

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.

Volume LVII

March 2025

Number 1

2025 Douglas Hike, Ride, and Dinner

By Jonnie Lefebure

On April 26 the Association will celebrate the 71st anniversary of the legendary hike led by Justice William O. Douglas with hiking options, cycling options and an evening dinner.

The hikes and bicycle rides will depart from Dickerson Conservation Area at Mile 39.5 on the towpath. After the outdoor activities, a catered dinner will be offered at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Poolesville, Md. After dinner Bert Swain will make a presentation about his family and their long association with Swain's Lock.

Hike Highlights

The history of the Dickerson Conservation Area, now part of the Maryland-National Capitol Park and Planning Commission, goes back over the operating days of the canal and beyond. The Maryland champion sycamore tree, with a circumference of 25 feet, resides in the area.

Shuttle buses will provide service to the hike starting areas. The first bus departs at 10:00 a.m. and provides service for participants in the long and medium length hikes. The long hike is 12.3 miles, and the medium hike is 8.7 miles. The second bus drops off participants in the short hikes and departs at 11:00 a.m. The short hike is 4 miles.

The long hikers begin their hike at Sycamore Landing, Mile 27.2. The 1,971-acre McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area (WMA) parallels the canal in this area. Birders and hunters frequent the managed wild lands. Native American camps in the river islands and shores have been archaeologically explored in the last several decades. After passing the WMA, the turf fields of the Summit Hall Turf Farm can be seen through the trees on the berm.

The combined waters of Chisel Branch and Cabin Branch enter Culvert 42 with its 12-foot span near Mile 30. Just beyond is Chisel Branch Hiker-Biker Camp. Shortly after the camp, hikers come to the Goose Creek River Lock, which gave canal boats access to the river and Goose Creek in Virginia. As part of its agreement to buy stock in the canal, Virginia required three river locks, which afforded its merchants access to the canal. Two other river locks are at Shepherdstown and Harpers Ferry.

The medium hikers will start their hike at Edwards Ferry, which was an important crossing, especially during the Civil War. The downstream end of the lock was extended during prosperous canal years in the late 1800's to allow two

Continued on Page 8



Hikers will pass Lock 26 on their return to Dickerson.



The remnants of the iron bridge at Whites Ferry.

C&O Canal Association Membership Renewals

Please note: C&O Canal Association memberships renew at the first of the calendar year. Maintaining a current membership is required to participate in the Association board, vote in board elections, participate in the Level Walker program and to receive the *Along the Towpath* newsletter. If your membership has lapsed you are receiving this March issue of *Along the Towpath* as a courtesy, but you will not receive additional issues unless you renew.

A renewal form to process your membership renewal was included in the December 2024 *Along the Towpath*. You can use that form if you still have it. Alternatively, you can renew on-line or download a renewal form by visiting candocanal.org/membership/ or scanning the QR code to the right. Click on the *Renew Your Membership for 2025* button to renew on-line. If you are unsure of your membership status, check the “Membership Expires” date just above your name on the mailing address for this issue of *Along the Towpath*. If it says “Membership Expires Dec-2024” then your membership renewal is due. Please contact the Membership Chair via email at membership@candocanal.org if you have any questions. Thank you so much for your continued support of our organization!



The Association Welcomes New Members

Dan Beck

Kristin Kruse

Dennis Morris

Thomas Kettler

Eleanor Melamed

Donald Sladkin

Thank you for joining the Association and for your support of our organization!

Delivery of the December *Along the Towpath* –

As you probably noticed, the December newsletter was delivered late. Production was completed on time, but the newsletter was printed nearly a month late due to supply shortages of the paper used for it. The mail delivery was also impacted by the December holiday rush that causes mail service delays and the early January snow storm.

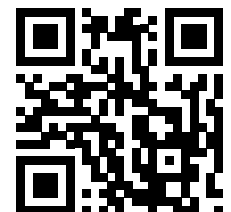
These are situations that the Association cannot control, and we appreciate your patience.

Submission of Content for *Along the Towpath* –

Guidelines for submission of content are posted at candocanal.org/submission/. Please review them prior to submitting content.

*Effective with the next issue of the newsletter, a new editor will produce the *Along the Towpath*. Please disregard any previous editor contact information and submit questions, comments and content to editor@candocanal.org or the following address:*

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Association Inc.
Attn: Along the Towpath Editor
P.O. Box 366
Glen Echo, MD 20812-0366



Submission Guidelines

Board Meeting Highlights

By Jane Hanna

December 1, 2024 and February 22, 2025

December's board meeting was at the Glen Echo Town Hall and February's was remote via Zoom.

The Association is in dire need of volunteers for key positions and programs. Several board members and others held a Zoom chat on January 9 to discuss possible solutions, which include:

- Partnering with local community colleges and universities to set up a program where interns would work with the Association and gain experience in environmental, recreational, historical, and nonprofit fields.
- Hosting a regular meeting with other park partners who are in the same boat with the lack of volunteers.
- Evaluating whether to give up some of the Association's long-standing programs and activities.
- Bringing in outside help, especially for *Along the Towpath*, which the Association would like to make every effort to continue in its present form. Because of its importance, separate meetings about *Along the Towpath* are ongoing.

Another problem is low turnout for Association activities. An example is the October 2024 Heritage Hike and Dinner, when only a few members attended the dinner and presentation. One way to address this is to increase the Association's social media presence. Allyson Miller has started posting regularly on the Association's Facebook page, which has around 3,000 followers.

The Association continues to fund C&O Canal NHP projects, including a reprint of the brochure on the granaries and new wayside exhibits on African American history at Ferry Hill.

Shaun Lehmann of the C&O Canal NHP updated us on additional projects throughout the park: Polly Pond Bridge repair, Foundry Branch Tunnel, Billy Goat Trail, Great Falls Tavern, Four Locks Boat Ramp, Byron Bridge (the pedestrian bridge at Harpers Ferry), Georgetown Visitor Center staffing and towpath resurfacing.

Several Association members will travel to Buffalo, N.Y., in September for the World Canals Conference. The main conference is during September 21 through 25. Additionally, there are pre- and post-conference tours focusing on the Erie Canal and other historic waterways.

The next board meeting is at 1:00 p.m. on April 13 at the Glen Echo Town Hall.

Note from the Treasurer –

As reported in the December *Along the Towpath*, I am a candidate for re-election to the office of treasurer at our annual meeting on March 22, 2025. I am writing this note to give everyone the largest possible advance notice that I will not be running for this office again in 2026. My predecessor, Richard Radhe, also gave a similarly long notice when he decided that he could no longer serve in the position. It has generally been my practice not to keep a position for longer than a four-year period. In my opinion, organizations need a periodic turnover of leadership to remain fresh. There are also personal reasons why I cannot devote the time required to continue in this office, though I will continue to be active in helping the Association prepare for the future.

Count on seeing me around for a while, but wearing a different hat.

