

# 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

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Number 2

## Fall Heritage Hike, Ride, Dinner, and Speaker

By Jonnie Lefebure

Historic Williamsport, MD, has been selected for the Fall Heritage hikes, bike ride, dinner, and speaker event. On November 1, hikers and bikers will meet at the Cushwa Basin to start their trips. Short-distance hikers meet at 12 noon and travel by shuttle to the Gift Road access for a 3.5-mile hike back to the Basin. Long-distance hikers will start their hike at beautiful Lock 46 for a 7.2-mile trek. A catered dinner will be provided at the nearby Downsville Ruritan Club. After dinner, David Gilbert will present his program on Hall's Rifle Works on Virginius Island on the Shenandoah River side of Harpers Ferry.

Long-distance hikers board the shuttle bus at the Cushwa Basin at 11 a.m., headed to Lock 46. Short-distance hikers board the shuttle at Cushwa at 12 noon, headed to the Gift Road parking area. After stepping off the bus, long-distance hikers will walk down a short gravel road to the lock. In addition to the brick lockhouse, well-preserved mule bridge abutments can be seen at the downstream end of the lock. Mules crossed the bridge to the berm side of the canal, towing the boats a short

distance to Lock 45, where boats entered the slackwater pond behind Dam 5.

Shortly after Lock 45, the towpath is a rock ledge with vertical cliffs rising on the land side and the river 10 feet below on the other side. The limestone rock strata here are vertical.

Just before the detour around Dam 5 construction, hikers can see an old stone wall and a decaying house up on the berm. At the start of the detour, two flights of temporary stairs take travelers up to a mulch path around Inlet 5 Lockhouse, then to a 2.5-mile hike along Dam 5 Road, crossing the prism to the towpath on a temporary wooden walkway.

Immediately after rejoining the towpath, hikers are diverted around what was once the Little Conococheague Creek culvert, which washed out during localized flooding in 2014. In 1834, this area was the scene of the "Irish Civil War" between feuding clans working on Dams 4 and 5. Federal and state militias were called to quell the disturbance.

*Continued on Page 9*



Lock 46. All photos by Jonnie Lefebure



Towpath between cliffs and river.

# President's (Non-Bovine) Ruminations

By Arthur Tsien

I am honored to have been elected as the C&O Canal Association's 39th president at the 2025 Annual Meeting. Thank you for your confidence in me and for your support.

By the time you read this, my one-year term as president will be about half over. A few ruminations from the first half of my term follow. Not being a cow (*Bos taurus*), my ruminations are inherently non-bovine in character.

Looking backwards, I see two important events that have taken place in 2025. First, *Along the Towpath* is back after a one-issue hiatus, with a new five-person editorial team: Jane Hanna, Ned Preston, David Romanowski, Steve Nelson, and Kuriacose Joseph (*see article on page 18*). Second, Allyson Miller took over as Level Walker Chair early this year. Hats off to all of them for stepping up and filling key leadership vacancies! They will help ensure that longstanding and highly valued Association programs continue.

Looking forward, I also see two things of note. First, **more** volunteer help is needed. The Nominating Committee needs to identify candidates for treasurer and several directors for election at the March 2026 Annual Meeting. We also need help with the following committees: archives, programs, webmaster, membership, and Volunteers in the Park (VIP). To borrow from a popular saying, it takes a village to have a successful volunteer-run association. You, readers, are the village. If you are interested

or have questions about leadership opportunities, a series of "blast" emails detailing specific leadership needs is in progress. If you have questions or comments, please send me an email at [president@candocanal.org](mailto:president@candocanal.org).

Second, early in 2025 before I became president, the Board of Directors held an informal Zoom "brainstorming" session to discuss the Association's "future" and how the Association should position itself to best fulfill our mission – preserving and protecting the historical and natural resources of the C&O Canal and the Potomac River Basin. Topics teed up for discussion included possible tweaks (or more!) of how we operate to better fulfill the Association's mission, increase volunteerism, increase membership, and increase participation in Association activities. That initial meeting was a useful start, but further discussion was moved to the back burner because of the then-more pressing need to find new leadership for

*ATP*. Now that *ATP* is back on track, I hope we can resume discussing our future soon.

Thanks for reading. I hope to see you at one of the Association's activities or on the towpath.

## *Author's Notes*

**Fact checking:** "39th President" is based on the list of past presidents on our website, separately counting non-consecutive terms served by the same individual.



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## The Association Welcomes New Members

*Larry Broadwell*

*Kevin Delia*

*Donald Fisher*

*Paula Majhan*

*Pam Oves and Chris Oves*

*Gustavo Camelo Perez  
and Mauricio Gonzalez*

*Lori Sperling*

*Theresa H. Stone*

*Jonathan Warner*

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

*Membership information is available at [candocanal.org/membership](http://candocanal.org/membership).*

# Donors to Association Funds

## *Donations February 1 through July 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 online.** The Association website makes it easy to pay online using your credit card. Processing online 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: You don't need to sign up for PayPal. 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**

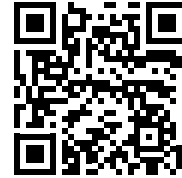
*General funds that are used for any purpose.*

#### **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.*



*Donate, or find more information about donations at [www.candocanal.org/contributions](http://www.candocanal.org/contributions)*

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## Donations

Kathryn Banfield – *A*

Norman Cook – *D*

Lauren Cosgrove  
& Thomas O'Brien – *G*

Ruth Dudgeon – *A*

Kenneth Fisher – *G*

John Frye – *A, C, D, R*

Robinne Gray – *R*

Martin Heavner – *C*

John Haaga – *G*

Joseph Howard – *R*

Carol Ivory – *L*

Tom Kettler – *A*

Alice Mayo – *R*

Cynthia Miller – *R*

Joyce Morgan – *R*

Gary Moore – *A, C, D, R*

Rodney Rempt – *R*

Robert Reynolds – *A R*

Edward Rodgers – *A, C, D, R*

Raphael Semmes – *A, C, D, G, R, S*

Michael Shallenberger – *D, R*

Sierra Club Potomac  
Region Outings – *R*

Brenda Sparenborg – *R*

Mercedes Tibbits – *R*

Peter Van Vliet – *G*

Rachel Weisz – *G*

Shelia Weldenfeld – *A*

Kristine Wilson – *A, C, D, R*

Keith & Esta Yoder – *G*

# Superintendent Tina Cappetta Retires

By Jane Hanna and Rod Mackler



Tina Cappetta and Ed Wenschhof.  
Photo courtesy NPS

Tina Cappetta, superintendent of the C&O Canal NPS since 2020, retired from the National Park Service as of May 31, 2025. Cappetta's retirement was marked by a tribute by Senator

Van Hollen in the May 22 Congressional Record. A June 2025 article in the *Huffington Post* titled "Trump Ushers in a Bleak Future for our National Parks" said she had planned to work another three years, but that the stress of managing the park through the current workforce cuts was affecting her health. So far this year the C&O Canal NHP has lost its only arborist, its carpenter, and its most experienced mule handler. In a concrete example, the article said a summer storm had downed trees across the road into Great Falls trapping Park visitors below. With Park maintenance workers busy elsewhere, neighbors came out with chainsaws and removed the trees and freed the visitors.

Cappetta oversaw several major infrastructure projects and initiatives at C&O. In 2021 the park celebrated its 50th anniversary as part of the National Park System, and NPS staff worked with the C&O Canal Association to hold the World Canals Conference in Hagerstown and points along the canal. Also in 2021, the park opened new headquarters in Williamsport. A new visitor center is underway nearby.

Cappetta closes out a 37-year career in the NPS. Before coming to the C&O Canal, she served as superintendent of Fort McHenry National Monument

and Historic Shrine, Hampton National Historic Site, and Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. At these Maryland parks she obtained grant support for field trips for Baltimore City fourth-graders, created a living history employment program for youth, and led a curriculum-based education and paddle program with partners. She also served as superintendent at Women's Rights National Historical Park (New York) where she led the rehabilitation of the Wesleyan Chapel.

Earlier experience includes chief of interpretation and resource management at Booker T. Washington National Monument (Virginia), education specialist at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve (Louisiana), and park ranger at Colonial National Historical Park (Virginia) and Gettysburg National Military Park (Pennsylvania).

Cappetta earned a bachelor's degree in government and politics from the University of Maryland. She holds certificates in the context of environmental policy from George Washington University and legislative studies from the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University.

Edward "Ed" Wenschhof stepped into the role of acting superintendent with Cappetta's departure. Wenschhof has been deputy superintendent since 2024, and before that was the chief of visitor and resource protection. "Ed's a well-respected leader who has dedicated his career to public service," says Cappetta. "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."

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## Submission of Content for *Along the Towpath* –

*Please review the submission guidelines posted at [candocanal.org/submission](http://candocanal.org/submission). Submit questions, comments and content to [editor@candocanal.org](mailto: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

## April 13, 2025 – Glen Echo Town Hall

**C&O Canal NHP Interns:** Last year, the Association funded three intern positions. One intern was James Etheridge, who attended the board meeting and described his experience as a digital interpretation intern. He was hired in May 2024, and his one-year term expired in May 2025. He especially enjoyed the engagement with the public. Joshua Nolen from the NPS reported that because of delays in the hiring process, the park has yet to hire an intern to assist in volunteer management.

**April Volunteer Cleanup:** Jim Heins managed five cleanup sites with 50 volunteers, including nine children. Association volunteers totaled four, three site leaders and one other volunteer.

**Along the Towpath:** As of the March issue, our long-time editor has stepped down but left us with detailed instructions on how to proceed. Several Association members have volunteered to take over the editorial duties. However, we will need professional design and production capability, and are in discussions with a local graphic designer. We will not be up and running in time for a June *ATP*, but expect to produce a September issue.

## June 1, 2025 – Williamsport Town Hall

**Park report:** Recovery from the May 2025 flood damage—the worst damage since 2018—is the highest priority for the NPS staff. Most damage occurred in the western section of

the towpath. We will table discussions of how we can help with park needs until the cleanup is well underway. Shaun Lehmann explained that the park depends heavily on the public to report on canal damage issues. Submit information with GPS-pinned photos to [choh\\_information@nps.gov](mailto:choh_information@nps.gov).

**Retirement:** Superintendent Tina Cappetta has retired as of May 31. Deputy Supt. Ed Wenschhof will take over as acting superintendent. *See article, page 4.*

**Along the Towpath:** The editorial committee continues to work toward issuing a September newsletter. The board approved the cost of professional design and production by a local graphic designer. Association members are contributing excellent articles and photos.

**C&O Canal Cleanup:** Jim Heins coordinated cleanup efforts with a friendly and energetic group of volunteer students from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science on May 31. The primary sites were Town Creek, Candoc Recreation Area, and Spring Gap. When the volunteers finished cleaning up the areas initially identified, they moved to adjacent areas such as hiker-biker camps since they agreed to three full hours of work. Meanwhile, Jim took all recyclables back to his home for disposal.

**Canal Place, Cumberland:** The replica canal boat needs additional repairs, mainly because of the effects of dry rot. The board approved \$5,500 for the repairs, to be completed by Hanada Contracting.

