cars were parked along Canal Road and at the campground. The river was very low. The park was being loved on this date.

**Ben, Jennifer, Zoe and Holly Helwig, with canine friend Lizzy, report July 21:** It was warm and sunny. Towpath conditions were good. The Antietam campground looked good and there were about six campers, with about 15 cars along the road. The towpath was quite busy with numerous bikers, local walkers and a few dog walkers.

*Level 41 Dam 5 to Four Locks:* **Mike Anderson reports June 3:** There was almost no trash. The towpath was clean and smooth. The Dam 5 parking area was closed due to the work in the area. The NPS has built a well-constructed set of steps to bypass the area. I encountered a father celebrating his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday with his son by biking the C&O Canal and the Great Allegheny Passage.

*Level 42 Four Locks to McCoy Ferry:* **Jack Ebersole reports June 11:** The towpath is dry and clear, with no trash. Most trash was left by fishermen in several spots along the river. The campground was also clean. There was a couple biking on their way to Cumberland. The said the planned to continue traveling to Pittsburgh, Erie and then on to California. I am concerned about the condition of the Lock 50 lock tender shanty and mule barn, as I have reported before. These structures need attention.

*Level 43 McCoy Ferry to Fort Frederick:* **Trent Carbaugh reports June 9:** I noticed during a bike ride that the level was becoming overgrown with multiflora rose and some other vegetation. I returned to trim some of the worst of the multiflora rose since it was impeding the travel path. The loss of many ash trees in the area is likely promoting the growth of the multiflora rose. **John and Susan Anderson report June 9:** There were many campers at McCoy Ferry and some visitors on the towpath at Fort Frederick. The level was relatively clean. No issues were noted with flow through culverts.

*Levels 47 and 48 Little Pool to Round Top Cement Mill:* **Phillip M. Clemans reports June 15:** The towpath was in good condition, with a little rutting from truck travel for recent tree work. Eight through-riders were observed in the Hancock area. The sink holes over Culvert 185 appear to be enlarging and merging into one larger hole.

*Level 58 Lock 63 1/3 to Tunnel Parking Area:* **Arthur Tsien reports June 1 and July 9:** The June walk was my second for this level in 2024. I decided to visit because it was National Trail Day, a glorious summer day without heat or humidity and I was already most of the way to Paw Paw from attending the annual Presidents’ Lunch at Bill’s Place. I had a pleasant outing, as with almost all my canal-related outings. As previously reported, the unresurfaced towpath was generally in OK condition for foot or bike travel. Except for the usual puddles inside the tunnel, the towpath was dry. My July visit was on an oppressively hot and humid summer day, hardly ideal for level walking. However, I was on my way to Cumberland for a meeting so stopping off in Paw Paw was an easy decision. Despite the weather, I had a pleasant outing. Resurfacing is in progress upstream of the tunnel. I encountered a

crew installing the stone dust top layer between the upstream portal and the parking area. The workers call it “paving” – it seems akin to street paving, but with stone dust replacing hot asphalt.

*Levels 65, 66 and 67 Spring Gap to Evitts Creek Aqueduct:*  
**Trent Carbaugh reports June 9:** It was a nice day, with sunshine and a few clouds, but very hot. The towpath had lots of mud holes; some were very large. All three levels needed mowing. I trimmed back some limbs and lots of multi-flora rose. There was very little trash. Structures looked good, except for the lockhouse at Lock 72. It sadly continues to deteriorate. There were also some missing mortar joints on Evitts Creek aqueduct. There were numerous large groups of thru bikers and one dog walker with leashed dogs. I saw one person on an electric motorcycle loaded down with fishing gear. I also saw another electric motorcycle at Big Pool last week. Both were going well over 15 mph.

*Level 67 Mexico Farms to Evitts Creek Aqueduct:*  
**Sue Rudd reports May through July.** I walk the level on a weekly basis with my dog Rusty. Due to lack of rain, the ruts on this section are now easily passable as you can ride or walk through them. We are (hopefully) scheduled to be resurfaced soon and I can't wait! The sections already done are wonderful! I have met some interesting people this year. On one occasion I talked with a family that was walking from Pittsburgh to Washington. They had completed the GAP and were five miles down the canal when I spoke with them. They were walking with their eight-year-old daughter, and all were enjoying themselves! There is lots of activity this summer.

*Roving Level Walker:*  
**Mark Stover reports May through July:** Mark walks various parts of the entire canal on a regular basis. Downed trees and other issues are frequently reported.



