

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

June 2026

Number 2



(Above) Restored barracks within Fort Frederick. (Left) Sign that greets visitors at the park entrance. (Inset, below) Bronze marker designating Fort Frederick as a National Historic Landmark. Photos by Tim Snyder

New Event! Friends and Family Summer Picnic

We are pleased to announce a new Association event: the Friends and Family Summer Picnic! This is a social event with games and an optional hike. Invite your friends, neighbors, and family—non-members are welcome and encouraged to attend. There is a playground nearby and a historic French and Indian War-era fort that is well worth exploring. Well-behaved pets on a leash are allowed in the park. This will be a potluck picnic with the Association providing fried chicken, drinks, utensils, and paper products. *Note: this is an alcohol-free event.*

When: June 28, 2026, arrival noon–12:30, meal at 1:00

Where: Fort Frederick State Park, 11100 Fort Frederick Rd., Big Pool, MD 21711. Follow signs to Picnic Area/Shelter.

Cost: Park admission fee payable upon entry: MD residents \$3 per vehicle; out-of-state residents, \$5 per vehicle. Cash, exact change, is needed for self-serve pay box.

What to bring: one side dish or dessert to share. Optional: outdoor chairs, insect repellent, sunscreen, games suitable for outdoors, such as Jenga.

RSVP: A reservation is required so that we can order the right amount of fried chicken. Email the number in your party to Programs@candocanal.org. In your email subject line, enter “Picnic.” RSVP deadline is June 22.



Continued on Page 4



Lock 20 in action. Photo by Steve Dean

President's Notes

By Arthur Tsien

Thank you, C&O Canal Association members, for re-electing me as president at the 2026 Annual Meeting.

As I announced at the Annual Meeting, the Association recently donated \$30,000 to the C&O Canal National Historical Park for culvert repairs. We are committed to donating another \$30,000 in each of 2027 and 2028 for the same purpose. We also recently donated \$5,000 to the park to transport students so they can participate in the Canal Classroom Corps program. Thank you, members, for your generosity that allows us to support the park.

On the topic of the Annual Meeting, it was a privilege to watch Steve Dean receive the William O. Douglas Award, our highest honor. Steve's contributions over the years included, but were not limited to, serving as editor and producer of *Along the Towpath* and chair of the Level Walkers Committee. "Congratulations and thanks, Steve. You were a consummate volunteer!"

On the topic of volunteerism, we are an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff. We depend on our volunteers and are always on the lookout for individuals to help lead us forward and fulfill our mission. If you are interested in volunteering—whether you may want to be president or want to lead an event like a hike or bicycling trip—please email me at President@candocanal.org.

On the topic of events, in addition to our "usual" hikes and bike and paddle trips, we have two new recreational events this summer: the Family and Friends Summer Picnic at Fort Frederick State Park in June, and a field trip on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad in August. Details are elsewhere in this issue. Both activities are designed to appeal to a broad audience and hopefully attract new members.

I hope to see you at one of our activities or on the towpath.

Steve Dean Receives the William O. Douglas Award

By Jane Hanna



(Left photo) Bill Holdsworth (left) presents Steve Dean (right) with the Douglas Award. Photo by Jane Hanna
(Right photo) One of the many culverts in the C&O Canal NHP. Photo by Steve Dean

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Association, and few people exemplify that spirit better than Steve Dean. At the March 25 Annual Meeting, we presented Steve with the William O. Douglas award, the Association's highest commendation. Steve was also honored with a lifetime membership in the Association.

Some of Steve's contributions include managing the Level Walkers program for 14 years, chairing the program committee, introducing folks to the "ins and outs" of culverts, editing and producing the *C&O Canal NHP Official National Park Handbook*, and editing and producing *Along the Towpath* for 12 years.

Named for U. S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, who led the effort to preserve the canal corridor beginning in the 1950s, the award was first given in 1985 to Dale Sipes, chief of maintenance at C&O Canal NHP. Other recipients include Douglas Faris, Martin Gallery, Gilbert Gude, Jim Heins,

Rita Knox, Hal Larsen, Nancy Long, Ken Rollins, Barbara Sheridan, and Emmie Woodward.