– Paul D. Lubell, Treasurer

Donors to Association Funds

November 1, 2024 to January 31, 2025

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 on line. 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/

Donations

Individual Donations

Christopher Allison – C

Katherine Anderle – A

Michael Anderson, D.D.S. – R

Kathleen Barber – R

Michael Barnhart – C

John Barr – A, C, D, R

John Beck – R

Bonnie Bell – A

Mary Bell – D

Nancy Benco – R

James Biasco – R

Susan Board – G

Dorothy Boerner – R

John Bogdan, Jr. – A, C, D

Susan Brown – R

William Brown – D

Michael Bucci – D, R

Ralph Buglass – A

John Butler – R

Robert Carpenter – A, R

Richard Cember – A, D

Sandra Clipp – R

Jo Ann Condry – C

Alford Cooley – C

Jill Craig – A

Joseph D'Amico – C

Emma Dieter – A

Jack Ebersole – R

Joseph Eckels – A, C, D, R

Robert Eldridge – R

Sharon Eliot – D, R

Howard Elitzak – A, R

Donations (Continued)

David Engstrom – *R*
Jonathan Field – *A, C*
Kenneth Fisher – *G*
Janette Fitzsimmons – *A, C, D, R*
Judith Gabel – *G*
Robert Graul – *A, D, R*
Mary Hawley – *G*
Judith Hecht – *R*
James Heins – *R*
Benjamin Helwig – *D*
Lisa Hendrick – *R*
Lynne Hottell – *C, D*
Joseph Howard – *R*
John Howe, Jr. – *A*
Hardy Howell – *R*
William Howell – *D, R*
David Irvine – *R*
Maureen Jais-Mick – *D*
James Johnson – *A, C, D, R*
George Kennett – *A, R*
Anne Kerfoot – *R*
Karlen Keto – *D*
Roger Kief – *C*
Thomas Knoezer – *A*
Joseph Kochenderfer – *R*
John Kochowicz – *A*
Dennis Kubicki – *R*
Michael Kurman – *A*
Peter Laugesen – *A*
John League – *R*
Paul Leatherman – *C*
Daniel Leubecker – *R*
Elizabeth Light – *A*
Daniel Long – *C*
Rochelle Lowenstein – *G*
Michael Marmer – *A, C, D, R*
Robert Masincup – *R*
Dorothy Mathieson – *R*
Kevin McCall – *R*
Thomas Mears – *R*
Wallace Meissner – *R*

Robert Melchior – *G*
Lorraine Minor – *R*
David & Nicole Mitchell – *G*
Douglas Mitchell – *R*
Ronald Morith – *A, D*
Emil Moskovich, Jr. – *R*
Diana Niskern – *R*
Linda Nosalik – *R*
Thomas O’Dea – *R*
Donald Peterson – *G*
Mark Podvia – *A*
Craig Reynolds – *A, R*
Beth Rogers – *G*
Rachel Rogers – *A*
David Romanowski – *A*
James Ronan – *D*
Lisa Rosenthal – *D, R*
David & Lia Royle – *G*
Cory Schlegel – *A*
Jan Schoonmaker – *G*
Jane Scoleri – *A, C*
Raphael Semmes – *A, C, D, R*
Jan Sengers – *A*
Martha Shannon – *A*
Jeffrey Short – *G*
Rima Silenas – *R*
Bridget Sisson – *D, R*
Dennis Sloppy – *R*
Karen Smith – *R*
Robert Stevens – *R*
Sally Strain – *R*
Debra Summers – *C*
Timothy Taylor – *R*
Susan & Richard Ugelow – *R*
James Waite – *A*
Hilary Walsh – *A*
Paul Ward – *A, C, D, R*
Jonathan Warner – *S*
Glenn Watkins – *R*
Katrinka Westendorf – *A, C, R*
David Wiecking – *C*

Rachel Weisz – *G*
Evelyn Williams – *A, C, D, R*
Mary Wilson – *A*
Francis Wodarczyk – *S*
George Wyeth – *R*

In Honor of Stephanie Boblitt
Todd Pruett – *G*

In Memory of Christine Cerniglia
Fund use will be determined at a later date by the family

Jeffrey Crooks
Ashley Davidson
Miriam Flaherty
Carol Galaty
Burton Hall
James Heins
William & Christine Holdsworth
Todd Hughes
William James
Steven Johnson
Patricia Lehmann
Claire Loftus
Kathleen Miles
William Stewart

In Memory of
Bill & Annette Doolittle
Rosalinda Rahe – *D*

In Honor of Lawrence Evans
Elizabeth Brotman – *R*
Calvin Henderson – *R*

In Honor of Van E. Gaus
Steven Johnson – *C*

In Memory of Hal & Jane Larsen
Anna Porter – *G*

In Memory of George Lewis
James Heins – *G*

In Memory of Gerald D. Nelson
Stephen Nelson – *R*

President's Report

By Bill Holdsworth

For the second time in three years, I am writing a farewell column as president.

Looking back, there are many reasons that Association members can take pride in their organization. Our level walker program is valued by a park staff that struggles to manage 184 miles of towpath with dwindling resources. As president, I have been on the receiving end of compliments about our "world class" newsletter – praise that should be directed at our editor. Our Volunteers in Parks crew does amazing work. Remember them whenever you walk past one of those heavy concrete benches.

In the past year we have been able to help the park by funding three intern positions. We provided funds for interpretive materials at Ferry Hill and the Williamsport Trolley Barn. We were able to work with Canal Place in Cumberland on repairs to the replica canal boat.

I am confident the board of directors will be looking for opportunities to partner with other organizations to help the canal. The Association is blessed with generous donors. Our numbers pale beside the cost of the

park's major restoration projects, but we have enough to make a difference when used strategically.

All the Association's accomplishments can be credited to hard-working volunteers. I regard it as a privilege to have been associated with them. But, to repeat a theme I have mentioned before, we need more volunteers to keep the Association thriving.

Looking ahead, there are reasons to be concerned about our canal. I worry that turmoil in the federal government could damage the park staff's ability to do an already difficult job. Differences between the park and Georgetown Heritage seem to have stalled plans for towpath improvements in Georgetown. Three years ago, there was discussion of historic structure reports and engineering assessments of the canal's aqueducts. I haven't heard anything about that topic recently.

Over the years, issues come, issues go, and some seemingly linger forever. What's clear is that the need for an organization like the C&O Canal Association to help the canal remains constant. See you on the towpath.

Volunteers in Parks

By Jim Heins

Spring Is Just Around the Corner

Counting on our park not being sold or given away in the near future, the VIPs and our association are starting to gear up for this coming season.

Foremost on our list is our annual *C&O Canal and Potomac Riverside Cleanup*. This event will be held on Saturday, April 12, from 9-12. We cover sites from Carderock to Dam 5. The VIPs have been involved in the annual cleanup of the canal since 2006. Unfortunately, very few members of our association support this event. We rely on students and county residents for just about all the volunteers doing the cleanup.

I invite you to join us on April 12. Gloves and trash bags are provided, courtesy of your association. If interested, please contact me at vip@candocanal.org.

The VIPs will be involved in other projects this year, as well. Planning is on-going for:

1. Once again replacing all the information panels in the bulletin boards throughout the park.
2. Setting up a procedure for cleaning waysides throughout the park.
3. Repairing picnic tables park-wide
4. For the 11th year in a row, adding new benches in the park, this year in the Western District. 10 more this year will bring the total to 118.

