

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 LVIII

March 2026

Number 1



An earthen dam under construction above Lock 10. Photos above and below by Allyson Miller

C&O Canal Becomes a Sewer

By Rod Mackler and Allyson Miller

On the night of the Martin Luther King holiday, Monday, January 19, a section of the Potomac Interceptor collapsed near Lock 12. The Interceptor is a huge (72 inches in diameter) sanitary sewer that carries 60 million gallons of waste daily from near Dulles Airport, under the Potomac River, then under the C&O Canal to Georgetown, and finally, back under the river to the Blue Plains Treatment plant in Southeast DC. To mitigate the immediate problem, DC Water plans to use a section of the canal prism as a temporary sewer, to divert the sewage into the (previously dry) canal from a point above the break to a point below the break. They have removed wooden lock gates from Locks 11, 12, and 13 to facilitate the flow. They plan to keep the towpath open, although the stench is awful, even in this freezing weather.

DC Water stressed repeatedly, and the press picked up, that the break is below the Washington Aqueduct water intake at Great Falls, so drinking water should not be affected. The downstream water intake at Little Falls has

wisely been turned off. The Park was slow to mention this spill on its website and then provided little information, only a link to DC Water.

When the break initially occurred, sewage followed a natural channel located between eastbound Clara Barton Parkway and Lock 12 and then flowed through Culvert 12 into the Potomac River. Culvert 12 is located between Locks 10 and 11.

According to the nonprofit Potomac Riverkeeper Network, *E. coli* counts in the Potomac River below the spill are nearly 12,000 times what authorities allow for human contact. The tests were performed on Friday, January 23. They estimated that nearly 300 million gallons of raw



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President's 2025 Annual Report

By Arthur Tsien

Undoubtedly, most of you readers are members of, or otherwise support, a variety of non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations. Many such organizations produce and disseminate a spiffy, multipage annual report. For example, closely related to our little C&O Canal-centric world, C&O Canal Trust, Potomac Conservancy, and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club all have very nice looking and informative annual reports. We don't. But each of the three organizations I mentioned has paid professional staff, including communications specialists. As a staunchly all-volunteer association, we don't. In the absence of a formal annual report, I offer the following to keep you informed. In sum, we are doing well, both financially and participation-wise.

- As of December 31, 2025, the Association had total assets of roughly \$630,000. Our assets are invested in certificates of deposit, money market funds, and a "balanced" mutual fund that holds both stocks and bonds. Some of our assets are restricted to specific uses, primarily aqueduct maintenance and legal expenses. We received dues income of about \$18,000 during 2025. We received donations (not counting dues) of about \$20,000.
- We paid or committed to paying about \$80,000 in grants to further our mission: preserving and protecting the historical and natural resources of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. We are supporting Cushwa Basin Trolley Barn Visitor Center exhibits, Park infrastructure repairs, the reprinting of Park publications, bus transport for school children to participate in the Park's Classroom Corps programs, and repairs to the replica canal boat in Cumberland.
- In 2025, we spent about \$19,000 on the production and mailing of three issues of *Along the Towpath*. (We normally produce four issues each year; we missed one issue in 2025 due to a change in volunteer leadership and staffing.) Our administrative and promotional expenses totaled about \$10,000, primarily for information services, insurance, a surety bond, membership software, and accounting software. We run our Annual Meeting of members and our Douglas and Heritage events (hikes, bike rides, dinner, and speaker) to be essentially self-supporting.
- We had over 500 members with paid-up dues at the end of 2025. Six months ago, we had vacancies in several key leadership positions; since then, members have stepped up and filled all but one of them.
- Our level walker volunteers expended about 350 hours in 2025, despite the loss of six weeks of prime fall level walking time due to the government funding shutdown, monitoring the condition of the canal and its historic structures and reporting that information to the Park. In the process they also collected over 35 large plastic bags of trash. Our VIP program had over 100 different volunteers (mostly nonmembers) who spent about 800 hours on projects that support the Park, such as picnic table repair and placement, bench installation, cleanup, and towpath map sign updates. We serve as the steward for Swains Campground by assisting the park with maintenance. Our volunteers staffed the replica canal boat in Cumberland on many summer weekends and welcomed hundreds of visitors. Our volunteers led hikes, walks, rides, and paddle trips open to members and nonmembers; these trips highlighted the historical, natural, and recreational assets of the Park and the Potomac River basin.

I wrote this report in narrative form with approximate numbers, ignoring accounting formalities, to make it more reader-friendly. I welcome your questions and comments (president@candocanal.org). A copy of our 2025 financial report, as approved by our Board of Directors at its February 2026 meeting, can be found on our website. The data in that financial report serve as the basis for our 2026 federal tax filing and our annual internal audit by the Audit Committee.

Thanks for reading and for your support. If you haven't renewed your membership yet for 2026, please do so. I hope to see you at one of our activities or on the towpath.

Donors to Association Funds

Donations December 1, 2025 through January 31, 2026

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

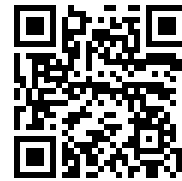
General funds that are used for any purpose.

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 candocanal.org/contributions

Donations

Christopher Allison – **R**

Michael Anderson – **A**

Kathleen Barber – **A, R**

Michael Bucci – **A, D, R**

Jo Condry – **A, C**

Jack Ebersole – **R**

John Frye – **A, C, D, R**

William Holdsworth – **R**

Maureen Jais-Mick – **R**

Roger Kief – **A**

Thomas Knoezer – **A, R**

Rita Knox – **G**

Daniel Leubecker III – **R**

Richard Longfellow – **R**

Michael Marmer – **A**

Dorothy Mathieson – **R**

Emil Moskovich, Jr. – **R**

Richard Peremski – **A, C, D, R**

Katherine Poore – **D**

Richard Potteiger – **A**

William Ravenscroft – **C**

Gayle Reid – **A, C, D, R**

David and Lia Royle – **G**

Michael Shallenberger – **G**

Kurt Schwarz – **R**

Sierra Club Potomac

Region Outings – **R**

Richard Sisson – **R**

Brenda Sparenborg – **R**

Frank Valentine – **A, C, D, R**

James Waite – **A, R**

Paul Ward – **A**

David Wiecking – **G**

Rachel Weisz – **G**



(Left) Cofferdam at Lock 13; sludge and debris collecting around vegetation in canal prism; sewage flowing into canal below Lock 12. (Right) Lock 13 with plastic sheeting displaced. All photos by Allyson Miller



C&O Canal Becomes a Sewer – Continued from Page 1

sewage had entered the river, a number that does not appear in releases by DC Water or the National Park Service. As a baseline, Potomac Riverkeeper also sampled the river near Old Angler’s Inn, above the rupture, and found *E. coli* levels in the range that is “safe and clean for human contact.” Thus, the high readings at Lock 10 and Fletcher’s were due to the break in the Potomac Interceptor. Dean Naujoks of Potomac Riverkeeper said it is too early to assess the long-term impact on public health and the environment; besides the consequences for humans, the contamination could lead to “dead zones in the river, algal blooms, and fish kills.”

To prepare for redirecting the sewage into the canal prism, DC Water crews did the following:

- Brush and small trees were cleared from the canal between Locks 10–13, approximately 2,700 feet.
- Locks 11, 12, and 13 were covered in plastic sheeting to provide some protection from the sewage. (Subsequent photos show the sheeting is slipping and not fully protecting the stonework).
- Trees have been cut down between Clara Barton Parkway and the canal prism in order to access the Potomac Interceptor pipe.
- DC Water crews installed two cofferdams, one above Lock 14 and one above Lock 10.

Currently, the waste is being pumped into the canal above Lock 12 and pumped out at the cofferdam above Lock 10. According to DC Water, the pumps are being clogged with wipes, grease, and other debris, so one can assume some of this debris will be left behind in the canal prism once the Potomac Interceptor is repaired.

At this time, there is no timeline for repair and no mention of what happens after the Potomac Interceptor is repaired, so we do not know if DC Water or the NPS will clean and repair the damage done to the canal prism and surrounding area.

Potomac Riverkeeper Network and the University of Maryland have been conducting testing of the water in at least three places: 1) near the break at Lock 10; 2) at Fletcher’s Cove; and 3) for control purposes, at Old Angler’s Inn upstream from the break. The testing below the break revealed extremely high levels of *E. coli*, *staph* (*Staphylococcus aureus*), and MRSA (an antibiotic-resistant strain of *S. aureus*). The District, Montgomery County, and Arlington County are also considering doing their own independent testing.

Obviously, DC Water is responsible for remediation, for cleaning up the damage. It is going to require quite a bit of time and quite a bit of money. What will it take to restore water quality, natural resources, and the canal and other cultural resources? For starters, the lock gates that were removed will have to be put back in place or, more likely, replaced with new wooden replicas. The canal prism will have to be dredged and scoured to remove the contamination. Somehow, the porous rock in the lock chambers will have to be cleaned. Fletcher’s Cove will have to be dredged and decontaminated. The list goes on, with short-term and longer-term tasks. We invite Association members to propose measures that should be taken. Timing is critical—the remediation should be budgeted while DC Water is obligating large sums.

For anyone interested in viewing the area, the Lock 10 parking lot is closed so the closest access is from Lock 8.

To follow this story in real time, DC Water is providing updates and photos on its website (dcwater.com) and Facebook account (DC Water). Two images stand out: 1) the lifting of one of the lock gates, and 2) a video of the sewage cascading over the lip of one of the historic (circa 1829) locks.

The Potomac Riverkeeper Facebook account is providing updates on water monitoring of the Potomac River.

The C&O Canal Association is providing updates on its Facebook account (C&O Canal Association).

The Association Welcomes New Members

Robert Baylor

Victor Kishter

Timothy Webb

Campbell Dodson

Elizabeth James

Bernard Jankowski

Carol Torgan

Rachel Sweeney

Thank you for your continued support of our organization! If you have questions, please contact the Membership Chair at membership@candocanal.org. Membership information is available at candocanal.org/membership.

Become A Member

Joining the C&O Canal Association is a simple way to turn your love for the canal into tangible support for the park.

As a member, you'll receive the quarterly *Along the Towpath* newsletter with updates on park issues, history, nature, hikes, and volunteer activities, plus opportunities to join guided walks, bike rides, and paddling trips along the 184.5-mile canal corridor. Members can also take part in hands-on stewardship through programs like Level Walkers and Volunteers in Parks, helping to keep the towpath safe, accessible, and welcoming for everyone. To join, visit candocanal.org.