**Volunteers Needed:** The Association needs volunteers to fill slots in Archives, Membership, Volunteers in Parks, Programs, Treasurer, Website, and Store.

*Continued on next page*



*Volunteers from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science worked with Jim Heins on a canal cleanup, May 31. Photos left and right by Robin Paulson. Center photo by Claire Nemes*

## August 3, 2025 – Zoom Meeting

Christiana Hanson of C&O Canal NHP gave an excellent presentation on their Canal Classroom Program, which has brought the park to kids and kids to the park since 2013. Park staff and volunteers work with Montgomery, Frederick, Washington, and Allegheny counties to develop location-based programs on plant identification, transportation, labor history, and other

subjects. The park plans to soon expand the program to the District of Columbia charter schools. Canal Classroom Corps volunteers are needed, and you don't have to be a teacher. Find out more at [www.nps.gov/choh/learn/education/development/canalclassroomcorps](http://www.nps.gov/choh/learn/education/development/canalclassroomcorps).

With the success of the C&OCA team competing in the 2024 3M Bike Challenge along the Great Allegheny Passage Trail, the board approved \$400 to support a team for this year's race, September 13.



Left to right: John Betting, Denny Sloppy, Arthur Tsien, Bonnie Leatherman, Paul Leatherman, Barbara Sheridan, Wayne Cerniglia, Patricia White, Charlotte Loveless, Tiffany Abalt, Bill Holdsworth, Christine Holdsworth.

## 2025 President's Lunch

By Arthur Tsien

The Association's annual President's Lunch took place on May 31 at its usual location, Bill's Place in Little Orleans, Maryland. We had 13 human (*Homo sapiens*) attendees, including the current president (yours truly) and three past presidents (Bill Holdsworth, Tiffany Ahalt, and Barbara Sheridan), and one canine (*Canis lupus familiaris*) attendee. The human attendees remembered the contributions of three other past presidents who went across the berm since the 2024 President's Lunch: Bonnie Troxell (president in 1975–1977), Nancy Long (1978–1979), and Chris Cerniglia (2003–2004).

According to my most reliable source of information about Association history, 2025 marked the 23rd round of this event. It started in 2003 as a breakfast at Bill's Place. In the event's early days, many participants arrived the night before and camped out. Some things change, but others do not. Breakfast has morphed into

lunch, and camping is a distant memory for many of us. However, the camaraderie and the venue continue.

After lunch, some of the group took an impromptu walk on the Western Maryland Rail Trail, which largely parallels the towpath in this area, to the upstream portal of the Indigo Tunnel. The former rail tunnel is closed to the public to help prevent the spread of fatal white-nose syndrome to endangered Eastern small-footed bats (*Myotis leibii*) and Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*).

Please join us next year; the date will be announced later in the year. This year's announcements for the President's Lunch described Bill's Place as "iconic." It may not be as iconic as the Eiffel Tower or the Golden Gate Bridge, but it's certainly well known and regarded by the Canal Association faithful. If you are not familiar with Bill's Place, don't miss the chance to experience it for yourself. I hope to see you there.

# Volunteers Needed!

As Arthur Tsien mentioned in his “President’s Ruminations,” the Association has an increasingly critical need for volunteers, as many key Association positions are either currently vacant or will be soon. Those who have held these positions have generously donated their time and expertise for many years. We now need new volunteers to step up and help keep the Association vibrant and moving forward. Below are descriptions of some of the most vital positions, along with key duties. If you are interested or have questions, please email our president, Arthur Tsien, at [president@andocanal.org](mailto:president@andocanal.org).

## Membership Committee Chair

- Collecting mail weekly from the Association mailbox at the Glen Echo, Maryland, post office. Sorting the mail and handling nonmembership correspondence. Non-membership mail is usually financial reports for the treasurer or junk mail.
- Processing new, renewal, and rejoining memberships received via the links on the Association website, email, or postal mail.
- Maintaining membership records using our Wild Apricot online membership database software.
- Mailing the current issue of *Along the Towpath*, membership cards, and badges to new members. Occasionally responding to members and prospective members who have questions about membership purchases.
- Periodically reporting to the Board of Directors and at the Annual Meeting on membership statistics and trends.

## Programs Committee Chair

- Planning and coordinating the Annual Meeting each March; the Douglas Hike in the spring; the President’s Lunch in the spring; and the Heritage Hike in the fall.
- Coordinating with other committees and event leaders for hikes, nature walks, bike rides, and paddle trips.
- General familiarity with Association events would be helpful, but no special qualifications are needed.

## Internet- and Computer-Related Tasks

Our current webmaster performs all four of the tasks listed below, but we welcome prospective volunteers

who are interested in performing only some of them. New volunteers will be able to work with our current webmaster to become familiar with tasks to be done.

**Website Manager** Keeps information on our website current. We use WordPress for content management of the website. A general familiarity with WordPress is highly desirable.

**Wild Apricot Administrator** Manages the configuration of the Wild Apricot membership software. The Membership Committee uses the online software to maintain the Association’s membership rolls. General familiarity with Wild Apricot is desirable.

**“Blast” Email Editor** Periodically sends “blast” emails to all members using our Wild Apricot membership software. The editor does not have any responsibilities for administering that software. At times, the editor is asked to compose “blast” emails, so good written communication skills are desirable.

**PayPal Manager** Processes online payments and refunds, such as for membership, donations, events, and store purchases. Downloads PayPal activity for the treasurer, updates payment buttons, and maintains permissions granted to other Association members. General familiarity with PayPal is desirable but not mandatory.



*Troop 9, Crespatown Scouts in Cumberland.  
Photo by Steve Nelson*



*Stairway at detour around Dam 5 construction.*



*Abutment at Dam 5 will be filled with dirt.*

### ***Fall Heritage Hike – Continued from Page 1***

Between mileposts 105 and 103, the river winds in an “S” shape, winding from east to northwest then back to east. Short-distance hikers enter the towpath at the Gift Road access just before milepost 103. Eight-tenths of a mile later, Martin Marietta’s Pinesburg Quarry is just over the berm. At milepost 101, water is drawn from the Potomac River for a water treatment plant that supplies 90,000 Washington County customers with drinking water. All hikers arrive at Cushwa Basin about 1.2 miles farther on.

Half a mile below the Basin, the furnished Lockhouse 44 should be open, staffed by volunteers.

The lower gate may be unlocked, allowing hikers to swing the gates open and closed. Interested folks may also visit the Williamsport Town History Museum, located next to the Springfield Barn, built by the town’s founder almost 270 years ago.

Evening events will take place at the Downsville Ruritan Club in Downsville, MD, 4 miles southeast of Williamsport. Happy Hour starts at 4:30, dinner at 5:45, followed by David Gilbert’s presentation.

*More information on the hike and dinner reservations will be provided by email closer to the events.*



## **Volunteers in Parks**

**By Jim Heins**

**Bulletin Boards and Benches** The major thrust of the VIPs recently has been the replacement of inserts and cleaning of over 50 bulletin boards throughout the park. The weather, including flooding, has hampered this project significantly.

We have again been asked to work on picnic table repairs. Due to staff limitations and inability to get to many they had hoped to replace, the park requests that we repair as many as we can. We are waiting for dry weather to begin.

As usual, our last big efforts of the year will again be installing more benches, 12 this time. At that point, the VIPs will likely welcome a break.

# A Canal Rescue In Georgetown

By Jon Wolz

During and after canal operating days, news accounts reported water rescues from the canal. However, there were many more accounts of drownings. In the November 26, 1910, edition of the *Washington Herald*, there was an article on page 9 titled, "SAVED FROM DROWNING, John McCrey Rescued from Canal in Unconscious State." The article continued:

*John McCrey, forty-three years old, of Rosslyn, Va., while on his way home from work in Georgetown at 8:30 o'clock last night fell into the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and was rescued in an unconscious condition by Harry Woltz of 1061 Thirty-first street northwest.*

*Woltz heard his cries for help and plunged into the chilly water as the man was going down for the third time. He secured a hold on his hair and dragged him to shore. The patrol wagon was summoned and the unconscious man was taken to Georgetown University Hospital, where he was revived.*

Harry was my great uncle, Henry Wolz. At the time, Henry was living at 1061 31st Street with my second great-grandmother Elisabeth Kroon and my great-uncle John Wolz. The house was just above Lock 41. Elisabeth was married to my second great-grandfather Conrad Wolz who died in 1876. By 1910, Elisabeth was twice widowed and was 70 years old. She owned the home on 31st Street and did not have a mortgage. John was 43 and Henry was 35. John was an iron worker and Henry's occupation was "fishing seine," a method of fishing that employs a surrounding net called a seine that hangs vertically in the water with its bottom edge held down by weights and its top buoyed by floats. [Wikipedia].

Earlier in 1910, in the June 6 edition of the *Evening Star*, Henry was mentioned in an article titled, "BODY OF KROUSE FOUND, Tenant of Houseboat Believed to Have Been Accidentally Drowned." The article went on to say:

*The body of William Krouse who is believed to have been accidentally drowned in the Potomac River above the Aqueduct bridge late Saturday night, was found this morning by Henry Wolz about fifty feet from the houseboat which he occupied.*

*Krouse and Wolz both lived in this houseboat. Saturday night Krouse left the shore for the houseboat in a small rowboat which was partially filled with provisions. The boat was found adrift yesterday morning. In it were Krouse's coat and hat. The body was clothed when found and it is believed that Krouse fell overboard. Wolz was assisting the police aboard the harbor boat to discover the body when he came upon it. The body was removed to the morgue. Coroner Nevitt will probably decide to give a death certificate without the formality of an inquest.*

Elisabeth and Conrad had 10 children together and by 1910, eight were living. My great-grandfather George Wolz died in 1902 at age 33. He was living in Rosslyn, married and owned a roadhouse. One day he went for a walk in the woods to gather chestnuts and came home sick. A short time after that he died. George is buried in Rock Creek Cemetery with his wife and some of his family. Elisabeth and Conrad with most of their children are buried at the Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown. In cemetery records, John Wolz died in 1941 and his last known residence was 1061 31st Street.



Along the Towpath, September 2025



(Left) C&O Canal in Georgetown. Photo by Carol Highsmith

(Right) Aqueduct Bridge. Illustration courtesy Library of Congress

# Swain's Campground Report

By Jon Wolz

## June 30, 2025

On this warm morning, there were two tents set up with no one around them. There was an abandoned tent that appeared to be a party tent in the day use area. The visitors at that day use area left a lot of trash/belongings behind. At campsite 2, there was a very small tent and a dog that barked at me if I got near it. It may have been chained because it did not come towards me. I kept my distance. Its humans were not around caring for the dog. I wrote the park telling them about the abandoned tent/trash at the day use area and the dog left alone. I cleaned out grills and fire rings and picked up two kitchen size bags of trash.