Across the Berm – Nancy Long

By Bill Holdsworth

We owe a debt of gratitude to Nancy Long, who died on February 1 at age 96, for the park we have today. The C&O Canal National Historical Park was created in 1971. The legislation also created a 19-member Federal Advisory Commission for the park. Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton nominated Nancy to serve as the chairman.

If you read Barry Mackintosh's 1991 book, *C & O Canal, the Making of a Park*, you get a sense of the role she played in the development of the park. Nancy and others clashed with the park superintendent. They regarded natural and historic preservation as more important than development. The park's *General Plan*, published in 1975, reflected their influence, limiting development to designated zones and reserving large stretches of the towpath to offer a "near wilderness" setting.

Nancy's involvement with the commission continued long after her term as chairman ended in 1977. The legislation creating the commission set a 10-year life span. Later Congresses continued that pattern, renewing for another 10 years once the previous authorization expired. Nancy continued to serve on future iterations of the commission.

For political reasons, the commission had a five-year hiatus from 2011 to 2016. Then in her late eighties, she was no longer a member but remained keenly interested. I attended their first meeting in 2016 with her and she left full of opinions about how the new group was proceeding.

Nancy joined the Association in 1969, before the park was created. She was elected president in 1978. She also served as secretary and newsletter editor. I'm not sure that the Association's record keeping is good enough to count the number of years she served on the board of directors. The total can be measured in the dozens. In 2006 she received the Association's William O. Douglas Award in recognition of her distinguished record of leadership.

In her later years, Nancy made a large donation to endow an Association fund for the maintenance, repair, and restoration of aqueducts. Three of the canal's 11 aqueducts have been restored. When we have a fourth, let's remember to raise a glass to Nancy's memory.



This photo from 1972 shows many of the original Commission members with NPS officials. Nancy Long is in the front row, seated, third from right. (December 2014 Along the Towpath)



C&O Canal NHP Commission members are shown here, with C&O Canal NHP park leaders, at their last meeting before the interregnum that began in 2011. The mementos that they are holding are canal boat replicas hand-made by a member of the park's maintenance division. Shown left to right are: Charles Wier, Barry Pasett, Ferial Bishop, Patricia Schooley, Donna Printz, Merrily Pierce, Superintendent Kevin Brandt, Sheila Weidenfeld, Nancy Long, John Zeigler, Jack Reeder, George Lewis, James Gilford, Jo Reynolds, Dan McElrath, and Deputy Superintendent Brian Carlstrom. Photos courtesy of the National Park Service, C&O Canal NHP.

boats to lock through at the same time. Here also are the ruins of Jarboe's Store. Eugene Jarboe drowned in the canal while offloading cargo. His three children operated the store until 1906.

Broad Run Trunk takes the towpath over Broad Run a mile above Edwards Ferry. This was the site of Culvert 46 with twin 16-foot spans. This was the only twin-arch culvert on the C&O Canal. The culvert was replaced with a wooden trunk after it washed out in 1846 and was referred to as the "Broad Run Trunk Aqueduct." Also in this area is Culvert 49, at Mile 34.8, which features ornate ring stones. *See photos and details on Page 24.*

Harrison Island is in the river north and south of Milepost 34 and is one of the longest islands in the Potomac River. In October 1861 on the Virginia shore opposite the island, the Battle of Balls Bluff was disastrous for the Union Army.

Whites Ferry is the starting point for the short hike participants. Located at Mile 53.5, Whites Ferry features a long history predating the canal. The ferry closed in 2020 due to the Virginia shore owners blocking access to the river. However, Whites Ferry Grill remains open. A pamphlet on the Whites Ferry and Monocacy Granaries can be found in the grill. An iron bridge on Seneca sandstone abutments carried traffic over the canal in the working days of the canal. Culvert 51 is located downstream of the bridge and is worth stopping to visit. The arches and base of the culvert trunk are visible. Wood was apparently used for the top of the culvert barrel and the floor of the canal prism.

Just above the Whites Ferry Road crossover to the ferry landing, the stabilized ruins of Elijah White's Granary are on the berm. Here farmers could sell their products for later loading on canal boats. Lovely Virginia bluebells and other spring wildflowers will be blooming along the towpath for the next mile. Then the towpath starts a sweeping turn to the right and Masons Island appears in the river. An eagle's nest can be seen in one of the large sycamores on the bank of the island. The remains of unmarked Benjamin Latrobe's Quarry are in the cliff along the berm. The quarry's limestone breccia was shaped into the beautiful columns that uphold the U.S. Capitol Statuary Hall.

Walkers will next encounter the Marble Quarry Hiker-Biker Camp. Whites Ford at Milepost 39 gave shallow water to the invading Confederate army in 1862. Just beyond, Woods Lock, 26, has been filled in to prevent the walls from collapsing inward. Careful examination reveals the lock was extended downstream. An ancient decaying silver maple between the lock and lockhouse foundation must have started growing here during the canal's operating days. Just beyond walkers will return to the Dickerson Conservation Area.

Bicycle Rides

The Association has organized two rides for cycling enthusiasts. Both start at Dickerson Conservation Area at 10 a.m. Helmets are required, and bells are recommended.

The first ride will be led by Denny Sloppy. This ride will be a 16-mile round-trip ride, going up to Monocacy Aqueduct, then back down past Whites Ferry to the Turtle Run Campsite, and back to the start. This leisurely ride will average 10-11 mph.

Lori Sperling will lead the second ride. This will be a more ambitious 28-mile circuit, averaging 14-15 mph. The group will first head for Monocacy Aqueduct, then north to climb up Sugarloaf Mountain and back down. Next, riders will take some amazing back roads to Nolands Ferry on the towpath before returning to the starting point. A link to the route is available at ridewithgps.com/routes/49516035.



Route Info

Happy Hour and Dinner

At 4:00 p.m. after the hikes and rides, participants will gather at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Poolesville, Md, for a happy hour and appetizers, followed by a delicious dinner at 5:00 p.m. prepared by locally acclaimed Bassett's Restaurant. The after-dinner speaker will be Bert Swain, who will present the fascinating history of his family at Swain's Lock on the canal. The Swain family was associated with the canal and the area from the early days of the canal to the early 21st century.

Hikers riding the shuttle will need to pay \$5 in advance or \$10 on the day of the event. Shuttle space is limited, and non-registered persons may use the bus on a space available basis. The cost of the dinner and happy hour is \$33 for members and \$38 for non-members. Registration details for the shuttle and dinner are on Page 9.



Culvert 51 at Whites Ferry is easily observed from the towpath. It had a wooden trunk and prism floor – Photos by Steven Dean



Douglas Hike and Dinner Information and Registration

Hike and Bike Ride Details. The Douglas Hike features walks of three lengths and two bike rides. The hikes and rides are described in the article starting on Page 1. Participants will meet at the Dickerson Conservation Area parking area. Shuttles are provided for all hikes and depart at 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. The shuttles leave promptly at the scheduled times and cannot wait for late arrivals. Food and drinks are not provided for the hikers and bikers.