Below is Steve's response letter to the Association.

Dear Board Members and Other Involved Members:

I was very touched and honored to be presented the Douglas Award and a lifetime membership at the 2026 Annual Meeting. I never expected to receive an honor of that magnitude and deeply appreciate it. I lost sight over the years of the magnitude of the appreciation of my humble efforts, and the presentation certainly brought that back into perspective for me.

It was probably good for me to take a break at the time. As I age and wind down my career with the U.S. Navy, I've found that in the last few years I have decreased bandwidth to take on other activities while I still work. I understand from other people this is a normal progression

of aging. With these factors in mind, at the time it is better for me to focus on keeping myself calm and healthy. I do plan on retiring in August 2027 and once I reach that point, if conditions allow, I will certainly consider once again supporting the Association in some capacity. I haven't lost sight that the Association provides significant support to the National Park Service and, from listening to the annual meeting presentation, these efforts seem to be progressing quite well.

I appreciate the efforts of those who supported the presentation, which I think includes Arthur Tsien, Bill Holdsworth, Barbara Sheridan, Jim Heins and Jane Hanna. Perhaps I missed others. I also appreciate the efforts of the board, past and present, and the members who supported this award.

I wish the Association well and hope to keep in touch!

*Best Regards,
Steve Dean*



(Above, left) Entry gate to the fort; (above, right) artisan presentation area within the fort; (below) Snippet from a sign within the fort. Photos by Tim Snyder

Friends and Family Summer Picnic – Continued from Page 1

The centerpiece of Fort Frederick State Park is a beautifully restored French and Indian War-era stone fort. The park includes a campground, picnic area, boat ramp, and hiking trails. The C&O Canal runs through the park and is accessible from it.

In 1756, Maryland colonial governor Horatio Sharpe (after whom Sharpsburg, MD, is named) received an appropriation of funds from the Maryland Assembly for a fort on the colony's western frontier. In 1854, rivalry and conflict between England and France over their colonial possessions and ambitions broke out in North America. After the French defeated George Washington's small army in western Pennsylvania, the victors turned loose their Native American allies to attack settlements along the English frontier. The fort was intended to protect settlers from these raids. Sharpe named the fort after Lord Baltimore, Frederick Calvert, the colonial proprietor of Maryland. The fort's design, featuring a large bastion at each corner, was modeled after the style developed by French engineer Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, known as the father of modern fortification.

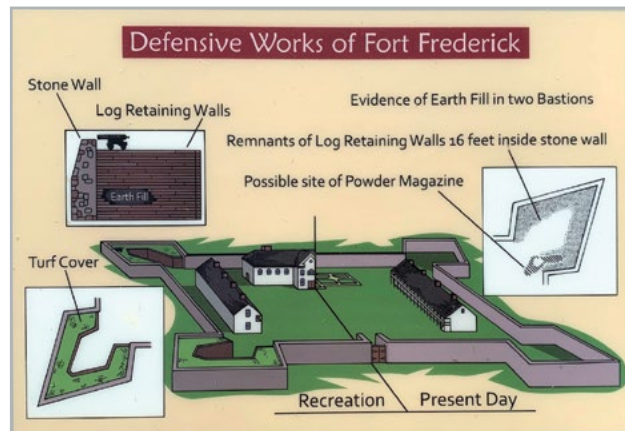
Construction of the fort was completed in 1758. Although it was not attacked during the war, it served as an important staging area for colonial troops and supplies. After General John Forbes' successful campaign against Fort Duquesne in late 1758, Fort Frederick was

shuttered. It was reopened for use again in 1763 during Pontiac's War. During the American Revolution, the fort was pressed into service as a prison camp to house captured British and Hessian soldiers. After the war, the state of Maryland sold the fort and surrounding land at auction, and the property was farmed.

During the U.S. Civil War, the fort saw little military activity. Union troops from the 1st Maryland Infantry were stationed at the fort and skirmished with Confederate cavalry on Christmas Day, 1861. It is believed that during the Civil War, troops made a hole in the south wall and placed a cannon in position to fire across the Potomac.