Visit to start your membership



Photo by Steve Dean

3M Bike Challenge

September 19, 2026

By Denny Sloppy

In 2024 C&OCH sponsored a six-member team in the 3M Bike Challenge race, a fundraiser for Mountain Maryland Trails. The race is uphill for 15 miles from Cumberland to Frostburg, Maryland. Cyclists are invited to “challenge” the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad’s (WMSR) 1309 steam engine as it climbs Mt. Savage in this face-off between muscle, machine, and mountain. In 2024 no one on our team beat the train’s time, but we did have two team members come close. We would like to sponsor a team for this year’s challenge on Saturday, September 19, 2026. If you or someone you know are interested in being a team member for the C&OCA, please contact Denny Sloppy at dennysloppy@yahoo.com. The event provides a T-shirt for participants and team T-shirts will also be given to team members. Challenge your abilities and help raise awareness of our Association.

Board Meeting Highlights, December 2025

Sixteen board members and other interested folks met at the Glen Echo Town Hall on December 7 for the year's final board meeting and holiday lunch.

NPS Report: Shaun Lehmann of the C&O Canal NHP gave his usual thorough status report on park projects, including Four Locks mule barn, ongoing vandalism of bathrooms at Carderock, Riley's Lock parking lot resurfacing, Georgetown locks and walls, Potomac wastewater tunnel near the Washington aqueduct, three tunnel repairs, pedestrian bridge at Harpers Ferry, towpath resurfacing, and gate replacement at Violette's Lock.

There was discussion about scheduling a walk-through of the Trolley Barn with Christiana, running an article in *ATP* about how volunteers should report canal corridor issues to NPS (Jane will follow up on this), towpath damage at Lock 8, rebuilding the mule barn, transferring the stonecutting mill from Maryland State Parks, the extent to which canal features are repaired and restored canal in a historic manner, the use of plastic netting on retaining walls, using native plants instead of grass along the towpath, and the park's method for assessing of culverts' need for repairs.

Volunteers: Several members stepped up to fill the vacant positions. These folks have begun transitioning into their new leadership roles, with advice from the previous committee chairs.

Jeff Crooks – Membership	Steve Nelson – Membership Communications Coordinator
Shelby Garrison – Webmaster	
Kamille Kay – PayPal Manager	Tim Snyder and Jon Wolz – Programs

We still need a replacement for Jim Heins on the Volunteers-In-Parks committee. This is a great opportunity for hands-on work that's visible and beneficial to park visitors.

Officers and Board Candidates for 2026: The nominating committee has come up with a slate of candidates for open positions. Brief bios are in the December 2025 issue of *Along the Towpath*.

Arthur Tsien – President	Bill Holdsworth – Director
Barbara Sheridan – Vice President	Paul Lubell – Director
Jane Hanna – Secretary	Allyson Miller – Director
Robert Carpenter – Treasurer	Tim Snyder – Director

Financial Support of Park Projects: Shaun Lehmann asks that C&OCA coordinate with the C&O Canal Trust regarding financial support of much-needed culvert repairs.

Arthur Tsien is working with Christiana Hanson of C&O Canal NHP on the process of donating \$5,000 to the student transportation fund.

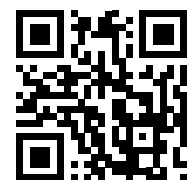
The board approved the general concept of donating funds for a water fountain and lighting near The Cumberland at Canal Place. A detailed plan is in the works.

New Board Meeting Policy: The Board approved the following: **POLICY:** A member of the Association who wants a matter to be considered by the Board is expected to attend that Board meeting to present the matter and answer questions. If that member is unable to attend the Board meeting at which the matter is scheduled to be discussed, consideration of the matter will be deferred to a future Board meeting in the absence of special circumstances.

Submission of Content for *Along the Towpath* –

Please review the submission guidelines posted at candocanal.org/submission. Submit questions, comments and content to editor@candocanal.org or the following address:

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



Submission Guidelines



*Whites Ferry Cabins in Winter 2025.
Photo by Jon Wolz*

C&O Canal National Historical Park White's Ferry Update

By Jon Wolz

At the Canal Towns Partnership holiday luncheon, held at the Bavarian Inn on December 10, in Shepherdstown, WV, C&O Canal Historical National Park ranger, Joshua Nolen, announced that a contract has been issued regarding the existing cabins and a future public campsite at White's Ferry. The cabins will be torn down and removed in early 2026. This is the first phase of turning the 19-acre site into a campsite for the public to use and enjoy.

The National Park Service (NPS) is in the process of reimagining future use of an approximately 73-acre site within the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal National Historical Park ("the park") at White's Ferry. Their goal is to provide new and enhanced public amenities and opportunities for group gathering and recreation along the Potomac River. The site, referred to as "the White's Ferry area" includes tracts 17-101 and 17-102 located in western Montgomery County, MD and is generally bound by the Potomac River to the west; Federal property to the north; White's Ferry Road, River Road, and Federal property to the east; and Federal and private property to the south. The site surrounds the private property where the White's Ferry "river crossing" operation and White's Ferry Store & Grill are located. The future of the river crossing operation is outside the scope of this effort. It is not located on Federal property.

The White's Ferry area is owned by the NPS and is managed by the C&O Canal National Historical Park unit of the NPS. The site includes open space, a picnic pavilion, a large parking lot, wooded areas, river access, structures, and access to private lands.

The White's Ferry Area Development Concept Plan (Concept Plan) dated March 2023 presents ideas for the future development and uses of the White's Ferry area. The White's Ferry area came under the jurisdiction of the NPS in the early

1970s. The NPS acquired Tract 17-102 in 1972 from the Royal Atlas Corporation, followed by the acquisition of Tract 17-101 in 1974 from the White's Ferry Sportsman Club ("the Club"). The NPS acquired Tract 17-101 through a deed that reserved in the Club certain rights of use and occupancy of the tract for a period of 25 years. The Club had continuously occupied the tract from before 1974 to 2021. The NPS is now exploring new future public uses of the north tract, which traditionally had been more accessible to the public, and the south tract, which until recently had been exclusively occupied by a private organization. The south tract currently has 20 cabins formerly used for recreation that the NPS will be removing.

The approximately 19-acre south tract is predominately wooded and contains 20 cabins formerly used for recreation linearly arranged along a one-lane unpaved access road known as Old River Road. Also, there are several outhouses standing associated with the cabins. The entrance to the south tract is along White's Ferry Road opposite the north tract's parking lot entrance. The entrance road has a locked gate. The access road continues south crossing a stream draining from the C&O Canal into the Potomac River and eventually provides vehicle access to a private property located adjacent to the west of the south tract. In the northern portion of the site, shaded open space is available east of the access road.

Potential visitor capacity for the south tract ranges from approximately 75 to 145 persons, depending on what plans are agreed upon. Visitor capacity for the south tract was identified based on the campsite visitor capacity based on the following reasons: visitor access and use of the south tract would be limited to those visitors using the campsites. A gate at the north end of the existing access road would help maintain campsite user privacy. Visitor capacity at the campsites could be implemented at the campsites through a recreation fee, reservation, and permit system.

The River Park at Canal Place and Impacts to the C&O Canal NHP

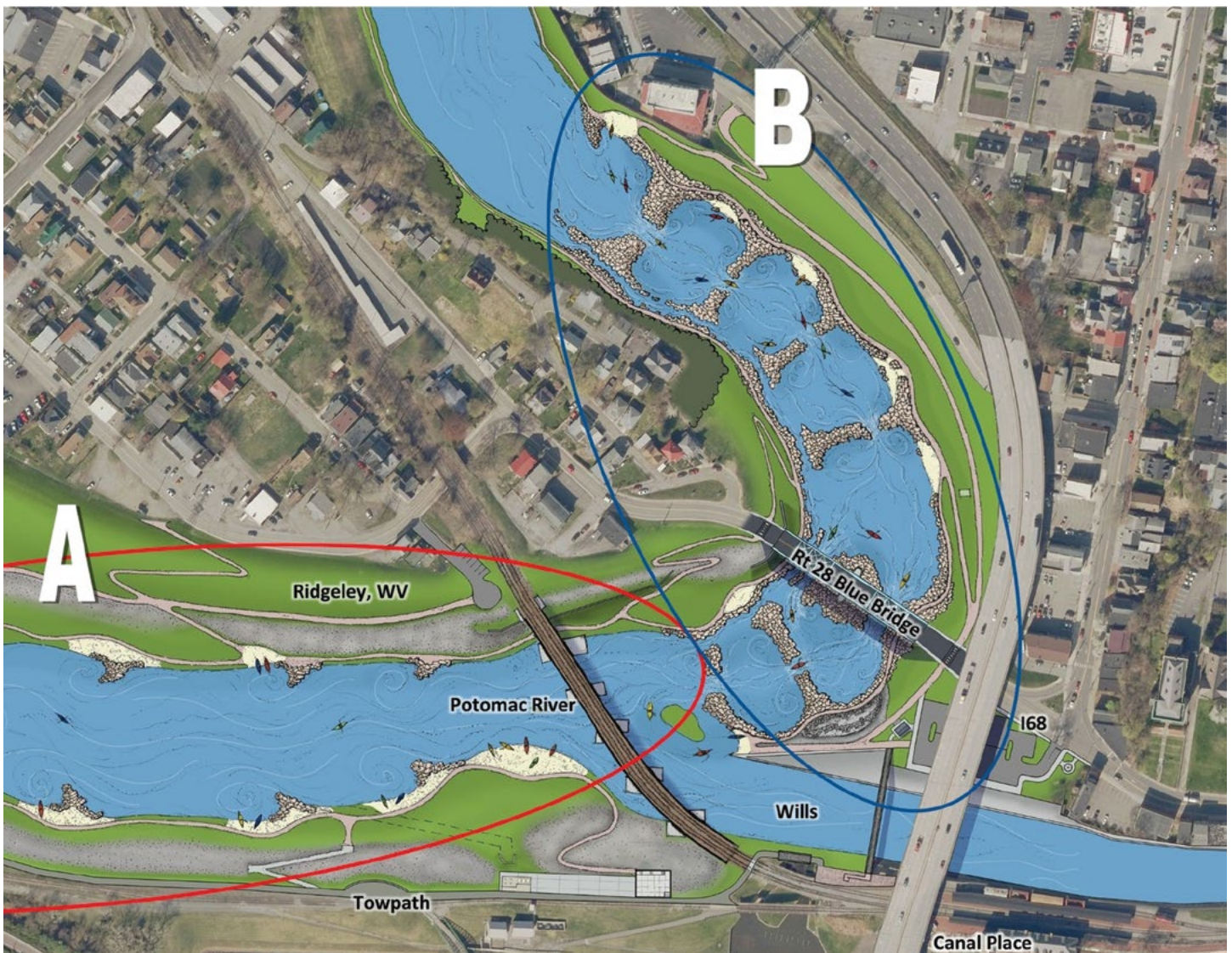
By Stephen Nelson

The planned *River Park at Canal Place* in Cumberland promises to be a major new benefit for Cumberland, Ridgely (WV), and Western Maryland. It will also be an asset for the C&O Canal National Historical Park, strengthening the park's western gateway at Cumberland with new river access opportunities, additional trails and connections, and a richer visitor experience at the canal's terminus.