*All photos by Jon Wolz*



## July 30, 2025

On this day I arrived a little before 9 a.m. and was helped by Arden Shaer of the C&O Canal Trust. By the time we finished we were bursting with perspiration and our clothing was soaked. We painted seven tables together. Last year I painted eight tables. I suppose one table floated away in May with the high-water event. Arden scraped and painted signposts. I scraped, wire brushed and painted grills. I cleaned out fire rings and grills. We picked up one Park size bag of trash. It was a quiet morning. There were no campers and for the first time this year, there was peace at the campground. Afterwards, Arden invited me inside the lock house where we both cooled down from the heat. The interior of the lock house looks very nice.





*The Potomac River from Great Falls Park in Virginia on May 15, 2025. The falls have all but disappeared within the swollen river.  
All photos by David Romanowski*

## Potomac River Flood Levels

By David Romanowski

For a few days in early May 2025, heavy rain fell across the Mid-Atlantic, especially in the mountainous region to the west. Much of the rainfall drained into the Potomac River, which soon turned into a raging torrent.

The Potomac River drainage basin encompasses parts of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. All the rain and snow that falls onto that 14,670 square mile area funnels into the river. Floods are not uncommon, and major floods can cause considerable damage.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) monitors water levels of the Potomac and other rivers throughout the United States via its National Weather Prediction Service. River gauges at several places along the Potomac chart its changing water levels and provide flood warnings and predictions of how high the river is likely to rise.

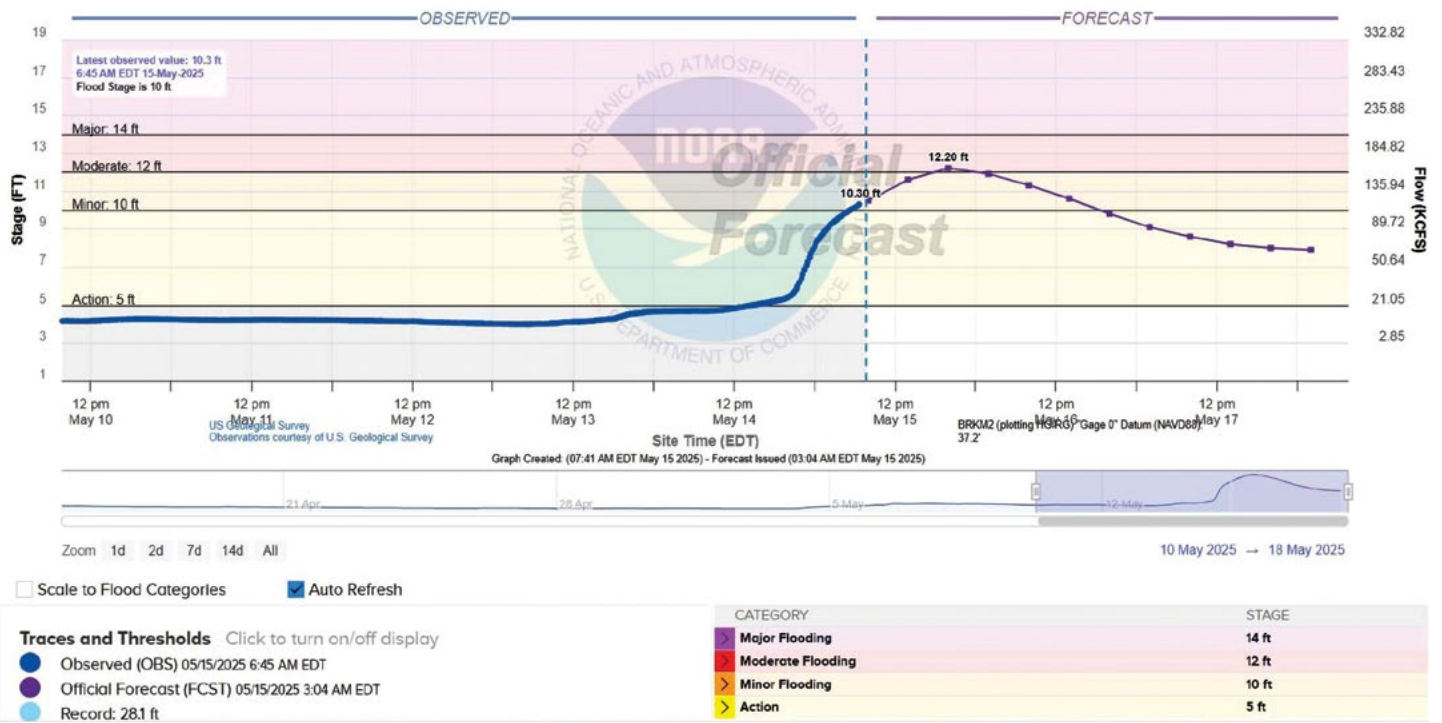
You can easily view this information online and follow the progress of a flood as it plays out at NOAA's National Water Prediction Service website: [water.noaa.gov](https://water.noaa.gov). The accompanying graphs are screenshots from that website.

### Tracking a Flood at Great Falls

A great place to watch a flood in progress is at the two national parks that border the Great Falls of the Potomac: Great Falls Park in Virginia and the C&O Canal National Historical Park right across the river.

At Great Falls in Maryland, park rangers monitor NOAA river level data from the river gauge at Little Falls, about 8 miles downstream, to determine when to close trails and begin other flood preparations. The online graph for Little Falls, which updates continuously, looked like the accompanying graph at about 10 a.m. on May 15, 2025.

*Continued on next page*



Little Falls on May 15, 2025. The markings along the bottom of the graph denote 12-hour periods. The horizontal lines and colors represent different flood stages: action, minor, moderate, and major. All graphs courtesy NOAA

### Potomac River Flood Levels – Continued from Page 11

The graph provides an interesting look at the river level over the previous few days and how NOAA predicted it would change over the next couple of days. You can access the current reading for the Little Falls gauge here: [water.noaa.gov/gauges/brkm2](http://water.noaa.gov/gauges/brkm2).

Normal river level here is 5 feet or less. (I assume zero feet is simply a set starting point for measurement, not the actual water depth, as that varies within an area.) If the river rises above the 5-foot “action” level, some flooding may begin to occur in low-lying areas. When the river reaches this level, park rangers at Great Falls in Maryland close Billy Goat A, the rugged trail that follows Mather Gorge and dips down to the river’s shore.

At 10 feet, the river reaches minor flood stage; at 12 feet, moderate flood stage; at 14 feet, major flood stage. This particular flood ended up peaking just short of moderate flood stage on May 15, right around when I took the accompanying photo from Great Falls Park in Virginia. By that time, park rangers had closed the boardwalk to the Great Falls overlook on the Maryland side.

That the river at moderate flood stage was only about 7 feet above what’s considered the normal range is a little deceiving. The flood level can get much higher in places, especially where the river narrows, as at Great Falls.

Compare the two photos I took from the C&O Canal towpath at Mary’s Wall (*right*), where a side channel diverts part of the flow just below Great Falls. Note the large tree across the channel in both photos.

On the webpage for Little Falls, just above the graph, you can click on links for the nearest upstream and downstream river gauges. At about the time I captured the image of the Little Falls river gauge graph, I also captured images of those for the next nearest ones: Edwards Ferry, about 17 miles upstream, and Georgetown, about 14 miles downstream. They provide an interesting contrast.

The flood level thresholds at Edwards Ferry differ from those at Little Falls, but here, the flood reached high into the moderate flood stage range. The river gauge graph from Georgetown in Washington, D.C., looks completely different, because it shows the daily tidal effect superimposed on the changing level due to the flood.

The webpage for the Little Falls river gauge contains lots of interesting data. You can scroll back and forth on the timeline. You can access a list of local flood impacts. For example, at 15 feet, “Most of the C&O Canal towpath from Pennyfield downstream [Mile 19.6]

is flooded.” And at 17 feet, “Water overflows the overlooks at Great Falls National Park and approaches the lower level of the visitor center.”

There is also a list of historic river crests. The worst flood since I’ve lived in the Mid-Atlantic took place in January 1996, when the river at Little Falls peaked at over 19 feet. During Hurricane Agnes, a disastrous storm that struck the Mid-Atlantic in June 1972 and heavily damaged the C&O Canal, the river level peaked at 22 feet. In the aftermath of a storm in March 1936, the river level peaked at over 28 feet, the highest on record.



The Potomac on May 15, when the river level was near its peak.

## Fun Facts About the Potomac

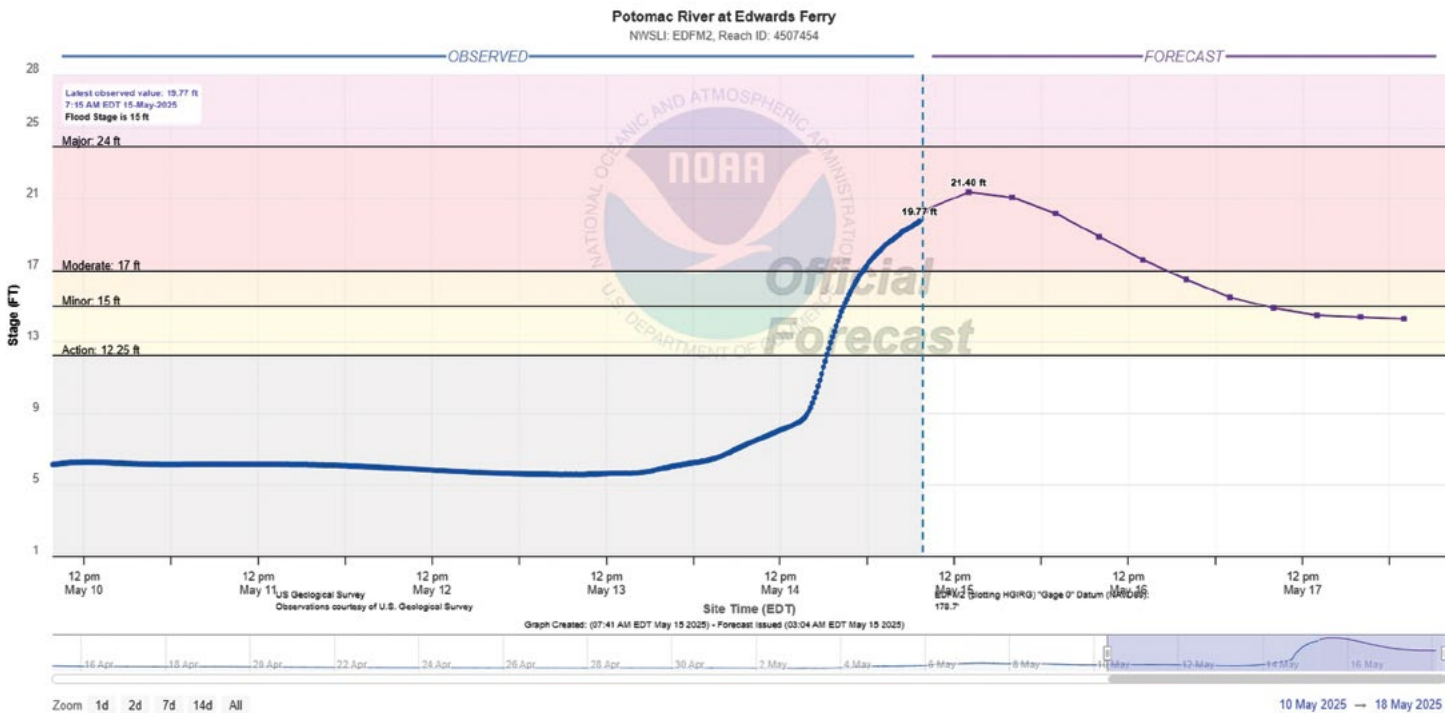
About three miles upstream from Great Falls, at Mile 17.5 along the C&O Canal towpath, is the intake structure for the Potomac River Water Filtration Plant of the WSSC (Washington Suburban Sanitation Commission). Beside it is an exhibit about the Potomac River and its drainage basin. Here are a few facts I gleaned from that exhibit.