Registration in advance is recommended to ensure a place on the bus. The cost of the bus is \$5 in advance or \$10 if paid on the day of the event. Seating 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. Peter's Episcopal Church, 20100 Fisher Ave. Poolesville, 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 dinner will be catered by Bassetts Restaurant and will be served at 5:00 p.m. The cost is \$33 for Association members or \$38 for non-members and includes the happy hour cost. The program features Bert Swain and will be at 6:00 p.m.

Registration and payment in advance required by April 16. The Association cannot accommodate late reservations or walk-ins. Contact Jonnie Lefebure at 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 **April 16**. Use the QR code below for access to the registration site or visit candocanal.org/25douglas/.
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 April 16.**
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 April 16.**

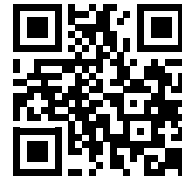
Number of dinner guests: ____ X \$33 (member) or \$38 (non-member) = _____

Number of 10:00 bus riders: ____ X \$5

Number of 11:00 bus riders: ____ X \$5

Total amount paid: _____

List names of dinner guests and bus riders.



candocanal.org/25douglas/

Schedule

- 10:00 a.m. Departure of long and medium bike shuttle to Sycamore Landing for a 12.3-mile return walk or to Edwards Ferry for a 8.7-mile return walk
- 10:00 a.m. Start of 16-mile bike ride to the Monocacy Aqueduct, Whites Ferry and Turtle Run
- 10:00 a.m. Start of 28-mile bike ride to the Monocacy Aqueduct, a climb of Sugarloaf Mountain and a return trip via scenic back roads
- 11:00 a.m. Departure of short hike shuttle to Whites Ferry for a 4.0-mile return walk
- 4:00 p.m. Happy Hour
- 5:00 p.m. Dinner catered by Bassett's Restaurant
- 6:00 p.m. Program featuring Bert Swain

Directions

**Dickerson
Conservation Area**

**St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Poolesville, 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.

The Wild Side of the C&O Canal

Fishers, Otters & Coyotes

By Stephen Nelson

The C&O Canal National Historical Park, a treasure trove of biodiversity, stands out among national parks with its rich variety of over 5,000 plant and wildlife species. Reflecting on my early experiences as a cub scout in the park before it became a national park, I vividly remember the thrill of chasing a skunk, flushing a turkey, and swinging on a vine, with only a distraught den mother and her helper to supervise our group of juvenile reprobates. From this inauspicious beginning came a love and appreciation of the wonders of the canal along with a respect for wildlife not always demonstrated as a youth.

Living in Allegany County, I have been blessed with the opportunity to explore some of the most remote sections of the canal. Every trip is a potential wildlife adventure, and it's a rare day when I don't spot various animals, reptiles, and fish. The sight of the more frequently observed species like deer, waterfowl, squirrels, groundhogs, snakes and other creatures never fails to thrill me.

Encountering bears, turkeys, and eagles in their natural habitats is a rare and unforgettable experience that always makes me feel privileged. Even more special are the sightings of a fisher, a river otter or a coyote – three animals that are increasingly being seen in the area.

Several years ago, I first encountered a fisher just upstream of Oldtown when cycling with my wife, Cheryl. As we rode past, the fisher scampered out of the tree, startling us. The interaction was brief. His (or hers) long tail, size, and colorization left little doubt about what we had witnessed. My second encounter was this past September when I was part of the first-day section ride of Denny Sloppy's Cumberland to Washington C&O Canal Association group bicycle ride. Emil Moskovich and I were riding downstream of Town Creek when we were fortunate enough to observe a fisher hunting along the bank of the canal for several minutes.

Fishers had been extirpated from Maryland in the early 1900s. In 1969–1972, twenty-three fishers from New Hampshire were released in the Canaan Mountain and Cranberry Glades areas of West Virginia. It is assumed that some of these West Virginia animals have spread into Maryland, primarily in the western region. They prey on small mammals and birds and are well known for their ability to prey upon porcupines, which are also becoming more frequently sighted in the park. Fishers are dark brown or black in color with a long body characteristic of their weasel family and are typically 8 to 12 pounds and 30 to 47 inches in length. Fishers are solitary and generally nocturnal, hence the rarity of sighting. According to



River otter at the San Francisco Zoo – Photo by Dmitry Azovtsev
www.daphoto.info



Fisher, taken at a licensed farm in West Virginia – Photo by Charlotte Pletcher, Somers, Pa.

the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (Md. DNR), despite their name, fishers rarely eat fish and, when upset, will produce loud growls and hissing coughs!

I believe the sightings of fishers may explain some inaccurately reported eastern cougar and mountain lion sightings. With their long tails and feline features, it is easy for someone unfamiliar with a fisher to mistake a brief glimpse for that of the larger extinct eastern mountain lions. I'm not here to dispute anyone's personal sightings of anything, so please save your emails, as I still insist that I saw Elvis pumping gas at a Piggly Wiggly in Georgia in 2016.

While not rare in most of Maryland, the river otter had been extirpated from Garrett County, Allegany County and parts of Washington County. However, during the 1990s, the Md. DNR undertook a commendable reintroduction project to the mountainous portions of Maryland, resulting in healthy, self-sustaining otter populations state-wide. This is a testament to the importance of conservation efforts in preserving our wildlife.

The river otter is the largest member of the weasel family, ranging from 35 to 50 inches long and weighing from 11 to 30 pounds. Despite their name, they can live in various habitats, including streams, rivers, lakes, marshes, and the C&O Canal. Several years ago, I saw my first river otter upstream of Oldtown in the canal. They can be active any time of day but tend to be most active at night. They, like their cousin, the fisher, are not social animals. Muskrats are sometimes mistaken for river otters, but there are some key differences to tell them apart. River otters are much larger than muskrats, who are smaller at only 4 pounds and 2 feet long. River otters have long, slender bodies with short legs, while muskrats are more compact and stouter. And finally, the surefire way to tell them apart is muskrats have thin, hairless rat-like tails while river otters have furry tails. According to the C&O Canal NHP Facebook page, otters can be frequently seen in the Great Falls and Fletchers Cove areas. One sign to look for is a slide, which is a worn-packed area that allows the otter to easily slip into the water.

River otters and fishers are often mistaken, and the differences are subtle as size is similar. Fishers have long bodies, short legs, and a bushy tail, while river otters have a more streamlined body adapted for swimming. The fisher's fur is dark brown with contrasting back legs and tails and a grizzled appearance on the head, which is also lighter in color than their body. Fishers have retractable claws like cats, while otters have webbed feet. Fishers are often found in wooded areas,

and otters are found in or adjacent to water. Understanding these differences can help you correctly identify these fascinating creatures in the wild.

I often hear but rarely see the eastern coyote. Coyotes have been well established in Maryland since their first sightings in 1972 and can now be found throughout the state, with the highest density in western Maryland. They are highly adaptable and have been observed in both urban and rural areas.