*Locktender shanty at Lock 50 – Photo by Jack Ebersole*



*Snapping Turtle – Photo by Arthur Tsien*



*Four Locks mule barn – Photo by Jack Ebersole*



*Crossover bridge at Fifteen Mile Creek – Photo by Steven Dean*

# C&O Canal Association

## Calendar of Events – 2024

C&OCA Business
C&OCA Hike and Dinner or Other Event
C&OCA Nature Walk
Non-C&OCA Event
C&OCA Hike
C&OCA Bike Trip
Sept. 14, Sat. <b>Nature Walk – Birds</b> , 8:00 a.m. at Sycamore Landing Contact: Kurt Schwarz – krschwa1@verizon.net or 443-538-2370
Sept. 14, Sat.. <b>3M Challenge Bike Event</b> , at Cumberland, Md. See article on page 6 Contact: www.mountainmdtrails.org/3m-challenge
Sept. 29, Sun. <b>Continuing Hike Series</b> , 10:30 a.m. at Dargan Bend. Hikers will visit Feeder Dam 3, inlet locks, and a dry dock. Contact: Pat White – hikemaster@candocanal.org or 301-997-5628
Oct. 6, Sun., <b>Board Meeting</b> , 1:00 p.m. at Williamsport Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.

Oct. 11-16, Fri.-Wed., <b>Through Bike Ride</b> . Cumberland to Georgetown. No sag wagon. Reservations required. Limited number of riders. We ride 30 to 40 miles per day for six days. Participants must be willing to accept instruction from ride leaders before and during the trip, and must come equipped with recommended bicycles and have clothing for warm, cold, and rainy weather. Contact: Denny Sloppy – dennysloppy@yahoo.com or 814-577-5877.
Oct. 26, Sat., <b>Heritage Hike and Dinner</b> , Details are on page 1 and 8 Contact: Jonnie Lefebure – programs@candocanal.org.
Nov. 24, Sun. <b>Continuing Hike Series</b> , 10:30 a.m. at Rileys Lock. Hikers will visit Feeder Dam 2 and inlet locks at Violettes Lock. Contact: Pat White – hikemaster@candocanal.org or 301-997-5628
Dec. 1, Sun. <b>Board Meeting</b> , 1:00 p.m. Glen Echo Town Hall, 6106 Harvard Ave.
Feb. 2, 2025, Sun. <b>Board Meeting</b> , 1:00 p.m. via Zoom Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details or changes.
Sept. 21 – 25, 2025 Sun. – Thu., <b>World Canals Conference</b> See article on page 7 Buffalo, N.Y. Further Info: www.wcc2025buffalo.com

Additional details about events will be included on Facebook, on the Association web site and in the *Along the Towpath* issue before the event. Contact programs@candocanal.org for questions.

### *Important Information About Association Events –*

- » *Liability waivers are required for many Association activities.*
- » *Hikes require proper footwear. Paddling, hiking and biking participants are responsible for their own equipment, food and water.*
- » *Reservations and/or advance fees are required for some events. Reservations must be received prior to the listed closing date. Advance fees are non-refundable after the reservation closing date.*
- » *Participants must arrive on-time for outdoor event start times. Outdoor events are usually rain or shine, however in extreme cases may be canceled for weather travel conditions or other reasons. Check www.candocanal.org/calendar/ (use QR code at right), contact the event host for updates, or visit Facebook @ candocanal.org.*
- » *Participants are expected to comply with local health or safety related rules.*
- » *The Association cannot accommodate requests for variations from established event agendas, transportation and arrangements, including requests for alternate pick-up or drop-off locations.*



**C&O CANAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**  
**C&O Canal National Historical Park Headquarters**  
142 W. Potomac St., Williamsport, Md. 21795  
C&O Canal NHP Contact Information  
choh\_information@nps.gov or 301-739-4200

Superintendent .....Tina Cappetta  
Deputy Superintendent ..... Ed Wenschhof  
Superintendent's Assistant ..... Erin Cowan  
Chief Ranger ..... Vacant  
Chief of Business Management .....Ben Helwig  
Chief of Resource Management .....Andrew Landsman  
Chief of Maintenance ..... Jim Yelton  
Chief of Interpretation, Education and Volunteers....Christiana Hanson  
Chief of Professional Services ..... Joseph Reed  
Partnerships Coordinator ..... Vacant  
Volunteer Program Manager .....Emily Tyner-Hewitt  
Cultural Resources Manager and Historian .....Justin Ebersole  
Safety Officer ..... John Adams  
Supervisory Park Ranger (Law Enforcement) ..... Joshua Cunningham

**Palisades District**

Mile 0 (Tidelock) to Mile 42.19 (Monocacy River)

Interpretive Supervisor .....Nicolette Talley  
Supervisory Recreation Fee Specialist ..... Evan Costanza  
Georgetown Partnerships Coordinator ..... Shaun Lehmann

**Western Maryland District**

Mile 42.19 (Monocacy River) to Mile 184.5 (Cumberland)

Interpretive Supervisor ..... Joshua Nolen

**Visiting the Park**

The C&O Canal NHP is open 365 days a year, but may be closed entirely or in sections at times due to weather conditions, towpath issues or repairs. Park visitor centers are located at Georgetown, Great Falls, Brunswick, Williamsport, Hancock and Cumberland. They may be closed seasonally or due to staffing limitations.