- The Potomac begins at the “Fairfax Stone” near Maryland’s southwest corner, 3,125 feet above sea level. It runs 382 miles from there to where it empties into Chesapeake Bay.

*Continued on next page*



What that channel looks like when the river level is very low.



Edwards Ferry on May 15, 2025.

*Potomac River Flood Levels – Continued from Page 13*

- It traverses six distinct geographic regions: the Allegheny Plateau, Ridge and Valley Province, Great Valley of the Shenandoah River, Blue Ridge, Piedmont, and Coastal Plain.
- Its average width from Harpers Ferry to Washington, D.C, is 1,500 feet, but it narrows to about 200 feet through Mather Gorge below Great Falls. At Washington, it becomes an estuary (subject to ocean tides) and farther downstream broadens to more than 11 miles wide.
- About 4,000 million gallons of water per day normally flow from the Potomac into Chesapeake Bay. But this varies greatly. During droughts the flow can drop to as little as 390 million gallons (about 90% below normal). During major floods, it can swell to as much as 300,000 million gallons (75 times normal).

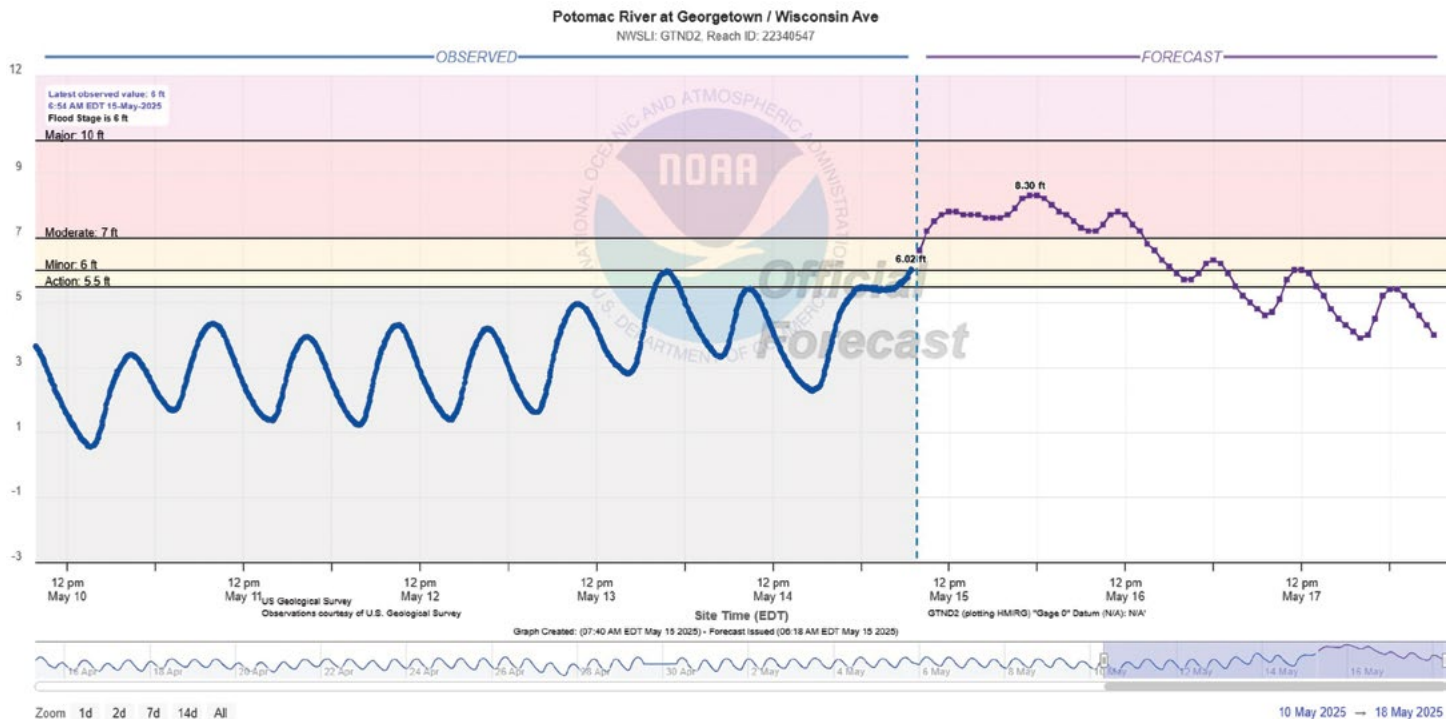
*David Romanowski was a writer-editor for the National Air and Space Museum for 30 years. He is now an associate editor of Along the Towpath and volunteers for C&O Canal National Historical Park assisting visitors at Great Falls Tavern. This article was adapted from a post on his blog Bike Walk Drive at [bikewalkdrive.wordpress.com](http://bikewalkdrive.wordpress.com).*



*Exhibit on the Potomac River and Basin.*



*The Potomac River from Great Falls Park in Virginia on a typical day.*



*Georgetown on May 15, 2025.*

# The Hike that Created a Park

By Barbara Sheridan

In 1974, the C&O Canal Association organized the first Thru-Hike of the canal. This event was to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas's historic hike in 1954. The Thru-Hike was so popular and successful that the Association decided to repeat the event every five years.

The year 2004 marked the 50th anniversary of the Douglas hike and the 7th C&O Canal Thru-Hike. The NPS planned many events to celebrate during the year. They even allowed us to add 25 hikers to the usual 50 allowed to participate in a Thru-Hike. To make this event even more special, they created a series of 14 handouts to be distributed to the hikers on a daily basis. These handouts were broken down to coincide with each day's hike and covered some of the history and sights (and a map) of that section.

*Starting with this issue, we will reprint one of the daily handouts starting in Cumberland. Hopefully, it will give everyone a brief look at the towpath through the eyes of a Thru-Hiker in 2004.*

## ***Day 1 – Cumberland to Spring Gap***

As a young man surveying the Potomac River Valley, George Washington dreamed of a system of canals that would open the Ohio wilderness. Building on Washington's dream, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company began construction in 1828. The plan called for a 365-mile canal to link the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River. The first 185 miles to Cumberland were scheduled to be completed in six years, with the rest of the canal to follow in the next six years. In Cumberland, anticipation of the arrival of not just the canal but also the B&O Railroad fueled the construction of warehouses, hotels, and other businesses.

Dreams of a water route to the Ohio River began to sour as the original estimate of six years to reach Cumberland dragged on to 22 years. Labor shortages, financial difficulties, and the rivalry with the B&O Railroad conspired against the continuation of the canal beyond Cumberland. The canal's loss was the railroad's gain. The B&O Railroad went on to reach the Ohio River and fulfill Washington's dream. Despite stopping short of its goal, the canal continued to play a role in Cumberland's economic development, hauling coal to the nation's capital for the next 74 years.

By 1954, Cumberland represented the fate from which Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas and his companions were fighting to save the rest of the canal. The terminus basin was gone. A flood control project buried the towpath, and both the river and canal became polluted. Wishing to emphasize the beauty and natural setting of the canal, Douglas and his companions bypassed the first nine miles of the canal and began their hike near Lock 72. From those steps sprang forth a new dream for the Potomac Valley and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

*Along the Towpath, September 2025*

Today, Justice Douglas's dream is bearing fruit. The Canal Place Authority has improved the areas around the old canal basin, bringing new life and economic growth to Cumberland. Projects like the Canal Parkway are opening the natural beauty of the area to visitors while preserving the canal. Most exciting of all, the long-buried canal bed at the terminus is being restored and will soon be rewatered. The canal may not have been the answer to Washington's dream, but the park it has become is the answer to Douglas's.

## ***What to See***

**Mile 184.4–Guard Lock No. 8 & Stop Lock:** The guard lock served as an entrance/exit for boats from the river and controlled the amount of water let into the canal. The stop lock closed off the terminus for repairs.

**180.6–Evitts Creek Aqueduct:** Aqueduct 11 was built between 1837 and 1850 of limestone quarried along Evitts Creek and brought to the site by a 1.5-mile wooden railroad. Work was suspended in 1841 due to a lack of funds. Thomas Sennet, a laborer at the quarry on Evitts Creek, was blacklisted by the C&O Canal Company for his role in labor disturbances near the Paw Paw Tunnel in 1839.

**175.7 to 175.4–Locks 75, 74 & 73:** Constructed of limestone from Evitts Creek. Upstream gates converted to drop gates in the 1870s. Look for the vertical grooves in the lock wall that housed the control rods for the wicket gates.

**174.4–Lock 72:** Lockhouses on the western end of the canal were built of wood instead of stone to save money. The last locktender at Lock 72 was Johnny Berry, ca. 1916–1923. Nearby Blue Spring is one of the largest springs in the eastern U.S.

# Indiana on the C&O Canal

By Tim Snyder

On the social media platform Facebook, the American Canal Society recently reposted the latest newsletter of the Canal Society of Indiana, *The Tumble*. Because I have been a regular visitor to southern Indiana (3 times in the last 8 years), I scanned the newsletter and was surprised to find an article about a hiking trip one of its members had made on the C&O Canal. The Society put me in touch with the author, and I learned of a second article about two earlier hiking trips, which the organization had published previously. With the permission of the Canal Society of Indiana and the author, The C&O Canal Association republished the first of these accounts below, with the second to follow in a later edition of the *ATP*. It is an interesting view of the canal we know so well from the perspective of a visitor, albeit one with knowledge of canals and canal technology. The author is Dr. Ronald V. Morris, departmental chair and history professor at Ball State University in Muncie, IN. Earlier this year, Canal Society of Indiana elected him president.

Indiana canal advocates formed the Canal Society of Indiana in 1982. Its mission statement is, “Established as a not-for-profit corporation to provide the interpretation of an era, preserve canal bed and structural remains, and to support the restoration of historic canal related sites while bringing together those who share a common interest in Indiana’s historic canals.” You can learn more about the Canal Society of Indiana, and the state’s canals, at its website: <https://indcanal.org>

Although the Indiana canal era was relatively short, from 1832–1874, the state had several interesting canals. The Wabash and Erie Canal was 468-miles long, the longest canal built in North America, which linked Lake Erie to the Ohio River. Students of the C&O Canal will remember that the original proposal for our canal was to link it to the tributaries of the Ohio River near Pittsburgh, PA. Another proposal envisioned extending the C&O Canal to Lake Erie. By the time of its completion in 1853, the Wabash and Erie consisted of four separate canals and, by means of lakes, rivers, and other waterways, linked New York City with New Orleans.