For much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the free African American Williams family owned and farmed the property. Nathan Williams was the patriarch of the family whose father had purchased his freedom. His descendants operated a successful farm for several generations.

In 1922, Maryland purchased the fort's ruins and surrounding land to begin converting the site into the current state park. In the 1930s, during the Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps rebuilt the fort's walls and located the foundations of interior buildings. The two barracks in the fort's interior were reconstructed in 1975–76.



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

Donations February through April 2026. Also included are donations from December 2025 not reported in the March issue.

Anonymous – **G**

Anonymous – **G**

Anne Abbate – **G**

Helen Alford – **G**

Katherine Andrele – **A**

Catherine Ball – **R**

Kathryn Banfield – **G**

Dennis Barry – **G**

Elizabeth Boas – **G**

John Bogdan Jr. – **A, C, D**

Alma Bowers – **G**

Artemis Brown – **A**

Robert Brown – **R**

Ralph Buglass – **G**

John Butler – **R**

Robert Carpenter – **R**

Wayne Cerniglia – **R, S**

Barbara Collins – **G**

Norman Cook – **D**

Joseph D'Amico – **C**

Emma Dieter – **G**

John Dubeck – **G**

Ruth Dudgeon – **R**

Joseph Eckels – **A, C**

Continued on next page

Donations – Continued from Page 5

Howard Elitzak – *D, R*
David Engstrom – *R*
Andrea Faller – *G*
Kenneth Fisher – *G*
Carol Galaty – *G*
Donald and Elizabeth Harrison – *A*
Mary Hawley – *R*
James Heins – *R*
Lynne Hottell – *C*
Thomas Hougen, MD – *R*
Joseph Howard – *R*
John and Shizue Howe – *A*
Julie Howell – *R*
William Howell – *A, D, R*
Katherine Hutton – *A*
Ta-Mao Hwang – *R*
David Irvine – *A*
Nanette Johnson – *R*
Rich Jones – *G*
John Kochowicz – *A*
Dennis Kubicki – *R*
Michael Kurman
and Patricia Hoff – *A, R*
Peter Laugesen – *R*
Linda Lightfoot – *R*
Nancy C. Long Estate – *A*

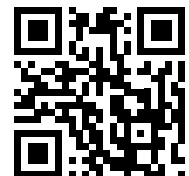
Robert Masincup – *R*
Michael Marmer – *A*
Luella Mast – *G*
Ruth McNinch – *G*
Robert and Jane Melchior – *A, R*
Douglas and Marilyn Mitchell – *R*
Ronald Morgan – *D*
Ronald Morith – *A, C, D, R*
Dward Moore, Jr. – *A*
Gary Moore – *A, C, D, R*
Carol Nase – *C*
Diana Niskern – *R*
Thomas O’Dea – *D*
Robert Perry – *R*
Patrick Pope – *C*
Anna Porter – *G*
Carol Purcell – *A, D*
Craig Reynolds – *A*
Edward Rogers – *R*
David Romanowski – *G*
James Ronan – *R*
David Scalley – *A*
Cory Schiegel – *A*
Lois Schiffer – *G*
Jan Schoonmaker – *A*
Jane Scoleri – *C*

Raphael Semmes – *A, C, D, G, R, S*
Jan Sengers – *A*
George Sengstack – *A*
Martha Shannon – *A*
Robert Shoemaker – *G*
Denise Shutt – *G*
Joyce Skoglund – *A, D*
Dennis Sloppy – *G*
Jayme Sokolow – *A*
William Stewart – *A, C, D, R, S*
Sally Strain – *R*
Timothy Taylor – *R*
Peter Van Vliet – *G*
Hillary Walsh – *G*
Maurice Ward – *R*
Jonathan Warner – *R*
Glenn Watkins – *A*
Richard Webber – *G*
Walter and Elizabeth Wessel – *A*
Katrinka Westendorf – *A, C, R*
Timothy Whitehouse – *R*
Mary Wilson – *D*
Linda Worthington – *R*
George Wyeth – *R*
Keith and Esta Yoder – *G*

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*



Photo by Steve Dean

Date Change: 3M Bike Challenge

By Stephen Nelson

As noted in the March issue of *Along the Towpath*, the C&O Canal Association is sponsoring a six-person team in the 3M Bike Challenge, a unique event that invites cyclists to take on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad's 1309 steam engine as it climbs from Cumberland to Frostburg in a thrilling contest of muscle, machine, and mountain.