**Check park status before visiting.**

[www.nps.gov/choh/planyourvisit/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/choh/planyourvisit/index.htm)  
(QR Code at right) provides information about park facilities, towpath local closures, NPS events, canal boat programs, visitor centers, camping and other visit related information. The park information phone number is 301-739-4200.



**Other Useful Contacts**

Canal Quarters Program – [www.canaltrust.org/programs/canal-quarters/](http://www.canaltrust.org/programs/canal-quarters/)  
Canal Towns – [www.canaltrust.org/programs/canal-towns/](http://www.canaltrust.org/programs/canal-towns/)

**24-HOUR EMERGENCY:**

911 or 866-677-6677

**REPORT SAFETY HAZARDS OR TOWPATH ISSUES:**

HAZARDS [choh\\_hazards@nps.gov](mailto:choh_hazards@nps.gov)

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**Editor and Producer:** Steven Dean – [editor@candocanal.org](mailto:editor@candocanal.org)

**Associate Editors:** Tom Aitken, Bill Holdsworth and Ned Preston.

*Content included in this issue consists of material related to:*

*Association business – 26%, history/education – 13%; nature/environment – 13% volunteers/projects – 19%, NPS/park info – 4%, recreation/events – 25%*

**C&O CANAL ASSOCIATION**

Membership in C&OCA is open to all persons with an interest in the C&O Canal, the C&O Canal National Historical Park and the Potomac River Basin. Annual membership dues are: \$25 individual, \$35 family, and \$50 patron, assessed on a calendar-year basis, and include subscription to the newsletter. Dues should be mailed to the C&O Canal Association or paid on-line. C&OCA is a non-profit organization as defined by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and all contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting the C&OCA at the address above or emailing [inquiries@candocanal.org](mailto:inquiries@candocanal.org). Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State for the cost of copying and postage.

C&OCA maintains a web page at [www.candocanal.org](http://www.candocanal.org). The webmaster is [website@candocanal.org](mailto:website@candocanal.org). Inquiries can be directed to the Association at [inquiries@candocanal.org](mailto:inquiries@candocanal.org).

**ASSOCIATION OFFICERS**

**President:** Bill Holdsworth, [president@candocanal.org](mailto:president@candocanal.org)

**First Vice President:** Arthur Tsien

**Second Vice President:** Barbara Sheridan

**Secretary:** Jane Hanna, [secretary@candocanal.org](mailto:secretary@candocanal.org)

**Treasurer:** Paul Lubell, [treasurer@candocanal.org](mailto:treasurer@candocanal.org)

**Information Officer:** Vacant

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Terms expire in 2027:** Trent Carbaugh,  
Paul Petkus, Dick Stoner

**Terms expire in 2026:** Jim Heins,  
Darius Mark, Allyson Miller

**Terms expire in 2025:** Tom Crouch,  
Jonnie Lefebure

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**By-Laws:** Arthur Tsien | **Community Outreach:** Dick Ebersole/Rita Bauman

**Editorial/Production:** Steven Dean | **Environmental:** Rod Mackler

**Festivals:** Rita Bauman/Dick Ebersole | **Finance:** Bill Holdsworth

**Legal Advisory:** Vacant | **Level Walkers:** Steven Dean

**Membership:** Pat White | **Nature:** Paul Petkus

**Nominating:** Barbara Sheridan | **Programs:** Jonnie Lefebure

**Sales:** Nan Johnson | **Special Projects:** Vacant

**Volunteers in Parks:** Jim Heins

# CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL ASSOCIATION INC.

P.O. Box 366

GLEN ECHO, MD 20812-0366

C&O Canal Association



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*Culvert 134 is located at Mile 102, just over two miles above the Conococheague Aqueduct. This 6-foot stone culvert is built on a timber frame and carries a typically active stream. The downstream arch had stone alignment issues and was near collapse for several years (upper image). The upstream arch also had damage, with fallen wing wall stones. A repair project by the NPS in 2019 successfully stabilized the arch (middle image). The restoration project also restored the downstream arch (lower image). Photos by Steven Dean*




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Check us out on social media!

 @candocanal.org

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