Another noteworthy canal was the Whitewater Canal, which extended for 76 miles along the Whitewater River in Ohio and Indiana. Because of the steepness of the river, the canal required 56 locks to overcome an elevation change of 490 feet. Workmen built two additional canals that linked to the Whitewater Canal. Along the path of the Whitewater, the town of Metamora, IN has the last standing covered wooden aqueduct of its design the U.S., the Duck Creek Aqueduct. In 2014, the Secretary of the Interior designated it as a National Historic Landmark. The state of Indiana administers the location as the Whitewater Canal State Historic Site.

*The editors of the ATP have made no changes to this account, except for the omission of photos that were part of the original article.*



(Above) Duck Creek Aqueduct, Metamora Indiana. Photo courtesy Library of Congress. (Right) Wabash and Erie Canal Park, Delphi, Indiana. Photo by Robert Schmidt



# *My Trail – Walking the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal*

By R. V. Morris

My first encounter with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was where it crossed the Appalachian Trail at Harpers Ferry. I had been hiking on the Georgia to Maine trail and found the walk into Harpers Ferry via the old tow path which ran between the Potomac River and the canal to be a pleasant respite from the vertical extremes of the A.T. I was interested in it because it ran directly into downtown Washington, D.C. and all the way to Cumberland, Maryland where the National Road began. It also followed the Potomac River and had an active railroad. Of course, it had the most amazing remnants of canal structures along the path.

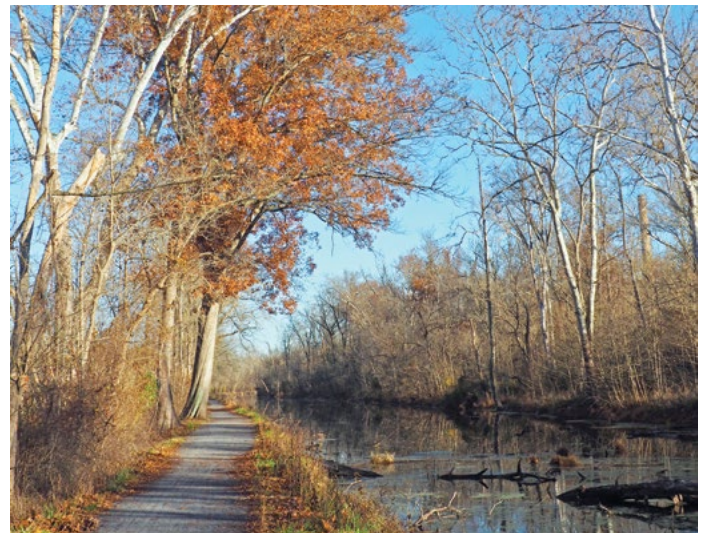
Years later and with more mature friends I started hiking the C & O Canal from Cumberland, Maryland to the Paw Paw Tunnel, and the next year from the tunnel to Hancock, MD. We made a day of it and hiked long miles with the gradual slope toward D.C. Along the way I passed feeder dams, sluice gates, steam pumps, over flows, lift locks, gristmills, lime kilns, aqueducts, culverts, basins, slack water ponds, guard locks, lock houses, a tunnel, distinctive houses from the canal era, the humble barn for wintering mules when the canal was closed, drydocks, and a school house. Because the canal was used longer it had more of the built environment still standing. I was ready for my next trip along the canal that proved that people come to exercise, relax, and enjoy the internal improvements of our ancestors by walking, bicycling, fishing, or canoeing.

The next year the trip was from Hancock to Williamsport, MD, and it was a great education to see how a canal ruin turned into a high-volume multiple use trail. The trail was filled with people, families, Scouts, and friends traveling the towpath point to point for a long or a short trip. The towpath was heavily used by bicycle enthusiasts with just a few of the plodding pedestrians. My friends and I needed signs on our backs saying, “Deaf old men walking shout loudly.” We dodged all the cyclists successfully. The trail provided drive in campgrounds, hiker/bicycle campgrounds accessible only by the trail, and lock keeper houses that were rented for those who wished amenities beyond a pump, privy, fire ring, and picnic table.

Even though I eyed the lock keeper’s house my tent served me well as the fog rose from the Potomac River that cold morning. As I made flap jacks with real butter and maple syrup the bacon and sausage hissed in the cast iron skillet and called my sleepy friends out of their tent for breakfast. The morning was quiet, as there was no one else in the campground. There was a trace of frost on the leaves beneath my feet. I knew that when I started walking my hiker’s heat would warm me sufficiently so that I just hiked in a sweater even though it was the first week of November:

The evening before we had gathered around the popping wood in the fire ring trading stories and turning marshmallows into charcoal briquets as the coals burned down and the flames died. Then I made a fast dash to the shelter of a warm sleeping bag. The owls broke the stillness of the night as the moon rose over the horizon making a flashlight redundant. These old friends who gathered on the shore of the Potomac River remembered past adventures, gathered new experience, and plotted new walks by the canal. Like the Canal Society of Indiana, we get together because we have a common history, past, and curiosity. I hope to see you at a Canal Society event to celebrate old friends or to meet new people who want to share your story.

*Reprinted from The Tumble, Sept. 2024, the newsletter of the Canal Society of Indiana.*



*Fall scene along the canal. Photo by Kuriacose Joseph*

# Looking Backward Along the Towpath

By Ned Preston

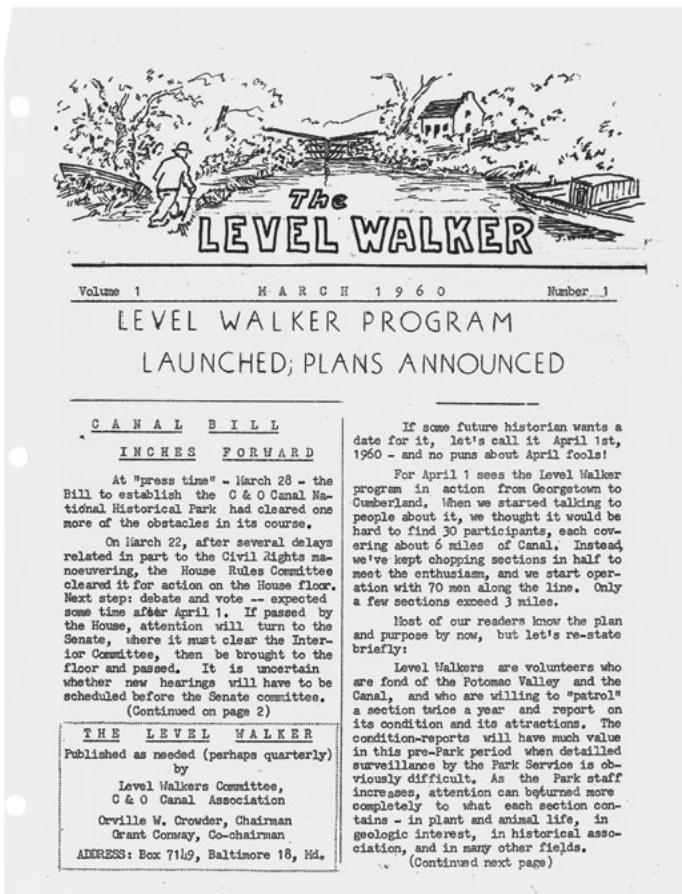
As publication of *Along The Towpath* resumes after a brief hiatus, it's timely to recall the origins and long record of our newsletter. *ATP* has been an essential communicator for the Association, informing members about our hikes, official meetings, social gatherings, advocacy, and volunteer work. It reflects the joys and challenges of people who care about the C&O Canal and its environment, its fascinating history, and its future prospects.

An inviting window on this story is the collection of past issues (through 2024) posted on the association's website at [candocanal.org/atpnews/](http://candocanal.org/atpnews/). As the examples here show, browsing that archive is an interesting experience.

In March 1954, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas led a highly publicized hike along the towpath that helped save the canal from development as a highway. That seminal event led to the formation of the C&O Canal Association, which advocated federal

protection for the waterway. The Association began a newsletter titled *The Level Walker* (below left) in March 1960. Beyond promoting the volunteer program that provided its title, the publication described work to repair the long-neglected canal and voiced concern that certain projects would harm its historic integrity. It also gave updates on the fight to upgrade the canal's 1961 designation as a national monument to that of a national historical park. Unfortunately, this initial effort at a continuing newsletter soon petered out.

In August 1969, the Association published a newsletter titled *C&O Canaler* (below). It reported on the 15th annual reunion hike led by the aging Justice Douglas and provided news on the political struggles of canal park supporters. Though only four pages long, the *C&O Canaler* showed what could be achieved with a more professional format that included photographs. However, this "Vol. 1, No. 1" was apparently not followed by a "No. 2."



# ALONG THE TOWPATH

Vol. I No. 1

20 March 1970

## ALONG THE TOWPATH WALKERS ON THE MOVE

The first newsletter of the Level Walkers, called The Level Walker, was published twice, once in 1960 and once in 1961 by our first Chairman, Orville Crowder. A newsletter was a good idea then and it seems an even better idea now. Perhaps the most frustrating feature of any group is its inability to communicate effectively. A newsletter is probably the most practical means of communicating each month or so. Just how effective Along the Towpath, our new newsletter will be, will depend largely on the interesting information and imaginative ideas which I am sure will be provided by each of you.

Our editorial policy is very simple: "To provide a means of exchanging information and ideas regarding the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and related matters." Each issue of Along the Towpath will contain a "section of the Month"; "Level Walkers Report" - information provided by Level Walkers; observations from your Chairman, based primarily on correspondence and conversations with those outside the Level Walkers; and articles of current interest. Please give us your support.

At the Annual Reunion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Association in Berkeley Springs last spring, we decided that it was high time for the Level Walkers to "fish or cut bait," as it had been several years since we had been really active. Tom Hahn was appointed Level Walker Chairman and the Level Walkers were off and running, (admittedly a bit slowly.)

Before deciding where we were going and what we were going to do, we decided to see just whom and where we were. Using the original Level Walker listings (of 1960,) an attempt was made to contact each person therein to determine which Level Walkers were able and or willing to retain their sections. From persons indicating an interest in the Level Walkers at last spring's Banquet; the Questionnaires from August's C & O Canaller; the listing of "active" Level Walkers; and those who had written in or to whom reference had been made by Level Walkers, new assignments were made and old assignments confirmed, wherein possible, assignments were made to the individual's choice of section or area. (Continued on next page)

The first issue of *Along The Towpath*, dated March 20, 1970 (above), used a simple typewritten format. Its editor wrote that ATP's effectiveness would "largely depend on the interesting information and imaginative ideas" that readers would provide. In its issue of February 18, 1971, ATP was able to announce (with three exclamation points) that the national historical park designation had been achieved in January. ATP proved durable, settling into a quarterly rhythm anchored by spring Douglas Memorial Hikes and later by the fall Heritage Walks begun in 1981.