Recently, while camping near the Antietam Battlefield, I was awakened by a pack of coyotes howling outside my tent. The eerie sound evoked feelings of raw wilderness, even though I could see the glow of lights from the town of Sharpsburg. Although the exact population numbers of coyotes are unknown, it is likely that a healthy population of coyotes exists within the park's boundaries, especially in western Maryland. It will likely be a fleeting glimpse if you are fortunate enough to spot one.

Coyotes are primarily nocturnal but can be active at any time. They are opportunistic feeders, consuming everything from grasshoppers to deer, and unfortunately, they may also prey on family pets. Eastern coyotes are larger than their western counterparts and are scientifically recognized[†] as a wolf hybrid, with many individuals weighing around 50 pounds. They can be found alone or in packs and generally pose little threat to humans. They are usually very shy and will retreat when they see or smell people.

If you encounter coyotes that do not seem fearful – an experience I have had – you can scare them away by using a firm human voice, waving your hands, or throwing a small rock. Do not run, as this may provoke an attack response and you turn your back on the animal. Any problematic encounters should be reported to the NPS.

[†] Lawrence, B. Bossert, W. H. (1969). "The cranial evidence for hybridization in New England *Canis*" *Breviora*. 330: 1–13.

Stephen Nelson is 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 Council of Western Maryland and is Past Chairman of the Board of First Peoples Credit Union, Rotary Club of Cumberland, Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, and the Cumberland YMCA. Contact him at tristatetownplnner@gmail.com

Pedal, Paddle and Hike

On The Importance of Large and Small Things

By Trent Carbaugh

Coddiwomple – To travel purposefully toward an as-yet-unknown destination, with a sense of adventure and exploration, focusing on the journey rather than the final goal. (English slang word)

I love learning new words and coddiwomple is a new one to me that kind of embodies my philosophy of life, at least in my later years. But more on this wonderful word later.

Traveling on the towpath or just generally moving through life are affected by large things: those momentous decisions, uncontrolled catastrophic events or unanticipated accidents that occur and can change lives in unexpected ways. But not all these things are unwelcome.

When you are out on the towpath pay attention to those large, wonderful trees that are growing in most





places. Sycamores, beeches, oaks, hickories, silver maples, Paw Paws – the list can go on and on. Those trees are dependent on water, sunlight, and nutrients from the earth.

Trees are big things and as we now know, thanks to the work of Dr. Susan Simard and others, trees cooperate with each other by transferring these nutrients and various enzymes to each other. This is accomplished

through the mycorrhizal network, a system of fungi, sometimes of various species, that facilitate transfers for the price of a little sugar. Fungi are small things making life for the large things possible. When large trees die other fungi and slime molds take over to break down the dead wood into its constituent parts (mostly energy produced from photosynthesis, or to put it simply, stored sunlight) and distribute it around the forest floor for the use of young trees starting the cycle of life over again.



Along the Towpath, March 2025

Small things helping big things and vice-versa. There is a lesson here should we care to pay attention to.

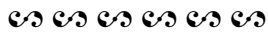
When you are out wandering along the towpath or floating on the Potomac you are surrounded by a bewilderingly huge amount of animal life. From microscopic organisms, insects, small rodents, reptiles, amphibians, birds, the occasional black bear, or the cattle and sheep on the surrounding farms, life is everywhere. Mosquitoes may be annoying, but they feed the bats and swallows, which in turn should keep the mosquitoes in check. That is if everything is working properly; white nose syndrome is killing off some bat species and the swallow population is, as are birds in general, declining for no yet discernible reason.

Nature seems to be a bit out of balance, there are a variety of reasons for this, most of them seem to be from the disdain that many folks have for the natural world. They are never in it; they spend their time closeted in

climate-controlled dwellings stuck to screens believing the lies they are told. They never venture out into nature or if they do it is in a very controlled way, then many of them chose to break the rules in place for their own safety and chase a bison or grizzly, or take a dip in the hot spring and wonder why they are broken or burned (and it's never their fault), just to get some social media attention. My perspective is a little different, but possibly we should let the bears eat a few these ignorant fools to help them survive hibernation.

We often encounter people who have an overwhelming desire to control others or to bend a narrative to re-enforce their own personal sense of entitlement or stroking their need for self-importance. This is an annoying quirk in human psychology and usually causes more problems than the perpetrator realizes. Unfortunately, most folks like this never learn that nature just doesn't really care.





The C&O Canal National Historical Park and the Potomac River drainage is one of those rare places where there is a fantastic blend of nature, history, and recreation in a concentrated area. It is also a BIG thing supported by little things. This is not to say that it is large in a physical sense, it is no Yellowstone or Yosemite; but it is large in a philosophical and spiritual way. It is a narrow strip of wonder; as Justice Douglas so succinctly put it “It is a refuge, a place of retreat, a long stretch of quiet and peace at the capital’s back door—a wilderness area where man can be alone with his thoughts, a sanctuary where he can commune with God and nature, a place not yet marred by the roar of wheels and the sound of horns.” There is a very good reason the Potomac is called the nation’s river.

The great pioneering psychiatrist Carl Jung postulated the idea of a collective unconsciousness that all humans experience. It seems to me that everyone that has an interest in preserving the C&O Canal NHP and the Potomac River drainage (they are part of a whole) should use their collective unconscious superpowers and all get on the same sheet of music. Every organization, individual, and the National Park Service should be working together to do the best job possible so our grandchildren and theirs, and on down the line can enjoy the wonders we have had.

Our solar system travels through space in an elaborate spinning, spiral dance of the sun, planets, moons, and asteroids at 514,000 mph. This speed doesn’t affect us very much, but the net effect is that we have sunrises and sunsets as well as the change of the seasons,



and you must admit that these are big things, often incredibly beautiful occurrences. And it happens every day without fail.

We are careening around the universe, and surprisingly not hitting things (at least not too often, sorry, dinosaurs) enjoying sunrises and sunsets, summer changing to fall, trees, and all those little things that contribute to the well being of all. Seems like a good system to me, it's up to us to be good stewards of the parts we affect.

So, this brings me to my new word coddiwomple. The world might be a better place if instead of always traveling "for purpose" either physically or intellectually, it might be wise, just every now and then, to wander about without a goal in mind. Pedal, paddle or hike, your choice, and simply enjoy and observe the nature and history around you. If you pay enough attention, you can, perhaps, learn to see the wonder of how it all works together by seeing not just looking.

The C&O Canal is a perfect place for coddiwompling ambitions, should you have any. You can wander about and marvel at the wonders of nature as well as the skill and determination of our ancestors. But please spare a thought for what you can do to preserve this great treasure for us and those that come after us. Please enjoy the accompanying photographs, they are all large and small things that can be found along the canal. Let's not lose them.



Due to unforeseen circumstances beyond my control, at least for the foreseeable future, this will be my final installment for *Pedal, Paddle, and Hike*. I truly hope you have enjoyed my articles as much as I have enjoyed writing them. I want to thank editor Steve Dean not only for the excellent job he has done as compiler and

editor of *Along the Towpath* but also for giving me the opportunity to write for such a fine publication, and along the way for becoming a good friend. Remember J.R.R. Tolkien's words "Not all who wander are lost." I wish you happy coddiwompling and please keep in mind getting lost sometimes is just as important as knowing where you are.