The *River Park at Canal Place* will be a free, family-friendly riverfront park in downtown Cumberland, set to

revitalize 1.5 miles of the North Branch of the Potomac River beside Canal Place and the C&O Canal's western terminus. According to Allegany County Tourism Director and Canal Place board member Ashli Workman, "The River Park adds new water-based recreation access, stronger trail connections, better walkability, and land-based amenities that support paddling, biking, fishing, hiking, and casual family use."

Continued on next page



Graphic rendition of the *River Park at Canal Place*. Highlights in section A are the trails, parking, and river access on the Ridgely, West Virginia, side as well as the Maryland side adjacent to the C&O Canal NHP. Section B shows trails, parking, and river access as well as planned whitewater and flatwater additions with the removal of the dam located under the Route 28 blue bridge.

This transformative project will remove the aging Cumberland Dam, restore the river, improve fish passage, introduce whitewater features, expand flatwater boating and fishing access, and provide new trails, connections, viewing areas, and parking. By dramatically increasing outdoor activity options, attracting more visitors, boosting local businesses, and enriching the natural environment for wildlife and the community, the River Park will establish Cumberland as a premier destination for recreation and tourism.

A New Riverfront Gateway at Mile 184.5

Canal Place in Cumberland already brings together the western terminus of the C&O Canal towpath, the beginning of the Great Allegheny Passage, the C&O Canal NHP Visitor Center, and the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad. The planned *River Park at Canal Place* would add a two-mile stretch of improved riverfront along the North Branch of the Potomac, immediately adjacent to this hub, creating a more dynamic and inviting trailhead for C&O Canal visitors.

The project area runs about half a mile upstream from Cumberland's Blue Bridge and one and a half miles downstream to the Carpendale Trestle. It covers both the Maryland and West Virginia sides near the canal's end. For C&O Canal users, the end of the towpath would lead into a larger waterfront park with easy river access, trails, and activities for families.

Project Features and River Improvements

River Park at Canal Place project will redevelop approximately 1.5–2 miles of the North Branch corridor with a mix of restoration and recreation features. Concept plans from the Canal Place Preservation & Development Authority describe removal of the aging Cumberland Dam, sediment cleanup, fish passage improvements, and stream enhancement, paired with new whitewater features, flatwater boating access, fishing access, viewing areas, parking, and trails.

These physical improvements will significantly upgrade the river corridor that C&O Canal visitors already see from Canal Place, turning what is now a largely utilitarian stretch of river into a restored and accessible landscape that better reflects the C&O NHP's conservation mission.

Stronger Trail and Access Connections for Canal Users

From the perspective of the C&O Canal National Historical Park, one of the most important aspects of the River Park is its emphasis on trails and connectivity. Canal Place's own planning and Maryland budget testimony describe the project as "River Park at Canal Place Trails and Trail Connections," underscoring that the new riverside paths will tie directly into the C&O Canal towpath, the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP), and city streets in downtown Cumberland.

These improved connections will make it easier for cyclists, hikers, and other visitors to move between the towpath and the GAP, the Visitor Center, downtown services, and new river features without navigating confusing road crossings or gaps. For long-distance riders completing the 184.5-mile towpath (or the full 333-mile Washington–Pittsburgh route), River Park's trailheads, parking, and wayfinding will effectively extend the western terminus into a broader trail village, providing more logical start- and end-points for trips, shuttles, and group outings that use the national park as their centerpiece.

Enhancing the Visitor Experience at Cumberland

The C&O Canal NHP Visitor Center at Canal Place already interprets the canal's construction, locks, mules, and cargo through exhibits and a lifesize canal boat replica. By adding a vibrant waterfront park next door, the River Park project will give visitors more reasons to linger at the western end of the canal—watching boaters on the river, exploring new overlooks, or enjoying short walks along the North Branch before or after time on the towpath.

Local tourism officials emphasized in recent public meetings that riverbased recreation is one of the most sought-after outdoor experiences and that River Park is designed to "transform Cumberland's downtown" and "support our growing outdoor recreation economy." For the C&O Canal NHP, this means a stronger, more engaging setting where interpretive programs, special events, and joint efforts between the National Park Service, the Canal Place Authority, and groups like the C&O Canal Association can connect canal stories with the living river right beside it.

Conservation, Community, and the Park's Future

Project sponsors highlight that River Park will “improve water quality, advance wildlife passages, provide an exciting new downtown river experience, and increase awareness for the region as a premier outdoor recreation destination.” These goals align closely with the C&O Canal NHP’s dual purpose of preserving natural and historical resources while providing high-quality recreational opportunities at places like Cumberland, one of Maryland’s certified heritage areas.

Significant public investment—at least \$10 million in direct federal funding, plus state, county, and city grants and appropriations—has been committed to River Park as an economic development and quality-of-life project for this gateway community. As Canal Place, the Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area, and the City of Cumberland continue to position the region as a trail-and-river hub, the C&O Canal National Historical Park stands to benefit from increased visitation, stronger community support, and a more resilient setting at its historic western end.

The River Park at Canal Place represents the next chapter in the long story of how a once-industrial corridor along the Potomac has been reimagined as a landscape of recreational trails, heritage, and flowing water, with the C&O Canal National Historical Park at its heart.

What is Next?

Planning for the River Park is underway, and some funding has been secured, but there are still challenges to overcome before the project is completed.

These include:

- Total funding costs of 25–30 million dollars may be challenging given current state and federal budget shortfalls.
- Early engineering work shows that the project will involve several agencies, removing a dam, and major construction in the river. Each of these steps could lead to delays, extra costs, or changes to the design.
- And, as expected, politics are at play. What appears to be a bipartisan project is already receiving criticism from some local leaders who do not recognize—or choose not to recognize—the economic, social, and recreational benefits of a project that differs from a traditional economic driver, such as a factory.

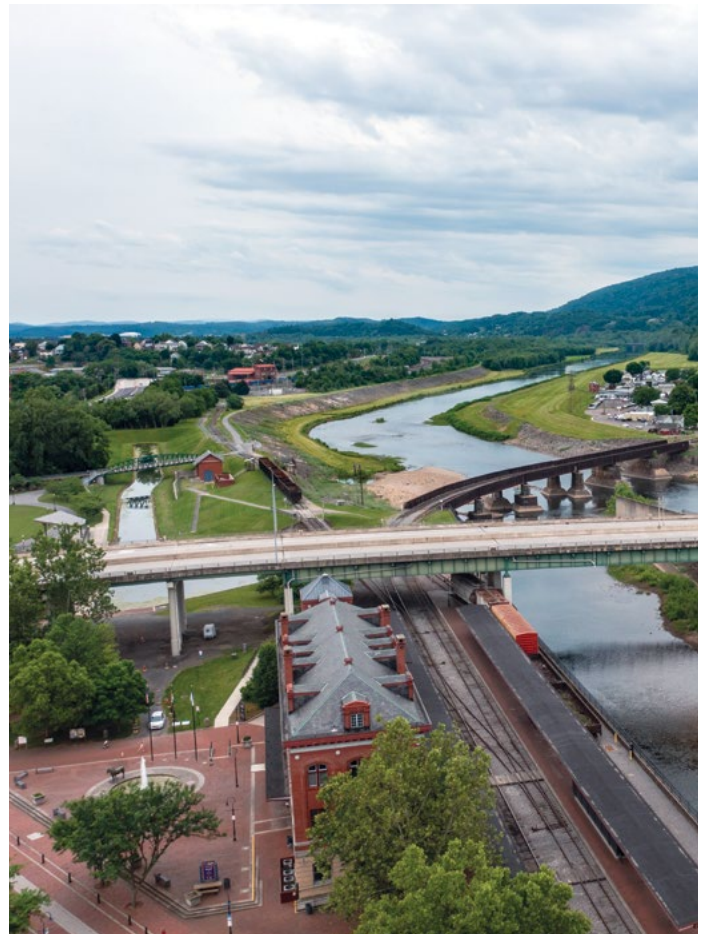
What Can You Do?

Review the information at passagesofthepotomac.org/the-river-park-at-canal-place and share your views with local, state, and federal leaders. Your involvement is important for gaining support for a project that is important to Western Maryland and to the C&O Canal NHP’s ongoing viability and its ability to provide recreational and historical opportunities for generations to come.

About Steve

Having recently sold his publishing business, Steve has more time to devote to family and outdoor recreational pursuits including flyfishing, skiing, and cycling. He is a C&O Canal Bike Patrol member, member of the C&O Canal Association, Mountain Maryland Trails, and serves as a Commissioner on the C&O Canal National Historical Park Federal Advisory Commission. Contact: tristatetownplanner@gmail.com

A current aerial view of the C&O Canal NHP at Canal Place in Cumberland, MD. The Western Maryland Railway Station is below the I-68 overpass. Photo by Kyle J. Little





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 information below is the third of 14 daily handouts created by the NPS for the 2004 C&O Canal Association thru-hikers. The 2004 Thru-Hike commemorated the 50th anniversary of the 1954 hike to save the canal led by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas.

Day 3 – Town Creek to Stickpile Hill

The remoteness of the western Maryland mountains has allowed rare Appalachian shale barren ecosystems to remain unspoiled and wild. For the canal company in the 19th century, however, this wilderness was a forbidding obstacle to overcome. At the groundbreaking ceremony on July 4, 1828, President John Q. Adams charged the canal company with “the subjugation of the Earth for the improvement of the condition of man.” The designers and engineers took this charge very seriously. Nature was a foe to be fought and eventually defeated.

The mountains and the river presented immediate challenges to the canal company. Difficulty in obtaining good stone and financial troubles led the canal company to use inferior materials. Lockhouses were built of wood instead of stone as on the eastern end of the canal. Locks 71–58 are composite locks made of rubble stone and wood. Over the years as creosote-soaked wood deteriorated, the company replaced it and repaired the locks with concrete.

Running short of funds in the 1830s and 1840s, the canal company decided to save money by eliminating Lock 65. To make up for the missing lock, the next 4 locks were dug two feet deeper to raise a boat an average of 10 feet instead of the usual 8 feet. Since the locks above the Paw Paw Tunnel had already been numbered, the company used fractions to make up the numbering difference. The lock numbers jump from 66 to 64 2/3.