To accommodate the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad's Railfest, this year's 3M Challenge has been moved to Saturday, September 26.

A few spots remain open on the Association's team. Interested riders should contact Denny Sloppy at dennysloppy@yahoo.com for more information. All participants will receive a souvenir race gift, and those who "beat the train" will also receive a commemorative railroad spike. C&O Canal Association team members will additionally receive a team T-shirt.

Proceeds from the event support Mountain Maryland Trails and its work to develop and maintain recreational trails in Western Maryland.

The Association Welcomes New Members

Larry Brock

Andy Darrow

Kathleen Rapp

Celeste Rollins

Scott Coleman

Deana Greenberg

Paul (Rick) Reid

Tim Whitehouse

Richard Daniels

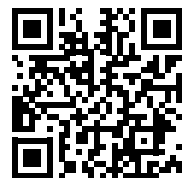
Tom Neal

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



President's Lunch: New Date and Location

The President's Lunch is moving to a new date and location for 2026. The event will rotate back to Bill's Place in Little Orleans, perhaps every third year, but until then we will visit some new locations.

For 2026, the President's Lunch will be held on September 26, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., at Captain Bender's Tavern Public House and Eatery, 111 E. Main St., Sharpsburg, MD. The tavern was originally founded in 1936 by a former canal boat captain, Raleigh Bender, and has been a town mainstay ever since. Attendees will order from the menu and are responsible for their own checks.

After lunch, the group will walk up to Sharpsburg's new Historical Park and view the six interpretive panels, one of which is entitled, "Canals and Turnpikes Fuel Economic Growth." We will then walk back toward the center of town. A visit to the town museum (closed as of this writing) may also be arranged. Lastly, we will walk to the town mural, which features a canal boat and mule team that reflects the town's canal history. For those who have room for a sweet treat, town landmark Nutter's Ice Cream is just across the street.

Free parking is available along the street or in the town lot located at 104 S. Mechanic St. An RSVP is required so that we can reserve the correct amount of seating. Please send the number in your party to programs@candocanal.org. The deadline to secure reserved seating is September 19.



(Top) Canal boat and mule team from town mural; (Middle) Captain Bender's Tavern Public House and Eatery; (Bottom) Sharpsburg Historical Park. Photos by Tim Snyder





The Coal Miner Memorial in Frostburg is an immersive memorial site that honors more than 700 miners who lost their lives in the region's coal mines from 1838 to 2007. Photo by Tim Snyder

Honoring Western Maryland's Coal Mining Heritage *Miners' Park – Coal Miner Memorial – Frostburg, Maryland*

by Dan Whetzel

The coal mining story of Western Maryland is one of determination, sacrifice, and hard work that began more than two centuries ago. From explorers and early settlers along George's Creek who happened upon outcroppings for personal use to current commercial enterprises, coal mining has been associated with the region. Those who labored in the coal fields laid an economic foundation for Allegany County as railroads, highways, and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal created transportation opportunities and advantages that benefitted everyone. Increasing business activity also attracted merchants who were vital in establishing communities along George's Creek and nearby areas. Local coal mining history will soon be captured within the Coal Miner Memorial located at Frostburg, Maryland. Memorial Park will serve as a major travel destination and memorial for families whose ancestors sacrificed and perished in the underground coal mines of Allegany County.