Thank you, Trent, for sharing your knowledge, talent and humor by providing a diverse selection of content to Along the Towpath. You have been a pleasure to work with.

References:

- The Mother Tree Project www.mothereproject.org
- Trees of Pennsylvania and the Northeast*, Charles Fergus, 2002
- Trees, Fungus, and Complexity Science*, Trent Carbaugh, 2023,
- Along the Towpath* Vol LV, Number 2
- Towpath Guide to the C&O Canal*, Thomas F. Hahn, 2015 revised edition.

A note on photos – for this article, Mr. Carbaugh has opted to share a selection of images without captions of things seen while coddiwompling on the canal.



On the Level

By Steven Dean

This report covers level walker activity for November 2024 through January 2025. Earlier reports are included when applicable. Any reports for activity performed during February or later will be in the June, 2025 Along the Towpath. Activity during this reporting period was lighter than usual. This was due to the extensive winter weather in January.

Level Walkers please note the following: Effective February 1, Allyson Miller is the Level Walker Chair. Please disregard any previous level walker chair contact information and submit questions and reports electronically to lw@candocanal.org or in writing to the following address:

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Association Inc.

Attn: Level Walker Chair

P.O. Box 366

Glen Echo, MD 20812-0366

Thanks to all who participate in the Level Walker volunteer program! Your efforts make a significant contribution to the park. For further information about the Level Walker program, please email lw@candocanal.org or use the QR code at right to visit candocanal.org/level/.



November 2024 to January 2025 Level Walker Activity

Level 2 Incline Plane to Lock 5: Kamile Kay reports November and December: I went on multiple walks each month. There is some light graffiti back underneath the Capitol Crescent Trail Pedestrian Bridge. Light trash was found and was mostly snack wrappers.

Levels 8 Lock 21 to Lock 22: Rinze and Sue Roosma report November 6: It was an unusually warm day for November with temperatures in the 80s. Since fall was in full swing there were plenty of leaves up and along the trail, which made spotting any trash much harder than usual. We didn't find much trash along the level. There was a small ball floating in the canal. There were plenty of blue herons out and about, but far fewer turtles were spotted than usual. Towpath resurfacing was complete on the level and the entire level was watered. There were no campers at Swains.

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

Level 9 Lock 22 to Seneca Aqueduct: Lou Robbins reports Dec. 8: It was a warm, sunny December Sunday. There was light towpath usage. Comments were noted:

- Bridge beams at Violets Lock need to be cleaned and painted

- The Seneca area parking lot has potholes
- The Pennyfield access road has potholes
- The rear doors of the Seneca lock house need repair and painting
- Fencing at the southwest corner of the Seneca Aqueduct needs to be expanded and repaired
- There is fresh beaver damage to trees on the river side of the towpath about 1.8 miles north of Pennyfield

Level 10 Seneca Aqueduct to Mile 25: Judith Walton reports Nov. 10 and Dec. 27: Walks were accompanied by Flora, the capable canine assistant. The November walk was on a beautiful fall day, with some walkers and bikers out. A large amount of trash was collected. Almost all the trash was around the parking and picnic areas. Clearly the parking lot is a place where people drink, and it seems to be used more and more recently. In December there was more trash than ever found before. As noted in the earlier walks, most trash was beer cans and alcohol bottles in the parking area. The towpath was in good condition and visitation was light.

Level 13 Edwards Ferry to Harrison Island: Liz Wagner reports Dec. 3: It was a relatively warm day for the time of year with temperatures in the mid-40s. The towpath



Pond lilies at Hancock – Photo by Mike Buccì

sides were recently mowed, and all structures are in good condition. Use of the level that day was very light. The towpath was in good condition. There was some surface wear between Mileposts 32 and 33, but no standing water or ruts were seen. The wooden bridge over Broad Run continues to show wear. Bird sightings included northern cardinal, white-breasted nuthatch, red-tailed hawk, downy woodpecker and eastern bluebird.

Level 15 Whites Ferry to Lock 26: Jon Wolz reports Dec. 25: I level walked by bike. It was a cloudy, cool afternoon. The towpath was clear and the fine, crushed gravel has washed away in different places leaving stone gravel as a towpath surface. The sinkhole by the historic bridge abutment at Whites Ferry is getting larger. A tree is growing out of the side of the bridge abutment on the berm side of the canal. The small trees growing from the foundations of the granary warehouse are also an issue. There are potholes in the Whites Ferry parking lot. Graffiti was noted at the Marble Quarry Hiker Biker Camp and was later removed by Jim Tomlin.

Level 16 Lock 26 to Monocacy Aqueduct: Jon Wolz reports Dec. 19: I level walked by bike. The wooden park entrance sign at the Monocacy Aqueduct is in poor condition. As reported in September, there was no trash along the towpath. All the trash that was gathered was from the parking lot at the Monocacy Aqueduct. There was no trash at the Dickerson Conservation Area parking lot. The canal prism was extremely low from the entrance at the Dickerson Conservation Area parking lot up to the entrance at the old power plant. There is no water in the prism near the old power plant entrance. There is more water in the prism from the old power plant entrance to lock 27. Water was flowing into the prism in a pipe near the old power plant canal entrance.

Level 22 Lock 31 to Lock 33: Karlen Keto reports Nov. 22 and Dec. 17: Level walks were conducted with canine Dobby who loves walking the level. In November



Round Top Cement Mill in snow – Photo by Paul Petkus

the weather was fantastic. Trash was light and I noticed no towpath problems. During the December walk, a little more trash was found. Some bricks on the canal side of the Lock 31 lock house are deteriorating. The towpath is in great shape. I saw no problems with culverts. A few tree parts were found and were easily kicked off the towpath. Numerous bikers passed on both dates with no warning. **Paul Durham reports Nov. 25:** The weather was cool; great for walking and biking. Towpath use was very light. The towpath surface was in good condition and no problems were noted.

Level 23 Lock 33 to Dam 3: Paul Durham reports Nov. 25: Typically, on this level, visitor activity starts rising significantly after 10:00 a.m. Most walkers are headed for the trail to go up to Maryland Heights. One issue that I observed was a large amount (40+) of paper Gatorade cups littered in piles at several locations between Locks 33 and 34. I collected the trash. The annual JFK 50-mile event that had been held on the towpath the day before. A walker informed me that these were left there by the race participants and organizers. The litter piles included the remains of packs of electrolytes and energy snacks, which are difficult to handle because of their attraction to ants. **Arthur Tsien reports Aug. 22 and Sept. 29:** This was my fifth walk of this level in 2024. It was a typical winter day for this part of the world, on the cold side, mostly sunny with some breeze. The level continues to be in good condition. I did not see any significant impediments to foot or cycle travel. I had my usual positive experience walking the towpath. I have been walking this level for five or six years, starting not long after it was resurfaced. During the last year or so, I have noticed incrementally more deterioration of the towpath surface with each walk. It's nothing serious and presumably not unexpected. The NPS stone wall project downstream of Lock 34 appeared to be done as of my walk of this level in June, but two temporary debris barriers across the canal near the repair area are still in place;

they do not appear to serve any purpose. Both historical waysides at Lock 33 are difficult to impossible to read. They are good candidates for replacement.