Perhaps the greatest challenge was posed by the Paw Paw Bends where the Potomac River curves back and forth for six miles. To avoid six arduous miles of canal construction, the company built a 3,118 foot tunnel through a shale mountain.

Today this section of the canal remains one of the most remote and wild areas of the park. Neighbored by Maryland state parks and protected by the ruggedness of the mountains, the Paw Paw area has been spared some

of the pressures of development faced by other areas of the park. Were the canal laborers awed by the mountains and the river or did the struggle to complete the canal overshadow nature's beauty?

What to See

Mile 161.7–Lock 67: Locktender in the early 1900s, Hughey Darkey (or Darbey) was known for his pretty daughters. Mr. Darkey is buried in the Oldtown Cemetery.

Mile 156.2–Paw Paw Section House: The section superintendent lived in this house. He oversaw the maintenance and smooth operation of the canal in his district.

Mile 155.8–Paw Paw Tunnel: The 12x12 railings in the interior of the tunnel are almost all original beams put in place in 1850. Grooves, carved by 74 years of towlines, can still be felt in the beams. Towline grooves can also be seen at the downstream end of the tunnel in the rock wall.

Mile 154.7–Lock 66 & Carpenter's Shop: Remains of the foundation of the carpentry shop built to maintain the canal can still be seen. The pit where the wood was treated with creosote is also still visible. The creosote-soaked wood was used to make lock gates and line Locks 71 to 58.

Mile 153.1–Lock 61 Circa 1900: Locktender Joe Davis and his wife were murdered and Lockhouse 61 burned to cover up the crime. The murderer was caught when he tried to spend some of the rare coins stolen from Davis near the canal in Cumberland. Boatmen recognized the coins and confronted him.

*(Left) The western entrance of the Paw Paw Tunnel.
Photo by Barbara Sheridan*



Leaving a Mark: Civil War Soldiers' Graffiti Along the C&O Canal

by Timothy R. Snyder

During U. S. Civil War, many young soldiers traveled and campaigned outside of their home communities for the first, and perhaps the last, time. Soldiering involved not only fighting, but drill, marching, guard, and garrison duty. In fact, most of the soldiers' time consisted of not fighting. In their free time, some soldiers chose to mark their presence at a specific location, a place they may never visit again, by leaving behind a physical reminder. They drew, sketched, carved, and engraved. It is believed that some of engravings on the Seneca Aqueduct were made by Civil War soldiers.

In addition to those at Seneca, on the limestone cliffs between Dam Number 5 and Four Locks, high above the canal, three such soldiers left their mark overlooking the

waterway. In shallow, uneven letters and numbers, the three soldiers engraved the name of their unit and their own names into the rock. The late Bernhard Charles, a descendant of Joel Charles who owned the Charles Mill during the Civil War, discovered the engravings many years ago.

Unfortunately, none of the three names appeared in the regimental roster of the 105th New York Infantry. It was back to the research trail! At this point, it was suggested that because the etchings are shallow and the cliff face is uneven and contains lichen, the regiment might be the 106th New York rather than the 105th. And indeed, a check of the regimental roster of the 106th New York showed that all three men served in the unit: *Hugh M. Irwin, William H. Craft (Graft), Welcome C. Harrington*



Monocacy Aqueduct. Photo by Jon Wolz

The Annual Douglas Hike and Dinner

April 25, 2026

The hike and dinner will be held on April 25, 2026. The meeting will take place at the barn on Calleva Farm, 19120 Martinsburg Road, Dickerson, MD 20842. Attendees will meet at the parking area by the barn in time for the 11:00 am bus departure. All hikers will board a Calleva bus for transportation to the starting points.

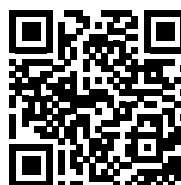
Long hikers will be dropped off at Noland's Ferry (Mile 44.60) where they will walk down the towpath to the site of a waste weir (Mile 39.17). From there, hikers will cross the canal and follow a path up the hillside to a field. At the field, hikers will turn right following the path and then turn left walking over to the Calleva Farm buildings and the barn. The hike from the towpath to the barn is about 0.5 mile. The canal prism at Mile 39.17 is dry.

Short hikers will be dropped off at the Monocacy Aqueduct parking lot. From there, they will walk out on top of the aqueduct (Mile 42.19) to view the mouth of the Monocacy River. From there, they will walk down the towpath to the site of a waste weir (Mile 39.17). Then hikers will cross the canal and follow a path up the hillside to a field. At the field, hikers will turn right following the path and then turn left walking over to the Calleva Farm buildings and the barn.

As hikers arrive, they will be invited to ride in a tractor-pulled wagon for a tour of the farm. Riders will stop at the site of what was once the White's Ford Fort. From the earthworks, there are views of the C&O Canal, White's Ford, White's Farm and the Blue Ridge.

As hikers finish up with the farm tour, they will have a non-alcoholic social period at the barn. The farm cannot allow outside guests to bring alcohol onto the farm and the farm does not serve alcohol. Dinner will be at 4:00 p.m. The menu will be finalized closer to the date and shared with COCA members. The dinner will be prepared by the farm's fantastic chef who will serve a smattering of fresh options, many of which come directly from the farm. The chef can accommodate many of the common dietary restrictions like vegetarianism, gluten free, etc.

The farm would like to have an estimate of the number of attendees for the dinner two weeks in advance with the final number one week in advance so the chef can prepare adequately.



To sign up, fill out and mail in the yellow insert in this newsletter, or use the QR code here.

The Strange Story of Dam No. 3

By David T. Gilbert

On October 22, 1884, Thomas H. Savery, a pulp and paper machinery manufacturer from Wilmington, Delaware, purchased the old Musket Factory lot at Harpers Ferry from the U.S. Government for \$25,100, outbidding the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad by \$100. Savery commenced plans to erect a pulp mill on the site of the Armory's old Rolling Mill,

using the former Armory Dam and Armory Canal to furnish water power from the Potomac River.

But within just a few months, a riparian dispute challenged Savery's development of water power at the place. The C&O Canal Company claimed that the proposed pulp mill's water use from the old Armory

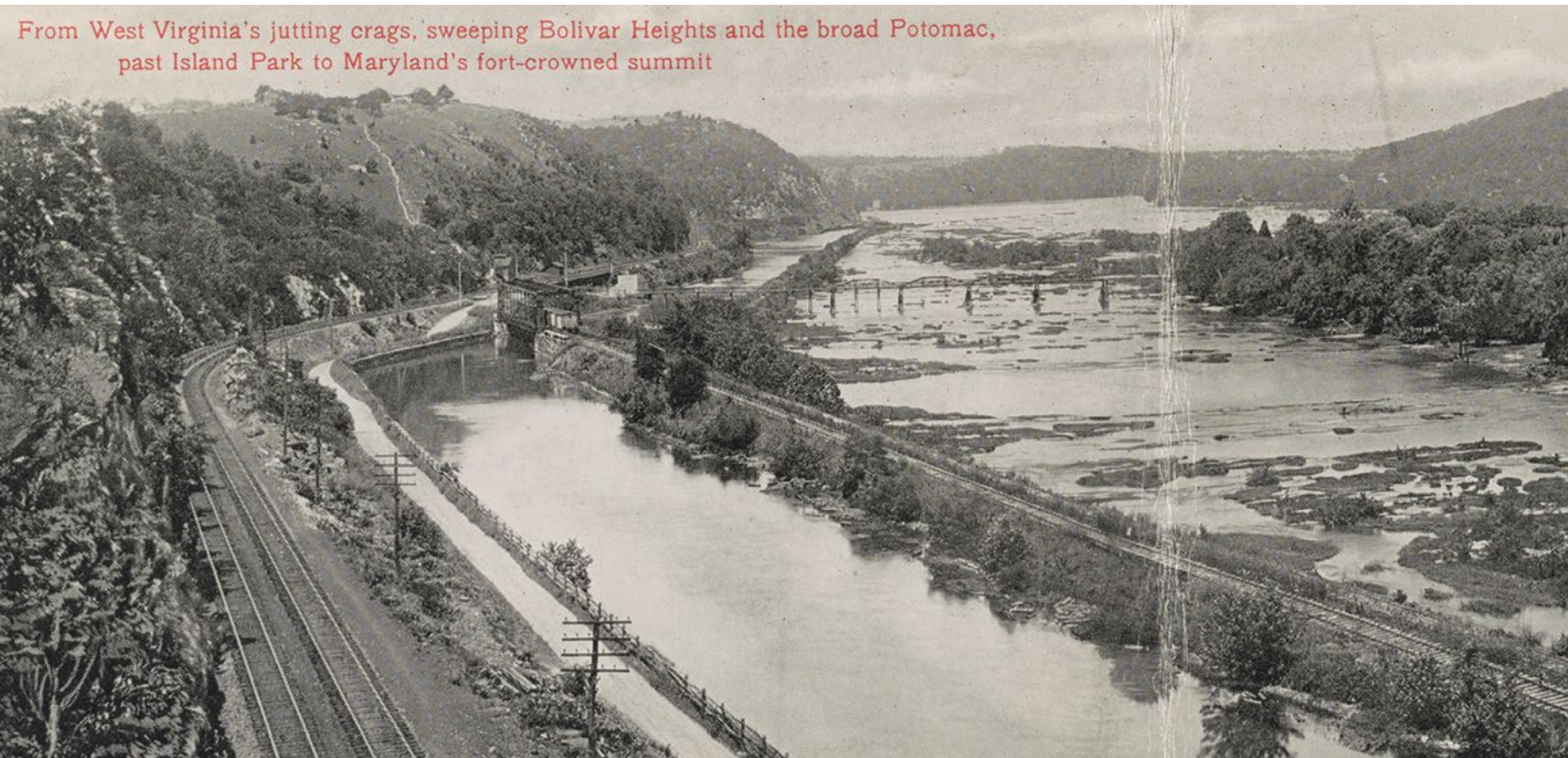
Dam would disrupt operations of the canal. In September 1885, the canal company's superintendent threatened to throw rocks in front of the headgate locks of the old Armory Canal to stop the flow of water. Savery's attorney, James D. Butt, responded to the threat with harsh words:

Continued on next page



*The Potomac Power Plant, a small hydroelectric facility that operated from 1899 to 1991, was originally part of Thomas Savery's pulp mill.
Photo courtesy HABS/HAER, Library of Congress*

From West Virginia's jutting crags, sweeping Bolivar Heights and the broad Potomac, past Island Park to Maryland's fort-crowned summit



A 1908 photograph by W. L. Erwin shows Dam No. 3 (upper center) and the former pulp mill (center left) along the Armory Canal. Photo Courtesy Library of Congress

I at once sent word to the Canal people that when they were ready to try that game on, that I would be fully prepared to meet them on the premises. I had intended to either have them arrested or employ a force of men from here, sufficiently strong to throw the entire Canal gang into the Potomac River.