Credit for the Coal Miner Memorial Statue belongs to Enordo "Moose" and Ellen Arnone, who believed that a statue of a coal miner would be a fitting reminder of our mining legacy. Rubbing that statue would certainly bring good luck. Moose, son of an Eckhart coal miner, was raised alongside the challenges faced by a mining family. The duo contacted Ray and Linda Walker, and not long after the foursome took a road trip to the studio of sculptor Alan Cottrill in Zanesville, Ohio. It was stressed to Mr. Cottrill that George's Creek miners wanted more from life than laborer's wages. Many were literate and placed a high value on formal education. Their dedication to progress became apparent when funds were needed to purchase land for Normal School #2 in Frostburg. Coal miners and civic-minded organizations responded in a positive way and the land for what began as a school for teachers is today's Frostburg State University.

Continued on next page

Mr. Cottrill was subsequently commissioned to create a maquette, a small replica of the actual statue. The maquette featured qualities that miners possessed—a strong work ethic and a desire for educational opportunities. The lunch pail, carbide lantern, and pick symbolized the physical labor endured by a miner, while a book held in the miner's left hand captured the desire for a better life through formal education. Mr. Cottrill completed the life-sized bronze statue in 2018 and it made the trip home to Frostburg in November 2023.

Committee membership expanded as residents Larry Fisher, Charlie Walker, Polla Horn, JoAnn Condry, Bucky Schriver, and Barb Armstrong joined forces with the Arnones and the Walkers. Discussions focused on fund raising and possible locations for the statue. Before joining the committee, Polla Horn had already begun the task of researching and recording the accidental deaths of local miners. Bucky Schriver, Midland resident and local historian, joined her and together they compiled the stories of more than 700 deceased miners from 1838–2007. Their findings proved to be significant and ongoing; six years were required to verify names, dates of deaths, location of mines, and descriptions of specific causes of deaths. Their research is ongoing; they recently discovered the demise of two more miners. Results of Polla and Bucky's work were edited by Barb Armstrong into weekly biographies printed in the *Cumberland Times-News* and later compiled into a series of three books. As of 2024, 714 deaths have been recorded and at least 40 of that number were 16 years of age or younger.

The Foundation for Frostburg, a 501c3 formed in 1995 to serve the community, accepted the project in 2012. Since that time, all donations and fund-raising proceeds have been placed in the Coal Miner Memorial Statue Fund.

As the statue neared completion, discussions shifted to finding an appropriate setting. The scope of the project had grown. What began as a statue had morphed into an educational memorial. After several site visits, interest narrowed to a location in Frostburg between the former Cumberland & Pennsylvania Railroad Depot and the Great Allegheny Passage. The site was owned by Allegany County and offered the advantage of sufficient space to augment the statue.

Proposals for the park's design and construction required collaboration among the miner's committee, A.C. Armstrong Design Group LLC., Bennett, Brewer & Associates, the City of Frostburg, Kathie Smith of Advertising Art Design, Inc. and Allegany County officials. Corey Armstrong, associate at A.C. Armstrong Design Group of Frostburg, recalled the initial contacts and early planning. "The committee visited us and showed old photographs of local underground mines. We also made a site visit and discussed ideas for designing the park. We agreed the park should honor the memory of those who labored and accidentally died in the mines—we wanted to tell their story in a personal way."

All agreed the setting should include the experience of entering a coal mine, so simulated overhead timbers and

Two of eighteen interpretive panels at the memorial site. Photo by Tim Snyder





The bronze statue of a miner reading by the light of his headlamp symbolizes the miner's desire for education and self-improvement. Photo by Tim Snyder

walls were integrated into the design. “We wanted visitors to feel the experience of a deep mine,” recalled Corey.

As visitors follow the pathways, they will also encounter interpretive signage that leads to the statue. Fourteen large panels will identify the names of those miners who typically immigrated to the United States seeking a better life, only to suffer a tragic ending. The meticulous research that went into compiling the information will provide guests with a self-contained history lesson. Major topics include The Early Days, Railroads and Canals, The Rise and Fall of the Coal Empire, Meet Our Miners, The Importance of an Education, Contemporary Coal Mining, Children in the Mines, and a Map of Coal Mines and Railroads. The memorial will likely motivate and inspire guests to further research family and local history.