Level 32 Marsh Run Culvert to Dam 4: **David Plume reports Nov. 18:** It was sunny to partly cloudy and 70 degrees. Almost all the leaves had fallen from trees. The English ivy on trees is more apparent this time of year. Large trash items were found, including a plastic chair in the channel between the guard lock and waste weir and a mattress between the towpath and river just downstream from the waste weir. I was not able to remove these items. I removed some branches from the towpath, but there were no big obstructions. There were a couple of small areas with erosion on the river side of the towpath. A larger area has been marked by NPS with orange fence. The prism was very dry, with shallow pools in just a couple small areas near the Big Woods hiker-biker camp. There was no water was flowing from Dam 4 Cave. There was trash in the parking areas.

Level 47 Little Pool to Hancock: **Mike and Judi Bucci report Oct. 17:** Trees that appeared to be healthy were marked with orange at the Little Pool hiker-biker camp. Lily pads appear to be taking over the watered canal in Hancock. We cleaned one wayside panel at the crossover bridge in Hancock, which helped a little. The wayside at the car crossing bridge at the boat ramp Hancock is illegible. Visitation was light, with just a few bikers. Brush had been cleared 2 feet on both sides of the towpath upstream from the Little Pool parking lot.

Level 49 Round Top Cement Mill to Lock 53: **Paul Petkus reports Jan. 12:** I was the only visitor to the park in that area. Birds, a raccoon and a squirrel were seen. Tracks from animals were in the snow for the entire stretch I walked. No changes were noted in the condition of any

of the structures. Two more benches have been added since my walk in October. The surface of the towpath was covered with snow. Based on observations during previous outings, there's no reason to believe there are any significant issues with the towpath surface. The prism held frozen water for parts of Mile 129. The condition of the prism appeared to have been unchanged from previous outings. No issues were observed. No change was detected in the structures at the cement mill. Birds identified from their calls were Carolina wren, tufted titmouse, golden crowned kinglet, hairy woodpecker, cardinal and white breasted nuthatch. The golden crowned kinglet was the only surprise. Birds I saw included pileated woodpeckers, crows, hairy woodpeckers, white throated sparrows and dark-eyed juncos. Tracks in the snow indicated recent activity from turkeys, deer, squirrels, raccoons and river otters.

Level 64 Kellys Road Culvert to Spring Gap Recreation Area: **Nasra Sakran, with L. Buckler, reports September and October:** We only walked the part of the towpath near the Spring Gap area. The towpath was in very good condition and trash was mostly in the parking area. *Nasra is retiring from level walking after many years of faithful service as a volunteer. We thank her for her service to the Association and the C&O Canal NHP.*

Roving Level Walker: **Mark Stover reports November through January:** Mark walks various parts of the entire canal on a regular basis. No reportable damage to the towpath or prism was noted. Spotted lantern flies were reported in the Milepost 90 area. A young coyote was noted near Milepost 6. A bear cub was observed leaving the canal and crossing over to the berm in October between Mileposts 141 and 142. No mother bear was observed. Another sighting included a 12-point buck.



Jim Moen encountered the towpath resurfacing effort in progress in the Spring Gap area during a fall walk.

Cumberland to Paw Paw Bicycle Trip in August

By Denny Sloppy

Denny Sloppy is organizing a two-day bike ride that will be held on Saturday and Sunday August 16 and 17. Riders will meet in Cumberland on Saturday morning at the mule statue in front of the Western Maryland C&O Canal NHP Visitor Center. Participants are expected to be ready to ride and the group will depart at 10:00 a.m. The group will bike to the Paw Paw area, spend the night and bike back to Cumberland on Sunday.

In the Paw Paw area, there are two overnight options. The first is to camp at the Purslane Run Hiker-Biker camp site along the C&O Canal. The second option is to stay in nearby Paw Paw, W.Va. at either the Canal Cabins or the Bike Path Bed and Breakfast. Lunch on Saturday and possibly Sunday will be at the Oldtown Schoolhouse Kitchen.

This is a rain-or-shine event except in the case of a possible flood. If flooding is in the forecast, Denny will cancel the ride two days prior.

There is no cost for the event. However, riders are responsible for their own food and lodging expenses.

Riders are responsible for their own equipment and provisions and must bring their own camping equipment if they decide to camp. The ride is limited to a maximum of 20 riders. The total distance is 60 miles; 30 miles each day. Riders can leave their cars at the free parking lot in Cumberland under I-68 at Exit 43B.



Riders will meet at the mule statue at the C&O Canal NHP Cumberland Visitor Center

Lodging is limited in Paw Paw, W.Va. Denny has reserved rooms at the Canal Cabins for the group. He encourages couples to consider this ride as two cabins and the Bike Path B&B have queen beds. For singles he encourages sharing of cabins for those willing to share. One cabin has two bunk beds, and one has two twin beds. The cabins are quite comfortable

and share two bath houses. If the cabins are reserved the owner will give a discount on the price.

Contact Denny for further information about the ride and the cabins and rooms. Reservations are required by June 1 to reserve a place on the ride. Riders will be required to sign a liability form. Denny can be contacted (814) 577-5877 or at dennysloppy@yahoo.com.

2025 Presidents Lunch

By Jonnie Lefebure

The ever-popular Presidents Luncheon at Bill's Place in Little Orleans, along the towpath at Mile 140.8 in Western Maryland, will be Saturday, May 31, 2025. No reservations are needed; just show up for lunch at or before 11:00, place your order and enjoy camaraderie with your fellow canal supporters.

Bill's Place is near many interesting canal and Western Maryland Rail Trail features, including the Fifteen Mile Creek Aqueduct and the Indigo Tunnel. Check back on the Association website for updates on the event and to find if any morning or afternoon hikes are scheduled on the day of the lunch.



Celebrating Over a Quarter Century of Continuing Hikes

By Arthur Tsien

The Association's continuing hikes have taken participants to a wide range of places on and near the Towpath, some well-known and others much less so. Typically, there have been four to six Continuing Hikes each year. In some years, there has been a theme for the hikes; for example, in 2024 the hikes visited dams and locks that supply water for the canal.

Pat White started leading continuing hikes before the end of the last century. Many of us have enjoyed her hikes and her commentary on the canal, its structures, and its history over the years. We also enjoyed Pat's delicious, homemade chocolate chip or oatmeal cookies.

After over a quarter century of continuing hike leadership, Pat decided to step back and give her mixer and oven a rest. She led her last continuing hike on November 24, 2024. Jon Wolz will take over leadership of the continuing hikes in 2025. Jon has led



Pat with one of her signature cookies at Violettes Lock – Photos by Arthur Tsien

several hikes for the Association over the years. Like Pat, Jon has a deep interest in and knowledge of the canal and towpath. Jon's hikes in 2025 will focus on canal aqueducts. Information on upcoming hikes can be found on the calendar on Page 22 or on the Association's website at www.candocanal.org.

I hope to see you on a continuing hike in 2025! Also, please consider leading your own hike; if you're interested, please consult "Leading an Event" on the Association's website at candocanal.org/event-process/ and contact the Association's Programs Committee Chair at programs@candocanal.org.