Thomas Savery subsequently wrote to the president of the C&O Canal Co., apprising him of his superintendent's threat of intimidation. On October 1, 1885, L. Victor Boughman, president of the canal company, replied to Savery's letter, backing up his superintendent:

Dear Sir:

I am informed by Superintendent Biser that you contemplate drawing water from our dam on the Potomac

River above Harpers Ferry. Under no circumstance can we permit you to do so, as the C&O Canal Co. own the water privilege of the Potomac River or so much thereof as is necessary to keep said canal open for navigation. You will be held responsible for any infringement of these rights and liable to arrest and damage.

This was the first known claim made by the C&O Canal Co. to the dam, which had been erected by the U.S. Government in 1801. In November 1833, the dam also began serving the C&O Canal as a feeder dam, but apparently no formal agreement was ever made between the government and the canal company for this privilege. The dam was abandoned by the government at the beginning of the Civil War, but

continued to feed water to the canal. When the Flood of 1877 destroyed part of the old dam, the damage was discussed during a canal company meeting. For the first time, the minutes of this meeting referred to the structure as "Dam No. 3."

Further details of the dispute are not known, but the matter was likely settled when Savery finally obtained his deed for the property on April 12, 1887. In this deed, the U.S. Government explicitly conveyed to Savery "the water power entire of the Potomac river." Plans for construction of the pulp mill proceeded, and the canal company apparently made no further claim to an exclusive water privilege here.

The Collier Family of the C&O Canal

By Jon Wolz

People who lived or visited the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in Montgomery County, Maryland, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries either knew of or encountered members of the Collier family. There were two occasions when a member of the Collier family saved a child from drowning in the canal. Richard H. Collier Sr. and his wife Mary lived along the canal, first at Edwards Ferry and then at Great Falls. Along the canal they raised several children.

In December 2022, I was at the Monocacy Cemetery in Beallsville, Maryland, to participate in the Wreaths Across America event, where holiday wreaths are placed on veterans' graves.

As people were gathering for the event, I noticed the door of the chapel was open. There were some people inside and I went in. This was the first time I had been inside. I noticed a framed poster hanging on a wall titled, Notable Burials at Monocacy Cemetery. The poster includes names and short biographies of twenty-four people. As I glanced at the poster, I wondered to myself if there were any lock keepers? I came upon the name of Thomas Walter on the poster. Thomas was a lock keeper at Lock 27 and then a boatman on the C&O Canal. For Thomas, under his name, "1801-1877" followed by, "Walter saved the Monocacy Aqueduct from

the Confederate Army during the Civil War". The poster did not say that Thomas was the lock keeper at Lock 27 for thirty years as well as the early years of the Civil War. I knew there were many more lock keepers buried at the Monocacy Cemetery, yet they all seem to be forgotten.

Subsequently, I began compiling a list of Montgomery County C&O Canal workers. The last year of the boating season for the C&O Canal was in 1923. I began looking at the Federal census for Montgomery County, beginning in 1920 and working back to 1850. The 1850 census was the first to show occupations.

Then I began looking at C&O Canal payroll and labor records. Those records are incomplete because lack all the months or years of payroll records. I also began looking up burial sites for the workers. So far, I have 250 names on my list, and I update it periodically.

In January through March of 2023, I visited the National Archives in Adelphi, Maryland, four times to scan/photograph labor records from the 1880s. These records did not include all the years of the 1880s. The C&O Canal payroll records end in 1889. After that year, the railroad began managing canal affairs after resuming

Continued on next page



*Lock 20 at Great Falls, 1889.
Photo Courtesy of Montgomery History*

Caption to come



*Looking downstream from
Lock 20 at Great Falls.
Photo by Jon Wolz*

operations after the great flood of 1889. I checked with the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore, and they told me they do not have any C&O Canal records.

Richard H. Collier, Sr. was born in 1824 in Virginia, and his wife Mary Frances Daily was born in 1824 in Virginia. In 1849, they were married in Washington, DC. By my count, they had 10 children, of whom eight survived childhood.

Richard and Mary both appear in the 1850 census along with their children living in Loudoun County, Virginia. Their post office was in Belmont. They had a six-month-old daughter named Mary. Daughter Mary does not appear again in the census and there is no record of her death. In the 1860 census, Richard was a warehouse keeper living in Loudoun County along with his wife and growing family. Children living with them were John 10, Thomas 6, Charles 5, Frances 2, and Eugenia three months. John and Thomas attended school. Eugenia does not appear in future census records and there is no record of her death. Son Charles does not appear again living with the family in subsequent censuses. He reappears in the 1900 and 1910 census for Washington, DC, where he was living. Living with the Colliers in Virginia in 1860 was Mary C. Newman, 17, serving as a cook and washer. Living near the Colliers were boatmen with families of Charles Clark (black) and Silas Simpson (white). It is likely the warehouse goods were loaded onto the boats and were poled across the Potomac River to Maryland entering the Goose Creek River Locks below Lock 25 before entering the C&O Canal.

By 1865, Richard and Mary moved their families across the Potomac River where Richard took over lock keeper duties from William Rollison at Lock 25, Edwards Ferry. In the 1870 census, living with Richard and Mary

were children: John, 20; Thomas, 16; Francis (Fannie), 12; Henry, 8; Valentine, 6; Richard Jr., 5; and Mary (Mollie), 3. Richard Jr. and Mollie were born in Maryland.

All the other Colliers were born in Virginia. Also living with them was Franklin Soper, 18. Mrs. Collier was keeping house, and other than the lock keeper, no other occupations were indicated on the census. Lock keeper Richard earned \$52 monthly in the 1860s and 70s from the C&O Canal Company. Richard earned an extra \$2 a month because he had responsibility for operating the Goose Creek River Locks. Lock keepers who operated a single lock made \$50 a month. The nearby neighbors of the Colliers were ferryman Samuel Mansfield with his family and Charles F. Elgin with his family. Charles Elgin was a “boss on the canal.” Samuel Mansfield became a lock keeper at Lock 17 at Great Falls in the 1880s. By 1873, Charles Wood became a lock keeper at Lock 25 replacing Richard Collier. Charles Butler replaced Charles Wood later in the 1870s. From the payroll records, Charles Wood subsequently moved up to Lock 26 to serve as lock keeper.

On the evening of May 15, 1880, a three-year-old daughter of Lock 25 lock keeper Charles Butler and his wife Frances fell into the canal at Edwards Ferry. The news report stated, “but for the presence of mind and bravery of Richard Collier, she would undoubtedly drowned.” The little girl was Corrie Butler, one of nine children. She never married and lived to be 76.

In the 1880s, the Collier children began moving out of their parents’ household. In the 1880 census for Edwards Ferry, Richard’s occupation in the census was listed as “at home”. There were four children living with their parents. Valentine and Henry were working on canal boats living with their parents. Sons John and Thomas were married

and living nearby, and he worked on a canal boat. Daughter Emily Collier married John Henderson where they would move to Washington, DC. John was a watchman in the 1900 census. In the 1870 census, John's father, William Henderson, was a lock keeper at Great Falls.

On September 24, 1880, it was reported by the *Montgomery County Sentinel* that "Captain Collier took four thousand, four hundred bushels of wheat to Georgetown on Tuesday raised by farms near this place (Edwards Ferry). He will bring back thirty-five tons of fertilizer." I do not know which Collier son this was, but possibly it was John who was the oldest of the Collier "boatmen" and had moved out of his parents' household. In 1882, tragedy struck the family of Thomas and his wife Martha. On August 8th, their infant son, William Peyton, died of cholera infantum "after a week of intense suffering". He was four months old.

By 1884, Richard moved down the towpath to Lock 20, Great Falls. There the lock house adjoins the Great Falls Tavern or Crommelin House as it was officially known back then. Richard's pay was \$40 monthly. Son Thomas became a lock keeper at Lock 23 (known as Violette's Lock today). *See photo page 19.* Thomas also worked on canal work crews. Children of Thomas and Martha attended the Seneca Mills School on River Road. Son Valentine became a canal laborer and eventually took charge of his own canal work crew in Georgetown in the early 1900s. Valentine married Charlotte "Lottie" Wood, the daughter of lock keeper Charles Wood and his wife, Columbia.

Son Richard, Jr. was a canal laborer. Daughter Frances "Fannie" married a canal worker, level walker and future lock keeper of Lock 27, John Whalen. John Whalen was the younger brother of Columbia Wood mentioned above. Fannie served as a cook for canal work crews earning \$10 a month. As the 1880s progressed, pay for lock keepers decreased. Richard's pay dropped to \$30 monthly and then to \$20 monthly by 1889. During winter months his pay was \$15 a month. At times, someone else signed for his pay, possibly a person who gave Richard a payday loan. The adult Collier children would eventually leave the canal for other ventures except for Fannie and Henry who spent their entire lives on the canal. All the adult Colliers are buried at the Monocacy Cemetery with their spouse/family except for Valentine and Charles who are buried in Washington, DC.

In May 1885, the *Montgomery County Sentinel* reported that, "Some little excitement has been caused by the charges against Mr. Thos. Sullivan, the gatekeeper of the Washington Aqueduct at Great Falls. Mr. E. E. Fisher

(Lock 18 lock keeper) and Mr. R. H. Collier (Lock 20 lock keeper), both worthy gentlemen, are applicants for the position which is a lucrative one, and are backed by their many friends. Mr. Sullivan is charged with using his office to further the interests of a certain political party. The charges have been laid before the Secretary of War". Neither Fisher or Collier got the position and remained lock keepers through the 1880s.

Locks along the C&O Canal are from 90 feet to 100 feet long, and the lock walls are sixteen feet high. When the locks were full of water, the water depth was up to sixteen feet of brown, murky water. People living and working along the canal generally did not know how to swim. There were many unfortunate stories of drownings. On December 18, 1885, the *Montgomery County Sentinel* reported that George Jewell fell overboard while attempting to board a grain boat belonging to Elijah White and Edward Wootten. The boy, "...was rescued with extreme difficulty by Mr. H. L. Collier of Great Falls." That was Henry L. Collier who did the courageous rescue. George Jewell was four years old at the time. He would become a streetcar motorman, marry, and together with his wife, have five children.

In December 1886, in the *Montgomery County Sentinel*, it was reported, "When the pay-boat Maryland passed up (the canal) last week, our old friend R. H. Collier received very serious injuries by falling between the boat and the lock. The timely assistance of Mr. James Daily and others saved him from going under the boat and drowning. He is now slowly recovering from many bruises and a severe cold." James Daily was a laborer living along the canal in the Great Falls vicinity. The available canal records do not show James working for the canal.