An example of the many notable events covered by ATP was a special edition on "The Great Flood of '96" (not shown). Among happier milestones reported was the article on the September 2002 groundbreaking for the restoration of the Monocacy Aqueduct, a project the Association had taken an important role in instigating.



# ALONG THE TOWPATH

CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL ASSOCIATION

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

Vol. 34, No. 3  
September, 2002

## MONOCACY AQUEDUCT RESTORATION BEGINS

Carl Linden

Saturday, September 7, 2002 was a glorious, sunny day and a glorious day for the Monocacy Aqueduct. The meadow by the Aqueduct was the scene of a ceremony held by the C&O Canal NHP marking the start of restoration work on the Aqueduct. It was a well-attended and gala event. The C&O Canal Association's partnership with the C&O Canal National Historical Park over the past seven years to bring about the restoration of the deteriorating Monocacy Aqueduct has met with success. Senator Paul Sarbanes and Representatives Connie Morella and Roscoe Bartlett, wearing the required hard hats, lifted the first stone with Archimedean machines (levers, that is) launching the Aqueduct project.

More than two hundred friends and supporters of the Aqueduct and Association members gathered together under a red and white striped pavilion tent. One side of the tent was decked out with seven county and state flags. These included the flags of Frederick and Montgomery Counties, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. A Park Service banner, "Monocacy Aqueduct - Restoration Project - 2002 - 2004", the Association's "Save America's Treasures - Uphold the Monocacy" banner were draped along the upriver side of the

Aqueduct along with that of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

Monocacy continued on page 2



Supt. Doug Ferris and Senator Paul Sarbanes at stone moving. Gilbert Guide is in the background. Carl Linden

## HERITAGE HIKE - HANCOCK November 9 2002



Round Top Cement plant after 1903

Hahn Collection

This year's Heritage Hike will offer a combined trek on both the C&O Canal towpath and the recently extended rail trail in the Hancock area upstream from Hancock. It is set for Saturday, November 9 starting from the NPS Visitor Center at various times, with parking provided on the east side of the building, off of Main Street. As in past hikes, walkers can choose the length of hike each one feels comfortable with, but each will be a round-trip, with NO BUS service provided. A handout map will indicate the three, four, six, twelve, and sixteen mile options. Of course, anyone is free to stay solely on the towpath or the rail according to taste, but there is something different to be seen from each one.

Hike continued on page 3

By this point, newsletter's scope had widened, with articles and columns investigating topics such as the canal's lore, wildlife, and feats of engineering. Detailed historical information has been provided by authors such as Dr. Karen Gray, whose long-running "Accompanied by the Past" column is indexed on our website.

*Along the Towpath's* format and technical production became increasingly sophisticated in the 21st century, and under editor Steve Dean it reached a maximum length of 28 pages (above). Color photography, first used in 2008 during the editorship of Carl Linden, has helped talented members heighten its visual appeal. Photos explore the natural beauties of the canal park and help document the work and pleasurable activities of our independent association. Like the hand-drawn illustrations of the early newsletters, these vivid images are permanently available for enjoyment online at [candocanal.org/atpnews](http://candocanal.org/atpnews).

# On the Level

By Allyson Miller

*This report covers level walker activity from February through June. Earlier reports are included where applicable. Any reports for activity performed later will be in the next issue of Along the Towpath. Thanks to all who participate in our Level Walker volunteer program! As a team, your efforts make a significant contribution to the park.*

*The Level Walker program is a long-term Association volunteer activity and the oldest volunteer program in 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.*

*Interested in being a level walker? There are several levels without an assigned level walker and we could use your help. Most of the unassigned levels are in the western part of the park. If you are interested or have additional questions, please contact Allyson Miller at [lw@candocanal.org](mailto:lw@candocanal.org).*



*Become a  
Level Walker*

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## February to June 2025 Level Walker Activity

**Level 2 – Incline Plane to Lock 5: Kamile Kay reported in February–April:** There is some light graffiti back underneath the Capitol Crescent Trail pedestrian bridge. Many people were ice skating on the canal this year during January. There was even a hockey game taking place! The canal was very clean these two months, probably due to lower usage in the winter with snow on the ground. I found a lot of small plastic cups on March 16th, probably leftover from an organized run. Overall trash level was not bad for March and April. Lots of people on the trail in mid to late April. Lock 5 has a detour around a work site. **In May–June, Kamile reported:** The graffiti at the Canal Road pedestrian bridge is gone! I saw more wildlife than usual. There was a huge turtle on the path and a few snakes. A tree had fallen after a storm by the Canal Road pedestrian bridge, and it was cleared away very fast.

**Level 3 – Lock 5 to Cabin John Creek: Allyson Miller reported in March–June:** There is severe rutting and puddling in several places throughout the level, much of it due to construction in the vicinity of Lock 5 and the guard lock. There is no access from the Brookmont community to Lock 5, as the entire Lock 5 parking lot is a construction site. A detour routes towpath traffic around the construction site. Water is in the prism on either side of Lock 7 and roughly from Sycamore Island to Lock 6. Several wood duck families are taking advantage of the water in this area. Other wildlife spotted included a muskrat near Lock 7 and a copperhead snake

on the towpath in front of Lock 6. I encouraged it off the towpath with a long stick.

**Level 4 – Cabin John Creek to Lock 14: Allyson Miller reported in March–April:** There was some light trash on the level, but otherwise it was in good shape. There is a stand of phragmites in the canal at Lock 8, which has been reported to the NPS.

**Level 5 – Lock 14 to Copley Bridge: Mindy Ginsburg reported in February:** It was a cold, clear, and beautiful day on the towpath with very good news from Level 5. Finally, the closed section of the towpath between Mile Markers 11 and 12 (the log wall) is open. The path has been widened and nicely repaired. There is a new and attractive wooden fence where a long strip of orange plastic fencing used to reside. The canal prism had a good level of water and a reinforced shape on both sides. NPS did really nice work here! The level looked clean with two exceptions. There was an old rusted propane tank under the sign for the Billy Goat Trail B (west end). Also, an orange safety cone slipped into the canal between the Mile Markers 11 and 12, just past the newly improved part of the path. The cone is resting on the ice now, but it will slip into the water when things warm up. The prism had a low to medium level of water in most places, along with some ice in a few sections. This is noteworthy only because it has been years since I have noticed a covering of ice on the canal. It is also noteworthy because much of this section is frequently dry or has a very low level of water that is obscured by overgrown plants.

*Level 7 – Great Falls Tavern to Lock 21:* **Carol and Joe Hayes reported:** The towpath was in good condition. No erosion issues noted. The paw paw trees and Virginia bluebells were flowering. We observed 30 to 40 turtles. There was a smoldering fire left behind by some visitors; we watered down the fire and stomped out the embers.

*Level 8 – Lock 21 to Lock 22:* **Rinze and Sue Roosma reported in March:** It was a nice spring day with temperatures in the 60s. Since it was a Monday afternoon, it was relatively quiet on the trail. There were plenty of birds in the river and the canal. We observed great blue herons, buffleheads, redheads, mergansers, blue wing teals, geese, cormorants, mallards. We even watched a red fox come down to the water for a drink. And it was time for spring peepers and wood frogs to be heard. There was relatively little trash. **In May, Rinze and Sue reported:** It was a somewhat overcast spring day with temperatures in the upper 60s to low 70s. After a recent heavy rain, the water level in both the river and the canal was high. There was relatively little damage to the trail after the Potomac reached flood level. There were a few spots where washout was visible and the trail was bumpy. Since it was quiet on the trail, we saw quite a bit of wildlife. We spotted the usual turtles and blue herons, egrets, eagles, deer, wild turkey, green herons, red-tailed hawk, and wood ducks and geese, both with young. There was relatively little trash.

*Level 8 – Swains Campground:* **Jon Wolz reported in late January:** I cleaned out grills and fire rings and picked up six bags of trash, three plastic gallon water jugs and an abandoned lantern. There were a lot of soft drink cans. I reported several maintenance items to the VIP team—the need for new fire rings, a grill, and repair to picnic tables.

*Level 12 – Sycamore Landing to Edwards Ferry:* **Pat Hopson with Carol Ivory, Margaret Neuse, and Frank Wodarczyk reported in March:** The weather was okay—about 46 degrees when we started out and about 52 when we finished. It was overcast to start but gradually became sunny. When the wind blew, it felt cold. There was very little trash at Edwards Ferry and nearby, virtually none along the towpath, and a lot at Sycamore Landing and at the Goose Creek site. The towpath was in good shape throughout the level. The Lock 25 lockhouse, picnic table, and surrounds looked in good condition and were clean. No one was staying at the lockhouse. Since our last trip, access to the

Edwards Ferry parking lot had reopened. All of us noted that the new bridge seems narrower than the previous one but still wide enough. **In April, Pat with Carol, Margaret, and guest Barbara Eppler reported:** The major purpose of this trip was to continue our perennial effort to eradicate garlic mustard, a non-native invasive plant, from the Edwards Ferry area. We've been doing this for at least the last 10 years and probably longer. This year we encountered much less garlic mustard than in previous years. There was very little trash at Edwards Ferry, which we picked up as we went along.

*Level 13 – Edwards Ferry to Harrison Island:* **Liz Wagner reported in April–June:** My walk was on a warm and sunny April day with temperatures in the high 70s. Several trees have been marked for pruning or removal. There was moderate bicycle use, and I moved an eastern box turtle off the towpath to prevent it from being hit by bicyclists. The information board about the history of Edwards Ferry is very worn and should be replaced. The grassy areas around Lock 25 and Broad Run Truck Aqueduct had been recently mowed, and park maintenance staff started to mow the high vegetation on the sides of the towpath during my visit in June. The towpath surface has deteriorated since my April visit, probably due to the heavy May rain. Numerous areas have lost the top gray surface layer, and some areas are beginning to show tire grooves. There was more standing water in the prism than usual. Over 90 percent of the level had water in the prism; 60 percent is more usual. The trash bag holder has been repaired, and bags are available.

*Level 15 – Whites Ferry to Lock 26:* **Jon Wolz reported in March:** In the Whites Ferry area, the trees growing at the granary and grain warehouse ruins have been cut and removed. The tree growing from the bridge abutment has been cut back. At the Marble Quarry campsite, everything was clean and there was no new graffiti. At Whites Ferry, the 19 cabins, which are to be removed in FY 2025 according to the NPS, are still standing. Bluebells were beginning to bloom. Bloodroot was blooming as well as other wildflowers. Different pairs of ducks were floating on the water in different places in the canal. Some turtles were sunning themselves. There was coyote scat in different places on the towpath. Lesser celandine has taken hold on the forest floor at Whites Ford.