Neil Gilliam, Pat White, and Jon Wolz (l to r) at Riley's Lock (Lock 24). Neil has been on, by his count, 121 of Pat's continuing hikes since he joined the Association in 1999.

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](https://www.facebook.com/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 alternate pick-up or drop-off locations.*



C&O Canal Association

Calendar of Events – 2025

C&OCA Business
C&OCA Hike and Dinner or Other Event
Non-C&OCA Event
C&OCA Hike
C&OCA Volunteer Event
C&OCA Paddle Trip
C&OCA Bike Trip
<p>March 22, Sat., C&O Canal Association Annual Meeting Upper Montgomery County Fire Department 19801 Beallsville Road, Beallsville, Md. Refer to www.candocanal.org for details</p>
<p>April 12, Sat., Potomac River Cleanup Association-sponsored sites from Fletchers Cove to Rileys Lock. Contact Jim Heins, vip@candocanal.org before April 12.</p>
<p>April 13, Sun., Board Meeting, 1 p.m. Glen Echo Town Hall, 6106 Harvard Ave. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.</p>
<p>April 13 to June 6. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mondays – Fridays. Commemorating the C&O Canal – from Past to Present. Art Exhibit – Featuring the art of Jean Hiron. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for additional details. Unitarian Universalist Church 6301 River Road, Bethesda, Md.</p>
<p>April 26, Sat., Douglas Hike and Dinner, Hikes starting in Dickerson, Md with bike ride options Dinner and presentation in Poolesville, Md. Refer to article on Page 1 and www.candocanal.org . Contact: programs@candocanal.org.</p>
<p>May 4, Sun. Continuing Hike Series, 11:00 a.m. at Edwards Ferry. Hikers will visit Broad Run Trunk. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details. Contact: Jon Wolz – hikemaster@candocanal.org or 240-888-5367</p>
<p>May 18, Sun.. 2 to 4 p.m. Transition from Commerce to Sustainability Slide Presentation - Joel Cohen Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for additional details. Unitarian Universalist Church 6301 River Road, Bethesda, Md.</p>
<p>May 31, Sat., President's Lunch, 11:00 a.m. Bill's Place, Little Orleans, Md. Details on Page 20 and at www.candocanal.org Contact: programs@candocanal.org.</p>
<p>June 1, Sun., Board Meeting, 1 p.m. Williamsport, Md. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.</p>
<p>July 12, Sat. Paddle Trip. Brunswick to Monocacy Aqueduct 4-5 hour paddle trip. Reservations by July 10 are required. For information and reservations, contact Tony Laing, canoemaster@candocanal.org or 301-980-8932.</p>

<p>Aug. 3, Sun., Board Meeting, 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.</p>
<p>Aug. 16 & 17, Sat. & Sun., Two-Day Bike Ride, Cumberland to Paw Paw and return. Details on Page 20 and at www.candocanal.org. Denny Sloppy, dennysloppy@yahoo.com or 814-577-5877.</p>
<p>Aug. 22–24, Fri.-Sun. Paddle Trip. Paw Paw Bends Area Potomac River from Paw Paw, W.Va. to Little Orleans, Md. Trip includes two nights camping. Reservations are required and paddlers must provide their own canoe or kayak and associated paddling and camping gear. Paddlers are expected to contribute to community meals and help out in camp. Most participants use kayaks, but we need two canoes to carry supplies. For information and reservations, contact Tony Laing, canoemaster@candocanal.org or 301-980-8932.</p>
<p>Sept. 21 – 25, Sun. – Thu., World Canals Conference Buffalo, N.Y. Further Info: www.wcc2025buffalo.com</p>
<p>Oct. 5, Sun., Board Meeting, 1 p.m. Williamsport, Md. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.</p>
<p>Oct. 10-15, Fri.-Wed., Through Bike Ride, 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 leaders before and during the trip, and must come equipped with recommended bicycles and have clothing for warm, cold, and rainy weather. Denny Sloppy, dennysloppy@yahoo.com or 814-577-5877.</p>
<p>Oct. 25, Sat., Heritage Hike and Dinner, Details will be provided in the September <i>Along the Towpath</i> and at www.candocanal.org. Contact: programs@candocanal.org.</p>
<p>Nov. 9, Sun. Continuing Hike Series, 11:00 a.m. at Antietam Creek. Hikers will visit Antietam Creek Aqueduct Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details. Contact: Jon Wolz – hikemaster@candocanal.org or 240-888-5367</p>
<p>Dec. 7, Sun., Board Meeting, 1 p.m. Glen Echo Town Hall, 6106 Harvard Ave. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.</p>
<p>Dec. 7, Sun. Continuing Hike Series, 11:00 a.m. at Williamsport. Hikers will visit the Conococheague Aqueduct Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details. Contact: Jon Wolz – hikemaster@candocanal.org or 240-888-5367</p>

*Refer to Page 21 for important information about events.
Contact programs@candocanal.org for questions.*

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

SuperintendentTina Cappetta
 Deputy Superintendent Ed Wenschhof
 Superintendent’s Assistant Erin Cowan
 Chief Ranger Joshua Cunningham (Acting)
 Chief of Business ManagementBen Helwig
 Chief of Resource ManagementAndrew Landsman
 Chief of Maintenance Jim Yelton
 Chief of Interpretation, Education and Volunteers....Christiana Hanson
 Chief of Professional ServicesJoseph Reed
 Partnerships Coordinator Vacant
 Volunteer Program ManagerEmily Tyner-Hewitt
 Cultural Resources Manager and HistorianJustin Ebersole
 Safety Officer John Adams
 Supervisory Park Ranger (Law Enforcement) Joshua Cunningham

Palisades District

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

Interpretive SupervisorNicolette 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)

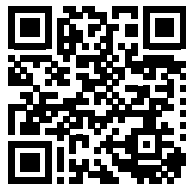
Interpretive Supervisor Joshua Nolen

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
 (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/
 Canal Towns – 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

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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. 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. The webmaster is website@candocanal.org. Inquiries can be directed to the Association at inquiries@candocanal.org.

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President: Bill Holdsworth, president@candocanal.org

First Vice President: Arthur Tsien

Second Vice President: Barbara Sheridan

Secretary: Jane Hanna, secretary@candocanal.org

Treasurer: Paul Lubell, treasurer@candocanal.org

Information Officer: Vacant

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Terms expire in 2026: Jim Heins,
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If address label says, "Membership Expired Dec-2024" your membership has expired. Please renew to continue receiving *Along the Towpath*.

Hikers during the 2025 Douglas Hike will have the opportunity to observe a unique C&O Canal culvert if they opt to make a short side trip off the towpath. Culvert 49, located at Mile 34.8, features the most ornate stonework of any C&O Canal culvert. It is believed that the culvert provided road access to the Whites Ferry area at one point. The two upper images are ring stones and keystones on the upstream arch. The lower image is the downstream arch. Photos by Steven Dean



ALONG THE TOWPATH

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Association
www.candocanal.org

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Check us out on social media!

@candocanal.org
 candocanalassoc