During the mid-1880s and continuing through the end of the decade, three of Richard Senior's children were actively involved in the Knights of Pythias, Crommelin Lodge, No. 89, located at Great Falls. Sons Valentine, Henry, and Richard, Jr., held offices with the lodge at different times. Richard Sr. appears not to have been a member as his duties as lock keeper were a full-time job requiring him to be on duty 24 hours a day. The Knights of Pythias support charitable, benevolent, fraternal, and social activities. The Crommelin Lodge had 100 members by 1889.

In January 1888, the *Montgomery County Sentinel* reported that "Mr. R. H. Collier, Sr. had a surgical operation performed by Dr. L.V. Champion. Mr. Collier is doing well under the circumstances."

Continued on next page

The Collier Family – Continued from page 21

In 1889, Richard Collier, Jr. married Emma Theresa Walter. Emma was a daughter of George Benjamin Franklin Walter and Mary Ann Walter. Richard Jr. was a boatman, a quarryman, and a grocery man. He died in Barnesville and is buried at the Monocacy Cemetery along with his wife. Richard Jr. died in 1917 and his wife died in 1955. George Walter was the son of long-time lock keeper Thomas Walter.

On June 1, 1894, Richard Collier Sr. died at Great Falls. The *Montgomery County Sentinel* reported, “The death of Richard H. Collier removes from our county a good citizen, an old-time gentleman and a noble-hearted friend to those who enjoyed his confidence.” He was 70 years old. His wife Mary died in 1904 in Potomac, Maryland.

In 1908, Richard and Mary’s son John Collier passed away. He was a farmer in Dickerson, MD and was a two-term sheriff in Rockville. John and his wife Anna together had ten children.

In 1910, Henry Collier lived with his brother-in-law John Whalen and his sister Fannie Whalen at Lock 27. Also, 14-year-old Blanch Whalen was living there too. At the time the census was taken on April 23, for the Poolesville District, three of the Whalen’s grandchildren were living with them. They were Iona Cross 8, Frances Cross 6 and Beatrice Cross 3. The three grandchildren were daughters of Reginal and Emma (Whalen) Cross of Darnestown. The three Cross children also appear in the Darnestown District census dated May 2, 1910.

On October 31, 1911, late one night, Fannie ran from the lock house and did not return. Husband John

went outside looking for her. He found her early the next morning floating dead in the lock. Fannie was buried at the Monocacy Cemetery next to her mother, Mary Collier.

In 1920, Henry Collier was still living at the lock house at Lock 27 with John, along with John’s daughter Blanch and her husband Harry Johnson. Blanch has a unique story as to how she met Harry Johnson. The *Montgomery County Sentinel* on January 2, 1920, reported that one day in 1919, Blanch Whalen was walking along the towpath and noticed a bottle floating in the water. She retrieved the bottle and noticed there was a note inside. The note was from Harry Johnson of Columbus, Ohio. He asked whoever found the bottle and note to write to him. Harry was taking a train from Washington returning home from France after World War I and was passing the canal when he tossed the bottle into the water. Blanch and Harry wrote back and forth eventually exchanging photos. One day Harry came to visit Blanch in December 1919 and proposed and they were married. Harry was a quarry man at the Dickerson Quarry in 1920. Henry Collier’s occupation was level walker where he kept an eye out along the canal to ensure there were no leaks and the towpath was clear of trees or limbs. A level walker was also required to walk twenty miles a day checking the canal.

On December 26, 1926, John Whalen died at the lock house. The *Montgomery County Sentinel* reported on January 3, 1930, “Henry L. Collier, aged 70 years—a well-known and lifelong resident of the upper section of this county was found dead in bed last Friday (December 27, 1929) in the lock tender’s house at Campbell’s lock (Lock 27) on the C&O Canal near Dickerson. He was unmarried and lived alone in the house where he died.”

Both John Whalen and Henry Collier did not have gravestones. With contributions from a few canal enthusiasts, gravestones were obtained for both men. Glenn Wallace of the Monocacy Cemetery placed the gravestones on the graves of the two men. In the burial row with Richard and Mary Collier are John Whalen, his wife, Frances “Fannie” Collier Whalen who is buried next to John. Next to Fannie are two Whalen children including Mary, less that one when she died in 1881 and John A. Whalen age one when he died in 1887. Next to John A. Whalen is the grave of Henry Collier.

The Collier family as well as others who worked and lived along the C&O Canal who once led vibrant lives are now distant memories and mostly forgotten.

Lock 25 at Edwards Ferry. Photo courtesy of Montgomery History



On the Level

By Allyson Miller

This report covers level walker activity from November 2025 through January 2026. 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.



*Become a
Level Walker*

In 2025, level walkers performed 107 level walks and collected trash equivalent to thirty-five 33-gallon bags!

Note that during the federal government closure from October 1 to November 12, the Level Walker program was suspended, so no walks were recorded during that time.

As you read through these reports, you will notice there is often more than one level walker assigned to a level. Many level walkers choose a level based on convenience to their home, or because it is very isolated or has some unique interest to them due to history or nature. Of the 69 levels, 18 have no assigned level walker, so we are always looking for new volunteers.

November 2025 to January 2026 Level Walker Activity

*Level 3 – Lock 5 to Cabin John Creek: **Allyson Miller reported in January:*** I continue to monitor the rebuild of Lock 5 and the inlet lock and guard lock. Construction work continues, and during my last visit on a warm January day, workers were repairing the walls of Lock 5. Trees and brush have been cleared around Inlet Lock 1, so it appears work might shift to this area soon. The bridge crossing over the inlet lock feeder is still out (it was removed as part of the worksite), and a bypass trail goes behind the inlet lock to reconnect to the towpath. I picked up one bag of litter between Locks 5 and 6.

*Level 4 – Cabin John Creek to Lock 14: **Allyson Miller reported in January:*** Since the Potomac Interceptor (a DC Water project) collapse on January 19, I've been visiting this level frequently to monitor the ongoing work to use the canal prism as a temporary bypass to reroute millions of gallons of sewage flow into it between Lock 13 and Lock 10. The towpath is open, and I've observed work crews installing cofferdams above Locks 13 and 10, clearing brush between Locks 13 and 10, and installing

protective plastic sheeting on Locks 13, 12, and 11. During my walks, I've picked up four bags of trash, the usual litter visible now that leaves have fallen. The Lock 10 parking lot on Clara Barton Parkway is closed, as this is now a worksite for DC Water. Lock 8 is the closest parking for anyone interested in observing this area.

*Level 5 – Lock 14 to Copley Bridge: **Mindy Ginsburg reported in December:*** It was a glorious day on Level 5. A bright blue sky and crisp cold air combined to create an excellent day for a long walk. There was evidence of the cold, as seen on the towpath puddles topped with thin layers of ice as well as some spots of ice-covered water in the canal. One or two of the few children on the towpath today were endeavoring their best to break the ice on the water with some tossed rocks and sticks. They had greater success stomping the thin ice covering a few puddles along the path. The prism had a full level of water in just a few places, and the more than 30 to 40 ducks took great advantage of those spots, swimming around and frequently going bottoms up!

Continued on next page

On the Level – Continued from page 23

Level 9 – Pennyfield to Seneca Aqueduct: **Lou Robbins reported in December:** It was a pleasant winter day, light usage. I noted fresh beaver damage to trees on the river side of the towpath about 1.8 miles north of Pennyfield. Other conditions remain as last reported previously: potholes in the parking lot at Pennyfield and light maintenance needed around the windows at the Seneca lockhouse at Lock 24.

Level 11 – Milepost 25 to Sycamore Landing: **New level walker Ed Crowe and his wife Rena Subotnick reported in December:** It was a cold quiet day on the towpath; we met a few bikers and hikers as well as one friendly birdwatcher. A Montgomery County Natural Resources officer was parked in the Sycamore Landing parking lot when we arrived. There was evidence of fires in the parking lot as well as significant amounts of trash there and along the trail walking toward Mile 25—almost all of which was items tossed into the bushes along the towpath. At Culvert 38, there was a significant amount of trash down near the river—many bottles, beer cans, soda cans, and a stash of about 20 beer cans and bottles raked together into a fire pit. There also was significant trash (probably one to two large bags) in the canal bed along most of Level 11. We managed to retrieve some, but the thick invasives in the canal bed, as well as the steep banks adjacent to the trail, made it impossible to reach most of the trash we saw. A future level walk could be spent entirely in the canal bed retrieving as much trash as possible.

Level 12 – Sycamore Landing to Edwards Ferry: **Pat Hopson with Frank Wodarczyk reported in November:** We did our usual split: Frank walked the entire level upstream, while I cleaned up at Sycamore Landing and then drove around to Edwards Ferry and worked there and at the Chisel Branch hiker-biker campsite. We met up just downstream from Edwards Ferry. The weather was overcast and seasonably cool—about 52 degrees when we started. Frank reported that the towpath surface is in good shape, except for some erosion about 100 yards downstream from Edwards Ferry Road. He also removed many large branches from the towpath. There was very little trash along the towpath; however, we still managed to fill about two-thirds of a 30-gallon trash bag by picking up odds and ends at the hiker-biker campsite and the two parking lot areas. The upstream edge of the wooden bridge over Chisel Branch is covered by orange netting and cones, so it's apparently getting renovated. The lockhouse and the Jarboe Store ruins were in good shape. There were not as many people as we usually encounter, no doubt because

of the weather. I spoke briefly at Edwards Ferry with Jon Wolz, a fellow level walker, and he introduced me to a man and a woman whose great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather, respectively, had been lockkeepers at the Edwards Ferry lock (Lock 25). I also saw one bow-carrying hunter walking along Sycamore Landing Road as I left that area. Those large bows look scary. (Editor's note: McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area is adjacent to Sycamore Landing, and it has active hunting seasons listed on its website.)

Level 13 – Edwards Ferry to Harrison Island: **Liz Wagner reported in January:** One of the warmer January days with the temperature in the mid 50s. The sides of the towpath and grassy areas around Lock 25 and Broad Run Aqueduct have been mowed and were free of debris. The towpath has numerous areas where the gray surface layer has eroded, but there were no areas with potholes, deep ruts, or standing water. The wooden bridge over Broad Run continues to show wear. One deck plank is almost completely rotted and another is starting to rot. The railing has several protruding nails—all reported to the NPS. There was more trash than usual along the sides of the towpath. Several small birds were present, including northern cardinals, hairy woodpeckers, and bluebirds. A red-shouldered hawk was perched on a tree beside the towpath.