*Level 16 – Lock 26 to Monocacy Aqueduct:* **Jon Wolz reported in February and March:** There are several gaps between stones in the ceiling of the first arch of

the Monocacy Aqueduct that may indicate shifting stones. The wooden park entrance sign at the Monocacy Aqueduct needs to be replaced with a metal sign as are used elsewhere at the entrances to the park. This sign cannot be cleaned, and painting it is a challenge requiring continuous maintenance. In several places along the towpath, the fine crushed top surface has washed away, and now gravel is the top. There is a new park sign at the entrance road for the Dickerson Conservation Park. Culverts 65 and 68 have some maintenance issues with sinkholes and falling stones and need the attention of the NPS. Trash was picked up by the aqueduct and along the towpath. On April 6, Montgomery County Scouts led a trash cleanup along the Monocacy and Potomac rivers. There were 32 bags of trash/recyclables gathered. In March five wild turkeys scooted up the hillside at the Monocacy Aqueduct parking lot. Two of the toms opened up their tail feathers. Bullfrogs were croaking down from Lock 27. There was a great blue heron flying across the canal near Milepost 40.

*Level 18 – Noland's Ferry to Point of Rocks:* **Bob Carpenter reported in March:** Today was a nice end of winter day for a walk on the towpath—sunny and mild with some early signs of spring plant growth. Overall, the towpath was in very good condition. There was a substantial amount of trash; most of the trash collected was at the Point of Rocks boat ramp and parking lot as well as at the Calico Rocks hiker-biker campsite. A tent was snagged in the woods, which I was unable to retrieve. There was a downed tree at Mile 45.2 and a large hole just off the towpath at Mile 46.9 as a result of a downed tree into the canal prism (both reported to the NPS). There was a moderate volume of bicyclists for a late winter weekday.

*Level 19 – Point of Rocks to Catoclin Aqueduct:* **Don Peterson reported in February:** I observed a ruby-crowned kinglet, golden-crowned kinglet, red-shouldered hawk, and Carolina wren. **June Miller and Cathy Guzauskas reported in March:** It was a lovely pre-spring day. There were several birders with big cameras/lenses right past the bridge watching the peregrine falcon on the high ledge above the railroad tracks. The towpath surface was in good condition. There was more trash than I ever saw on previous walks and more graffiti on the Point of Rocks pivot bridge. **Lou Robbins reported in March:** It was a partly sunny, cool spring day; the leaves weren't out yet. There are possible sinkholes in the prism at Culverts 78 and 79. One of the rub rails on the Catoclin Aqueduct supports

is rotting. Culvert 75 is blocked by debris. The towpath shoulder .07 miles north of Culvert 78 needs some repair. The picnic table at the Bald Eagle hiker-biker campsite is damaged and needs repair or replacement.

*Level 21 – Lock 30 to Lock 31:* **Karlen Keto with canine Dobby reported in March:** I started at the MARC train lot and walked to the Brunswick Family Campground and back. I spotted one turtle on a log and two ducks that took flight when I approached their territory. I heard a lot of birds but did not see them. It was beautiful weather for a small dog that hates the cold. I filled three grocery plastic bags with trash; more than 99 percent were beverage containers. I was the only walking person on the towpath. Seven cyclists passed me from the rear without signaling. There were several potholes close to the edge of the road, formed by digging to locate utility access.

*Level 22 – Lock 31 to Lock 33:* **Paul Durham reported in March:** It was cool weather, great for walking and biking. Some occasional light puddling on the towpath surface from melting snow and recent rain. Towpath use was very light. There were several trash piles along the river just upstream and then downstream from the Route 340 bridge. They appeared to be linked to overnight camping in the area or perhaps fishing. **Karlen Keto with canine Dobby reported in May:** It was a warm and sunny day. There were a lot of turtles, cyclists, runners, joggers, walkers, and dogs. There was very little trash, and the Weverton lockhouse looked fine.

*Level 23 – Lock 33 to Dam 3:* **Paul Durham reported in February:** Very light use for this section of the towpath. No hikers observed going to Maryland Heights. Occasional light puddling on the towpath from recent melting snow. **Arthur Tsien reported in March:** This was my first walk of this level in 2025. It was a typical winter day for this part of the world, on the cold side, bright sun with a very light breeze. The level continues to be in good condition. I did not see any significant impediments to foot or cycle travel. There was very little trash along the towpath. The resurfaced towpath continues to be in good condition. **In June, Arthur reported:** It was a nice early summer day, sunny, warm but not too hot, low humidity for this part of the world, a light breeze. I observed some erosion of the repaved towpath surface topcoat in a few places, particularly near Lock 33. Nevertheless, the level continues to be in good condition. I did not see any significant impediments

to foot or cycle travel. Mowing and trimming were in progress near Lock 33.

*Level 27 – Antietam Aqueduct to Lock 38:* **Lizzy, Zoe, BJ, Holly, and Jen Helwig reported in February:** It was a sunny, cold day with a lot of runners, walkers, and cyclists. Trail conditions were good, and there was little to no trash.

*Levels 28 and 29 – Lock 38 to Snyders Landing:* **Brigitta Shroyer and Joel Anderson reported in February:** It was sunny with temperatures in the low to mid 40s, a beautiful day. The overflow parking lot at Shepherdstown was almost full. The lot at Snyder's Landing was about half full. We passed cyclists and walkers, most with children and a few with dogs. We picked up about four kitchen trash bags of plastic bottles at Snyders Landing. **In May Brigitta and Joel reported:** It was a beautiful day, sunny and in the 60s. The overflow parking lot at Shepherdstown was almost full. The lot at Snyders Landing was full. We passed many cyclists (around half were bikepacking) and walkers. After all the recent rain, the towpath was showing erosion and potholes, although the surface was still rideable for cyclists. We picked up one small bag of trash.

*Level 30 – Snyders Landing to Lock 40:* **Charles Connolly reported in March:** It was a warm day with a lot of walkers enjoying the park. I noted 15 bikers, 6 walkers, 6 swimmers, and 2 people using a cart loaded with possessions.

*Level 41 – Dam 5 to Four Locks:* **Michael Anderson reported in March:** It was a beautiful day for my first walk of the year: blue sky, no clouds, no wind, and temperatures in the 60s. The towpath was clear for bikers and hikers. All the ruts were repaired or filled in with crushed stone. There was light traffic and little trash. Most likely, the usage was down due to continued construction of the Dam 5 parking lot and grounds, and construction of a new boat ramp at Four Locks. It was an uneventful, pleasant walk.

*Level 42 – Four Locks to McCoys Ferry:* **Jack Ebersole reported in May:** The towpath was dry and clear with little trash. The campsite was cleaner than usual and being mowed. Downed trees from recent storms had been cleared. A brush pile in the campsite needs to be removed. There were several black snakes along the towpath, as well as numerous squirrels. The Four Locks boat ramp was closed for construction of a new boat ramp and dock.

*Level 47 – Little Pool to Hancock:* **Lisa Hendrick reported in March:** The towpath was in very good condition, with a scattering of small- to medium-sized sticks from recent winds. I plucked them easily off the path with my grabber, as I searched both sides of the towpath for hidden trash. As usual, I found some litter near the Little Pool fishing area. At the hiker-biker campsite, I found some trash in the wooded area and down near the Potomac River, including a very large inner tube. There were large downed branches in the campsite, which I assume were also due to recent heavy winds. I cleared the larger ones into a stack to be used for firewood. As I walked my level, there were wonderful signs of spring, with an abundance of bluebells everywhere about to bloom. No walkers were on the towpath, but I observed two bikers at different times.

*Levels 47 and 48 – Little Pool to Round Top Cement Mill:* **Michael and Judi Busci reported in June:** A clear day after the previous night's torrential thunderstorm. The towpath was amazingly drained given recent rainstorms—only a few bike ruts and no puddles. We trimmed lots of vines and branches encroaching over the towpath, especially for bikers. This is the beginning of the growing season, so it's only going to get worse. The wayside exhibit at the boat ramp needs to be replaced. There was very little trash at the outlet to the watered Hancock area, but more trash than I'd ever seen in the picnic area at the boat ramp, as well as a full trash can at the Bowles House.

*Level 48 – Hancock to Round Top Cement Mill:* **Phillip Clemans reported in March:** The conditions were brisk, but it was great weather for walking along the canal. There were few vehicles in the parking lot and just a handful of walkers and one cyclist. The towpath surface had a few potholes. Seven deer ran across the towpath right in front of me.

*Level 49 – Round Top Cement Mill to Lock 53:* **Paul Petkus reported in March:** It was a warm spring day. Park visitation was a bit higher than my previous early spring walks. Spring wildflowers were emerging. Birds were active. Reptiles and amphibians were present in the watered area of the prism. I watched a muskrat swim in the prism and gnaw on vegetation. I briefly saw a groundhog. The towpath was in good condition. No obstructions were present. The picnic table at the Leopards Mill campsite has been repaired. The conditions of the structures along the level were mostly stable, with only a small change at the cement mill.

*Level 54 – Lock 59 to Lock 60:* **Paul Petkus reported in March:** Vegetation was mostly dormant. Precipitation has been lower than normal so far this year. Those conditions allowed me to access all structures along the level to fully photograph them. I noted no changes other than additional graffiti on the railroad abutment. Visitation was very light. One park visitor rode an ATV along the towpath. Checking photos of the gates where the ATV likely entered the towpath shows that they lack signs indicating that motorized vehicles on the towpath are prohibited. As for wildlife, I mainly saw reptiles and amphibians as usual at this time of the year. My first butterfly sighting on this level for 2025 was an eastern comma. A few of the early spring wildflowers had started to emerge. I saw a beaver swimming in the prism at Mile 143. **In April, Paul reported:** It was a pleasant spring day for an outing. Using my visits to Level 55 in April as a reference, visitation was higher than I've seen before. The towpath was in good condition overall. Only a few small areas had puddles or tire marks. The only branches on the towpath were small. I detected no change in any of the structures. It was a good day to view butterfly activity; I observed 14 species.

*Level 55 – Lock 60 to Culvert 208:* **Paul Petkus reported in March:** It was a nice, sunny day for a visit to the park. Visitation was light in this area. The towpath was in good condition. Any change I saw to any of the structures was small. Most plants were still dormant, but some of the very early spring wildflowers were starting to emerge. Turtles and red-spotted newts were the wildlife I most often saw.



*Downed tree near the Paw Paw Tunnel. Photo by Mark Stover*

A muskrat graciously posed for photos. Racist graffiti was at the Stickpile Hill campsite. **In April, Paul reported:** It was an unseasonably warm day for early spring, a good day for observing nature. I observed 10 butterfly species on Levels 53 and 54, but only five along Level 55. It was a good day for seeing reptiles and amphibians. Spring wildflowers provided color along the towpath. I detected no changes to

the lock or the culvert. The towpath surface was in good condition overall. I only saw light tire marks in places. There were no obstructions on the towpath. I moved a couple of small branches off to the side. There were no integrity issues with the prism. It held water where it normally does.

*Level 58 – Lock 63-1/3 to Tunnel Parking Area:* **Arthur Tsien reported in March:** This was my first walk of this level in 2025. It was a colder than expected, sunny, but brisk spring day. I picked up two bags of trash. The towpath (resurfaced upstream of the tunnel) is generally in good condition for foot or bike travel. Except for the usual puddles inside the tunnel, the towpath was dry. Despite the weather, I had a pleasant outing.



*Towpath resurfacing in Cumberland. Photo by Travis Medcalf*

*Level 67 – Mexico Farms to Evitts Creek Aqueduct:* **Sue Rudd with dog Rusty reported in February:** I am so excited to write that the canal towpath in my section is resurfaced! No more ruts, the trees and shrubs have all been trimmed, and the surface is AWESOME! It is hard to put into words: I have walked the canal for years and am just now really getting to enjoy it, as I don't have to watch every step for ruts, rocks, overgrowth, etc. It is just so pleasant. The joy of watching the wildlife and the river without fear of turning an ankle is wonderful. People are walking and biking in February! Granted the weather is good, but everyone I talk with is just pleased. One worker today told me they hope to be all the way to Cumberland by mid-March. Won't that be wonderful! And I must give a shout-out to all the workers who have kindly put up with all my questions over the past few months. They were all nice and willing to talk. The NPS people were glad to be upgrading the surface, and the workers seem to really care about what they are accomplishing. I know some people aren't happy that it is no longer a path, but I think it is perfect for what the canal is now used for. My thanks to all!

# Environmental Committee Update

By Rod Mackler

**Georgetown University Boathouse** On June 10, the National Park Service announced an agreement between NPS, Georgetown University, and the District of Columbia for a land exchange. The deal would give to the canal park a GU-owned area that lies between Foundry Branch and the Incline Plane, from east to west, and between the Capital Crescent Trail and the Potomac River, from north to south. In exchange, the university would receive NPS land close to Key Bridge for construction of a new boathouse for its rowing team.

The NPS news release also noted that Key Bridge Boats would continue to operate as a rental facility at a to-be-determined site nearby. Reports indicate that this location might be within the canal park just upriver from the Alexandria Aqueduct. As a concession serving park visitors, such a facility might be desirable and would not run counter to the C&OCA's longstanding position against building a private boathouse on that site.

**Fee Structure** The President signed an executive order on July 3 instructing the NPS to institute a two-tiered fee structure—one set of fees for U.S. residents, a second, higher set for foreign visitors. This would apply to the entrance fee at Great Falls, the only fee area in our park. The President also directed that U.S. residents should be given preferential treatment regarding “recreational access, including camping . . .” Would U.S. residents receive priority over non-residents for camping reservations? The C&O Canal NHP is waiting for further guidance from the Interior Department and the regional office.

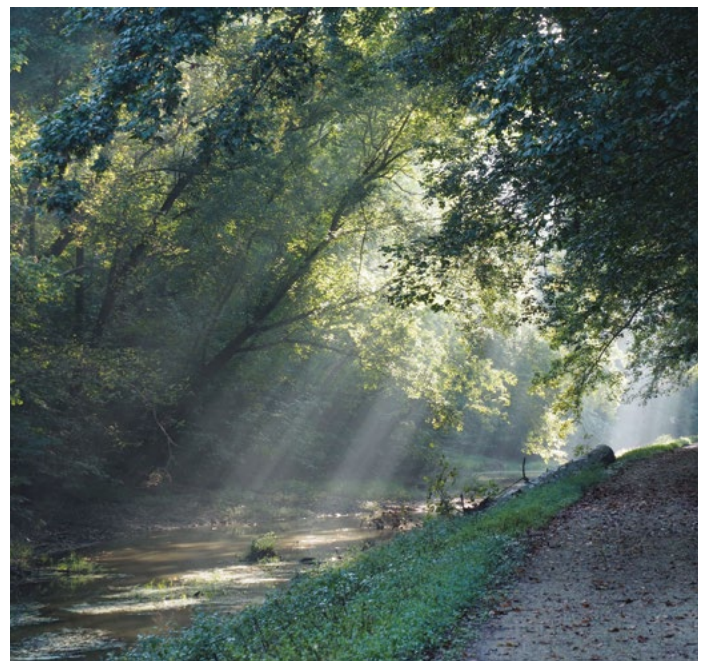
**Staffing Superintendent** Tina Cappetta announced her retirement at the end of May. *See article on page 4.*

**Potomac Tunnel** Site preparation continues just above the Alexandria Aqueduct, with limited impact on the Capital Crescent Trail and no impact on the towpath. The main action is in West Potomac Park, between Constitution Avenue and the Lincoln Memorial, where the boring machines will be lowered a hundred feet under the river.

**“Log Wall”** On July 11, the Park celebrated the completion of the stabilization of the historic dry-laid stone wall at Mile 11, between Carderock and Old

Angler's Inn. The work was accomplished with funds from the 2020 Great American Outdoors Act. The wall is especially critical because it supports the Potomac Connector, a huge sewer line that carries some 60 million gallons of wastewater daily from the area around Dulles Airport to the Blue Plains treatment plant in the District. The 96-inch sewer pipe was installed by DC Water directly under the prism of the canal, in accordance with an agreement that dates to the creation of the airport in the early 1960s and before the canal's designation as a national park. A failure of the wall would have caused a massive break in the canal and towpath and unimaginable pollution in the Potomac Gorge. *See photos on page 28.*

**Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail** Beginning September 5, The Trail is hosting a series of meetings with the public on the present status and future of the Trail. The Trail is 900 miles of hiking/biking trails, primarily in the Potomac watershed and not always connected. The longest single segment is the C&O Canal. The Trail's superintendent is Jeri DeYoung, former chief of resources for the C&O Canal NHP; she still sits in the Williamsport HQ and reports to the acting superintendent of that park.



*Early morning on the towpath. Photo by Kuriacose Joseph*

# C&O Canal Association

## Calendar of Events – 2025–2026

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
Sept. 21–25, Sun.–Thu., <b>World Canals Conference</b> Buffalo, N.Y. Further Info: <a href="http://www.wcc2025buffalo.com">www.wcc2025buffalo.com</a>
Oct. 5, Sun., <b>Board Meeting</b> , 1 p.m. Williamsport, Md. Check calendar at <a href="http://www.candocanal.org">www.candocanal.org</a> for details.
Oct. 10–15, 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 leaders before and during the trip, and must come equipped with recommended bicycles and have clothing for warm, cold, and rainy weather. Denny Sloppy, <a href="mailto:dennysloppy@yahoo.com">dennysloppy@yahoo.com</a> or 814-577-5877.

Nov. 1, Sat., <b>Heritage Hike and Dinner</b> , See cover story for details, or find more at <a href="http://www.candocanal.org">www.candocanal.org</a> . Contact: <a href="mailto:programs@candocanal.org">programs@candocanal.org</a> .
Nov. 9, Sun. <b>Continuing Hike Series</b> , 11:00 a.m. at Antietam Creek. Hikers will visit Antietam Creek Aqueduct Check calendar at <a href="http://www.candocanal.org">www.candocanal.org</a> for details. Contact: Jon Wolz – <a href="mailto:hikemaster@candocanal.org">hikemaster@candocanal.org</a> or 240-888-5367
Dec. 7, Sun., <b>Board Meeting</b> , 1 p.m. Glen Echo Town Hall, 6106 Harvard Ave. Check calendar at <a href="http://www.candocanal.org">www.candocanal.org</a> for details.
Dec. 7, Sun. <b>Continuing Hike Series</b> , 11:00 a.m. at Williamsport. Hikers will visit the Conococheague Aqueduct Check calendar at <a href="http://www.candocanal.org">www.candocanal.org</a> for details. Contact: Jon Wolz – <a href="mailto:hikemaster@candocanal.org">hikemaster@candocanal.org</a> or 240-888-5367
Feb. 1, 2026, Sun., <b>Board Meeting</b> , 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. Check calendar at <a href="http://www.candocanal.org">www.candocanal.org</a> for details.
March 21, 2026, Sat., (tentative) <b>Annual Meeting</b> Beallsville, Maryland Details to come.

*Visit Facebook and the Association web site and check upcoming issues of Along the Towpath for additional event listings and for further details of scheduled events. Contact [programs@candocanal.org](mailto:programs@candocanal.org) with questions.*

## Bicycle Safety



*Photo by Kuriacose Joseph*

Bicycle riding is permitted on the canal towpath, Western Maryland Rail Trail, Capital Crescent Trail, and Berma Road. Biking is not permitted on hiking trails or off trail. The surface of the towpath is for the most part an even hard-packed dirt trail. The towpath can be very muddy following heavy rain. Bicyclists should carry tools for repairs.

Please follow these basic biking regulations:

- 15 MPH maximum speed limit on towpath
- Ride single file
- Stay to the right except when passing
- Yield right-of-way to all pedestrians, horses, and mules
- Walk bikes over aqueducts and through tunnels
- Sound devices (bell, horn, etc.) are recommended and should be sounded within 100' of approaching others

Helmets are required in accordance with county ordinances. Children under the age of 18 are required to wear helmets in Montgomery County, MD, and children under the age of 16 are required to wear helmets in other areas of the park.

**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 .....Ed Wenschhof (Acting)  
Deputy Superintendent.....Ben Helwig (Acting)  
Superintendent's Assistant.....Erin Cowan  
Chief Ranger.....Joshua Cunningham (Acting)  
Chief of Business Management ..... Vacant  
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/playourvisit/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/choh/playourvisit/index.htm) provides information about park facilities, towpath closures, NPS events, canal boat programs, visitor centers, camping, and other visit-related information. The park information phone number is **301-739-4200**.



NPS  
*Plan Your Visit*

**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 CHO\_Hazards@nps.gov

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**Editor and Producer:** editor@candocanal.org

**Editorial Committee:** Jane Hanna, Kuriacose Joseph, Steve Nelson, Ned Preston, David Romanowski

**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 for individuals, \$35 for families, and \$50 for patrons, assessed on a calendar-year basis, and include a subscription to the newsletter.

Dues should be mailed to the C&O Canal Association or paid online. 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:** Arthur Tsien, [president@candocanal.org](mailto:president@candocanal.org)

**Vice President:** Barbara Sheridan

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

**Information Officer:** Vacant

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

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**Special Projects:** Vacant

**Volunteers in Parks:** Jim Heins [vip@candocanal.org](mailto:vip@candocanal.org)

# CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL ASSOCIATION INC.

P.O. Box 366

GLEN ECHO, MD 20812-0366

C&O Canal Association



Founded in 1954

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Permit# 1608  
Baltimore, MD



*(Top to bottom)  
The Log Wall at Mile 11  
(a dry-laid stone wall  
nearly 200 years old)  
before repairs, during  
construction, and  
after completion  
in June 2025.  
Photos courtesy NPS*



## ALONG THE TOWPATH

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Association  
[www.candocanal.org](http://www.candocanal.org)

Fall Heritage Hike.....	1
President's Ruminations.....	2
New Members .....	2
Donors to Association Funds .....	3
Tina Capetta Retires.....	4
Board Meeting Highlights .....	5
President's Lunch .....	6
Volunteers Needed .....	7
Volunteers in Parks .....	8
A Canal Rescue in Georgetown .....	9
Swain's Campground Report.....	10
Potomac River Levels .....	11
The Hike That Created a Park.....	15
Indiana on the C&O Canal.....	16
Looking Backward.....	18
On the Level.....	20
Environmental Committee Update .....	25
Calendar and Events .....	26
Contacts.....	27

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