Level 13 – Edwards Ferry to Harrison Island: **Ed Crowe reported in January:** My level walk took place on a chilly overcast day in early January. Temps were around 49 degrees for most of the time, but it felt colder. I collected many beer cans and beer bottles near the boat landing. In three or four areas, there was evidence of recent tree trimming because of downed branches or downed trees. None of these infringed on the towpath in any way. Quite a lot of fauna—busy squirrels, five white-tailed deer, and many birds, including my current favorite, the northern red cardinal. Bird sightings (or soundings in some cases): many northern cardinals, black-capped chickadee, red-bellied woodpeckers, tufted titmouse, Carolina chickadee, golden-crowned kinglet, white-throated sparrow, brown-headed cowbird, and Carolina wren. The towpath was completely deserted for the whole of my walk, except for me and one friendly biker who traveled east in the early afternoon and then returned to the west in the late afternoon. It was a different but pleasant experience to be alone for more than two hours in the outdoors, enjoying the sounds and the sights.

Level 13 – Edwards Ferry to Harrison Island: **Ron Tipton reported in January:** It was a beautiful sunny and cool

winter day as we awaited the big snowstorm and freeze this weekend. My wife Rita Molyneaux and our Havanese Julie really enjoyed the walk from Edwards Ferry and back. We only saw a biker on the way to Harrison Island and a woman with a dog on the way back. When we arrived back at the lockhouse at Edwards Ferry, 10 or more students from a Virginia high school had gathered for an overnight stay. Trash was very light. We removed quite a few twigs and small branches from the towpath. On the return to Edwards Ferry, six deer crossed about a hundred feet in front of us.

Level 15 – Whites Ferry to Lock 26: **Jon Wolz reported in December:** The large “Welcome to White’s Ferry” sign over Whites Ferry Road is about to fall. I reported this to the NPS. The towpath is damaged in several places from the May 2025 high-water event. At the Canal Towns Partnership meeting on December 10, park ranger Joshua Nolen announced that the cabins at Whites Ferry will be torn down and removed in January 2026. This area will be turned into a public campground.

Level 16 – Lock 26 to Monocacy Aqueduct: **Jon Wolz reported in November:** I drove to the Dickerson Conservation Park parking lot, where I rode my bike to Lock 26 and up the towpath to the Monocacy Aqueduct. After visiting the parking lot there, I rode back to Dickerson. The water was very low from the Dickerson Conservation Park parking lot entrance up to Lock 27. I filled a pothole in the parking lot for the Monocacy Aqueduct once again. The bulletin boards and wayside are in good condition. I did notice that a sign about the Confederates and the Monocacy Aqueduct has a significant incorrect date on it. It mentions that Thomas Walter, the lockkeeper at Spinks Ferry Lock, had worked for the canal since 1839. In fact, he had worked for the canal since 1832. I provided supporting documentation to the NPS. I wrote the NPS about another incorrect sign at the parking lot that states, “only white stone was used” to build the aqueduct. Both red and white stones were used and came from the red and white quarries owned by Joseph Johnson.

Level 18 – Nolands Ferry to Point of Rocks: **Bob Carpenter reported in January:** There was very light bicycle and foot traffic on the towpath today, a day that was reasonably mild for January. Overall, the towpath was in good condition with minimal tree debris. Trash along the towpath was light, but I collected a much heavier volume of trash at the Nolands Ferry and Point of Rocks boat ramp, as well as at the Calico Rocks hiker-biker campsite. I filled seven 13-gallon trash bags and picked up a cooler. There

is an abandoned tent in the canal prism opposite the well pump at the Calico Rocks hiker-biker campsite that I first reported in March 2025. The towpath was generally in good condition, firm but damp from recent rainfall. Damage from the May 2025 flood is still notable in three places between Mile 47.3 and the Calico Rocks hiker-biker campsite (Mile 47.65). Each damage site was 10 to 20 yards long. There are orange ribbons near the start and end of these rough places, which I assume were placed by the NPS.

Level 18 – Nolands Ferry to Point of Rocks: **Ed Crowe with Rena Subotnik reported in late January:** It was a fairly cold day on the towpath. We observed a small number of bikers and two birdwatchers along the way. We heard only a few birds and saw no animals—perhaps they’d all been watching weather reports and hunkered down for the weekend. Because of the season, it was quite easy to see to the Potomac and enjoy the river sights and sounds. Once things begin to grow again, the view will be almost completely obscured by invasives. We continue to observe heavy concentrations of invasives along the trail—on this stretch, we saw plenty of Japanese honeysuckle and winter creeper. We picked up one empty 5-gallon bucket. We also came across a large and very heavy cooking grill, located about halfway between the towpath and the river and about midway between Mile 45 and Mile 46. The grill must have weighed a hundred pounds or more; probably washed in from the river as a result of flooding. As elsewhere (Levels 11 and 13), it’s typical to find trash in the canal bed as well as alongside the towpath. Most of the canal bed trash consists of discarded beer cans and beer bottles. Where there is flatland adjacent to the river, trash such as beer cans and bottles is deposited by whoever is hanging out in these areas. We also found a fair amount of trash—cans and bottles as well as discarded plastic bags—in the boat ramp area. This also seems typical of sites along the trail with boat ramps. We saw tree contractors with trucks and related equipment at the Nolands Ferry parking area around 2:30 p.m. They were trimming branches from previously marked trees.

Level 19 – Point of Rocks to Catoctin Aqueduct: **Stephen and Deborah Jones reported in December:** The canal overall is in good shape on this level. The bridge over the canal giving access to the boat launch at Lander Road is closed. We noticed English ivy on many trees, as well as invasive honeysuckle. There are some beautiful red oaks, sycamores, and hackberry trees. It appears the ash trees are dead or dying. We picked up a little trash but overall, there was very little.

Continued on next page

On the Level – Continued from page 25

Level 22 – Lock 31 to Lock 33: Paul Durham reported in November, December, and January: In November, I noted fairly heavy trail use—158 walkers/runners and 12 bikers. When I crossed the railroad bridge back to Harpers Ferry, an additional 60 or 70 people were crossing over to the Maryland side. Most were heading to Maryland Heights. I noted the new stairs to the towpath from the railroad bridge. In December, it was cool and cloudy weather, and usage was lighter than expected. Most of the visitors originating from Harpers Ferry appeared to be going upstream on the next level and/or to Maryland Heights. I observed 17 bikers and 23 walkers. On a separate recreational hike on December 2, I observed that the rear door to Lockhouse 31 had been forced open. I contacted the NPS dispatch center by phone and reported the vandalism. They repaired the door within the next day or so. In January, it was another cold day but with some intermittent sun. Very light usage: 6 walkers, 8 cyclists. The tire and debris pile next to the Route 340 bridge that I noticed in December had been cleaned up by the time of my January visit. A landscape company was clearing some trees that had fallen along the towpath.

Level 22 – Lock 31 to Lock 33: Karlen Keto and Don Peterson reported in January: Due to the weather being cooler than anticipated, we cut our walk short. We encountered two walkers, five cyclists, and a jogger. Two of the bicycles were e-bikes. We conversed with a walker recently retired from the military. He is enjoying the towpath a small section at a time and hopes to continue to love retirement on the C&O Canal. The lockhouse remains unchanged from previous reports. We removed about one-third of a plastic grocery bag of trash. Almost all consisted of beverage containers.

Level 23 – Lock 33 to Dam 3: Arthur Tsien reported in November: It was a nice early winter day to spend outdoors, seasonably cool but not too windy. The level continues to be in good condition, with no changes from my last report two months ago. I did not see any significant impediments to foot or cycle travel. The river was very low. I had my usual positive experience walking the towpath. There is erosion on the slope at Lock 33 and in a few spots elsewhere. The resurfaced towpath continues to be in good condition. The temporary staircase at the Goodloe Byron Bridge looks like it was constructed from a giant Erector Set. Equipment and some supplies for construction of the new permanent staircase is visible in the area, but there were no signs of active construction activity.

Level 23 – Lock 33 to Dam 3 and Level 24 – Dam 3 to Dargan Bend: Arthur Tsien reported in January: When I started at Dargan Bend, it was a pleasant, seasonal winter day. When I finished at Lock 33, the weather was blustery; it was nasty walking across the Goodloe Byron Footbridge into Harpers Ferry. The resurfaced towpath on both levels continues to be in good condition, with no impediments to foot or bicycle travel. Despite recent rains, I encountered only a few minor puddles. Usage was quite light. I did not see or hear anything of note. I did not see much in the way of new activity at the Byron Footbridge construction site compared with my last visit in November. The towpath was quite clean. I picked up only part of an NPS bag of trash.

Level 23 – Lock 33 to Dam 3: Paul Durham reported in December: Cold weather with bright haze, snow on the ground from a snowstorm a few days prior. Very light usage: I saw four walkers, two of whom were walking leashed dogs, and one biker. Two young men with unloaded 12-gauge shotguns were walking up the towpath upstream from the Harpers Ferry bridge toward Lock 34. They said they had been waterfowl hunting on the river earlier but were unsuccessful.

Level 42 – Four Locks to McCoy Ferry: Jack Ebersole, with Lauren Ebersole and Bethany Schumaker, reported in November: The towpath is dry and clear with little trash. There is a downed tree just west of the North Mountain hiker-biker campsite. Waysides at Four Locks are in very bad condition, barely readable. There are trees growing out of the top of the far wall in the stop lock; they should be removed before the roots damage the wall. At Four Locks, construction of the new boat ramp continues.

Level 44 – Fort Frederick to Ernstville: Jim Biasco reported in December: The towpath is in excellent condition. It was cold and sunny, about freezing. Big Pool was frozen over except for only a very small part on the north shore. Several flocks of passing geese circled in and landed in the small unfrozen area, pushing the count to maybe 70 to 80 geese overall.

Level 55 – Lock 60 to Culvert 208: Paul Petkus with Sue Muller reported in November: The towpath was in good condition. No hazards or blockages were present. The structures on this level appeared to be stable with no recent changes detected. Rainfall over the past few months hasn't been enough to keep the water level in the prism as high as it normally is, so some sections were dry. As a result, sightings of reptiles and amphibians along the level were limited to one frog. Birds were active in some areas. Two large groups of visitors walked the towpath in the afternoon.

Birds were the majority of the wildlife I observed throughout the afternoon. I identified cardinals, robins, crows, white-throated sparrows, tufted titmouse, northern flicker, Carolina wren, pileated woodpecker, downy woodpecker, and hermit thrush. Sue Muller, who accompanied me on the walk, identified a lot of the birds from their calls. I observed 21 park visitors on Level 55. They were grouped as follows: a pair of bicyclists and a group of nine hikers, and a group of 10 hikers. The group of 10 hikers included Boy Scouts who were on a 20-mile hike to earn a hiking merit badge. They started at the campground upstream of the Paw Paw tunnel and hiked downstream 10 miles before returning.

Level 69 – Wiley Ford Bridge to Cumberland Terminus: Travis Medcalf reported in November: It was a lovely cloudless day, but what wasn't pleasant was that this was the trashiest

walk I've experienced in seven years on this level. I quickly filled a grocery bag with wrappers, cans, bottles, clothing, car parts, etc. After the railroad crossing, I filled yet another bag. Then the stop gate had a drug party, with paraphernalia (fortunately no needles) and health department "don't use drugs" brochures as reading material all left on the ground. Otherwise, the level was clean. There was light usage with four bikes and about a half-dozen walkers as sunset was approaching. I spotted mallards and geese in the prism and river. The towpath was in magnificent shape; it has never been this good in the history of the canal!

Roving Level Walker: Mark Stover reported in November and December: Mark walks various parts of the entire canal on a regular basis. He noted downed trees, sinkholes, and other issues, as well as interesting animal sightings.



One of the great benefits of membership is long-lasting community. Many of the individuals shown above are still active members, nearly eight years after this photo was taken. (L–R) Chris Colgate, Neil Gilliam, Dick Ebersole, Barbara Sheridan, Jack Ebersole, Barbara Elliott, Wayne Anderson, and Deb Ebersole at the Fifteen Mile Creek Aqueduct during the November 2018 Continuing Hike. Photo by Pat White

C&O Canal Association Membership Renewals

C&O Canal Association memberships renew at the first of the calendar year. Maintaining a current membership is required to participate in the Association board, vote in board elections, participate in the Level Walker program and to receive the *Along the Towpath* newsletter.

You can renew your membership online or by mail. Use this link for instructions: candocanal.org/renew2026 or use the provided QR code.

To continue renewal online, select membership type (Individual, Family, or Patron) click "Add to Cart," and submit payment thru PayPal.

To renew by mail, click the 2026 renewal form in PDF format link, print and complete the form, and submit with payment.

If you are unsure of your membership status, check the membership expiration date, which appears below the mailing address label on this issue of *Along the*

Towpath. Example: "Membership Expires Dec-2026".

Please contact the Membership Chair via email at membership@candocanal.org if you have any questions. Thank you so much for your continued support of our organization!



Visit to renew
your membership



Photo by Denny Sloppy



Photo by John Betting

Cumberland Bike Ride

by Denny Sloppy

Day 1, Saturday

On August 16 at 10 a.m. nine bicyclists met at the mule statue at the C&O Canal National Historical Park in Cumberland. The nine were John Betting, Gerry LaPorte, Paul Stickley, Tom Knoerzer, Wayne Anderson, Cindy Knoerzer, Melody Miles, Deborah Poole, and Denny Sloppy. After a photo or two was taken we were on our way biking toward Old Town on a beautiful, sunny day. Although not officially part of our ride, Cheré Thrasher Athey joined us for a few miles before returning to Cumberland. Before we even got out of Cumberland we spotted an osprey above the Potomac River hunting for its lunch. Near Oldtown we were joined by Kathy Merchant and Amy Dawson who had biked up from Paw Paw to meet us. We all headed over to the School House Kitchen for lunch. The School House Kitchen stop has become a great tradition over the past 20 years on our annual through ride for the association. On day one of this two-day ride, things were uneventful in a good way. The only crashes involved no injuries, and jokes about “Could you do that again so I can get a photo?” The scenery along the towpath was beautiful with views of the Potomac river with mountains in the background.

Arriving at Paw Paw, part of the group headed for Canal Cabins and part headed over to Bike Path B&B. After several years of limited lodging in Paw Paw there are now two more B&B Choices: Mountain Life Inn and The Heritage Trail Inn. The cabins provide a chance to have the

camping experience with a campfire and the comfort of a nice motel room to sleep in with French press coffee makers in each cabin to get your morning started on the right foot. In Paw Paw, dining choices are limited, but Big & Tiny’s has great wings and has become a fun stop for us on these bike rides. After dinner, those at the cabins built a nice campfire. Deborah Poole had brought along Jiffy Pop Popcorn which we proceeded to try to pop over the campfire. Have you ever tried to pop Jiffy Pop over a campfire?

Day 2, Sunday

On Sunday morning those of us at the cabins headed over to the Liberty Gas Station for a breakfast sandwich. Those at Bike Path B&B were treated to Dan Kaminski’s home cooked breakfast. After biking the road for a short distance and crossing the river on highway 51 we finished our return to the towpath on the paved concrete trail that was built by the Maryland Department of Transportation in 2014. As we biked toward Oldtown which would again be our lunch stop for the day, John Betting was taking photos and Denny was sweeping the group. Paul Stickley was also in the back with John and Denny and told us of a house he had painted across the river in Okonoko, West Virginia. Shortly after that a bee of some sort, maybe a wasp, got under Denny’s glasses and stung him below his left eye. About that time Denny’s phone rang but by the time he retrieved his phone the call ended. Denny returned the call and a very upset Melody Miles answered and said there had been

an accident and Tom Knoerzer had been injured. By the time Denny, John, and Paul arrived at Oldtown an ambulance had already arrived and the paramedics were getting ready to get Tom loaded. The accident happened just before the road at Oldtown. Tom was riding a High Wheel Bike and when he stopped and tried to dismount, the bike fell over and his leg was caught on the little step that is used get on and off these bikes. Tom knew the injury was bad and said “Someone call 911, I’m going to need a ride for this one!” I haven’t yet mentioned one of the highlights of the trip—Tom was riding a High Wheel. *(See photo at left.)* It was fun seeing Tom ride that bike and John got some great photographs. Now I must tell you, if anyone else but Tom or maybe Greg Stocksdale of 2 Wheel Escapes Shuttle, had told me they were bringing a High Wheel Bike for one of our rides I wouldn’t have allowed it. But you must know these guys. In my book they’re right up there with Superman. I guess that little step was Tom’s Kryptonite. At the Cumberland Hospital Tom required surgery on his leg. The injury cut not only skin but muscle was well. When the accident happened, a young Marine, Michael Sweeney from Annapolis, Maryland, was nearby and he immediately took off his t-shirt and made a tourniquet for Tom’s leg. Also, kudos to the Allegany Emergency Services Crew who were on the scene very quickly and got Tom on his way to Cumberland.

Continued on next page

In the aftermath of the accident, Tom’s wife, Cindy walked the High Wheel Bike over to the School House Kitchen. Tom was on his way to Cumberland in the ambulance. We had lunch at the School House and then continued on our way back to Cumberland. Once in Cumberland, Cindy got in touch with her friend, Cheré Thrasher Athey, who had biked some with us on day one. The

two of them drove to Oldtown and picked up the High Wheel Bike. At the Cumberland Hospital, Tom was a celebrity. All the hospital staff wanted to see the wound. When the call came in, bicycle accident, they thought scraped knee or something. This wound was much worse! After all that happened, Tom was patched up and made it home to Ashburn, Virginia by 9:30 p.m. that evening.

At the end of the day’s ride as we arrived in Cumberland, I said, “I don’t think I could’ve biked one more mile!” I wasn’t joking. The day had been warm and I don’t know if I was dehydrated or what was wrong, but my legs were done. A few of us stopped at the Crabby Pig for something to eat before heading home. All in all, I think everyone enjoyed the ride.

C&O Canal Association Calendar of Events

C&OCA Business
C&OCA Hike and Dinner or Other Event
Non-C&OCA Event
C&OCA Hike
C&OCA Volunteer Event
C&OCA Paddle Trip
C&OCA Bike Trip
<p>March 21, Sat., 2026 Annual Meeting Upper Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department Beallsville, Md. See calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.</p>
<p>Apr. 12, Sun., 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting, Glen Echo Town Hall, 6106 Harvard Ave., Glen Echo, Md.</p>
<p>April 25, Sat., 10:00 a.m. Douglas Hike and Dinner Calleva Farm, Dickerson, Md. See page 16 or calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.</p>
<p>June 7, Sun., 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting, Town Hall, Williamsport, Md.</p>

<p>June 28, Sun., 12:00 Noon Friends and Family Summer Picnic Fort Frederick State Park, 11100 Fort Frederick Road, Big Pool, Md. C&OCA will provide fried chicken and drinks. Bring a dish to share. This is a family event with games and an optional hike. Well-behaved pets are welcome. There is no admission charge for the picnic, but the state park charges a fee per vehicle. Make your reservation at programs@candocanal.org.</p>
<p>Aug. 2, Sun., 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting, Zoom</p>
<p>Sept. 19, Sat., 3M Bike Challenge Cumberland, Md.</p>
<p>Sept. 26, Sat., 11:00 a.m. President’s Lunch Note new date and location: Captain Bender’s Tavern 111 E. Main St., Sharpsburg, Md. Details will follow in the June <i>ATP</i>.</p>
<p>Oct. 4, Sun., 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting, Town Hall, Williamsport, Md.</p>
<p>Dec. 6, Sun., 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting, Glen Echo Town Hall, 6106 Harvard Ave., Glen Echo, Md.</p>

Visit Facebook and the Association website and check upcoming issues of Along the Towpath for additional event listings and for further details of scheduled events. Contact programs@candocanal.org with questions.

C&O CANAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
C&O Canal National Historical Park Headquarters
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Palisades District

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

Interpretive SupervisorNicolette Talley
 Supervisory Recreation Fee Specialist Evan Costanza
 Georgetown Partnerships Coordinator Shaun Lehmann

Western Maryland District

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

Interpretive SupervisorJoshua 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 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 – canaltrust.org/programs/canal-quarters
 Canal Towns – canaltrust.org/programs/canal-towns

24-HOUR EMERGENCY:

911 or 866-677-6677

REPORT SAFETY HAZARDS OR TOWPATH ISSUES:

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C&O CANAL ASSOCIATION

Membership in C&OCA is open to all persons with an interest in the C&O Canal, the C&O Canal National Historical Park and the Potomac River Basin. Annual membership dues are: \$25 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. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State for the cost of copying and postage.

C&OCA maintains a web page at www.candocanal.org. The webmaster is website@candocanal.org. Inquiries can be directed to the Association at inquiries@candocanal.org.

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Scenes from the Seneca Creek Aqueduct Hike on Sunday, January 11, 2026. (Top) The view of the Potomac River from the aqueduct. Photo by Jon Wolz (Right) The group at culvert number 35. Photo by Andy Patterson



ALONG THE TOWPATH

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Association
www.candocanal.org

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