Barb Armstrong, Frostburg resident and long-time committee member, reflected on the memorial park's development over a decade in time. “The project began in 2012, and there's a reason it took such a long time to reach fruition. It's one-of-a-kind, dedicated to the natural resource of coal and those who mined it for a living. Coal brought both prosperity and despair to Western Maryland. Coal brought talented immigrants from Europe and beyond who packed up their culture, and brought it with them, and learned to combine their old lives with the new ones. As we uncovered their stories and took in the history we knew it was really important—no matter how long it would take to do it right.”

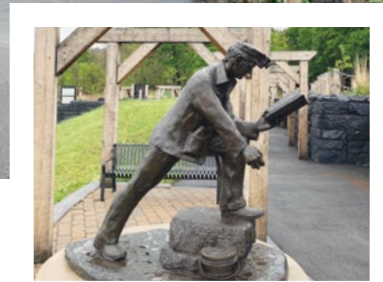
And to do it right the project required significant additional funding. A State of Maryland Bond Fund, the Rocky Gap Foundation, Allegany County Commissioners, Project Open Space, City of Frostburg, and the individuals who contributed to the Foundation for Frostburg were instrumental in funding a project that now hovers above the \$550,000 mark. In addition, Allegany County Department of Public Works handled the bid/award procedure and oversaw the construction.

A dozen years in the making, the Coal Miner Memorial will soon offer a unique learning experience for residents, riders of the trail and train, and other guests who want to take a peek through a window to the past. While much of the work has been completed, installation of signage and other tasks are still pending prior to the dedication. It is anticipated that descendants of deceased county coal miners will attend the memorial's opening ceremonies. Reflecting on the park's progress over the years Bucky Schriver, committee member, is complimentary. “We researched other coal miner memorials around the country, and we believe ours is the best one.”

Editor's Note: This article was originally published in the Spring/Summer 2024 Mountain Discoveries magazine and is used with permission. In early August 2024, the memorial opened with a dedication ceremony. It is located within walking distance of the Frostburg Depot of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad and adjacent to the parking lot of the Great Allegheny Passage.



(Above) Near the entrance of the memorial, with the replica mine shaft and miner's statue in the distance. (Inset) bronze statue of a miner reading by the light of his headlamp. Photos by Tim Snyder



The C&O Canal Association's First Summer Field Trip

Scenic Railroad and Coal Miner Memorial

On August 1, the Association will have its first-ever summer field trip! We will visit the recently opened Coal Miner Memorial in Frostburg, MD (*see page 9*). Anyone who has studied the C&O Canal knows that the most significant product transported on the waterway was coal mined in western Maryland. Canal enthusiasts often overlook mining operations, since our perspective begins once coal is loaded into canal boats. Mining coal was a difficult and dangerous occupation that sometimes left a hole in families. John D. Scally, the grandfather of well-known Washington County, MD, TV and radio personality Lou Scally, died in a pillar fall at Consol Mine #1 on April 21, 1914, at the age of 26.

Beginning at 11 a.m., we will board the steam-powered Frostburg Flyer at the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad Station, 13 Canal Street, Cumberland, MD, for a 4.5-hour round trip to Frostburg. At Frostburg, there is a 90-minute layover, during which time we will visit the Coal Miner Memorial, which is within walking distance of the Frostburg Station. If you wish, during your 90-minute layover, you are free to explore Frostburg instead of, or after, visiting the memorial.

To reserve a seat for the summer field trip online, go to the website of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, Frostburg Flyer: wmsr.com/frostburg-flyer. Review the details, including the car class you wish to ride (Coach, Lunch, Lounge, Dome, or 1309 Cab). As of this writing, adult prices range from \$45 to \$130, except for the 1309 Cab. Many cars—such as Lunch and Dome Class—have limited seating, so early booking is highly recommended. Be sure to select a seat on the train that departs at 11:30 a.m. on August 1, 2026. Note that Coach seating is not assigned. Those who wish to reserve a seat by telephone can call the WMSR at 301-759-4400.

Boarding begins 30 minutes before departure. For those who are not on a car that provides meals or drinks, food and non-alcoholic drinks are permitted. Gated parking at Canal Place is \$1.00 per hour, payable with Visa or Mastercard only. The Howard Street parking lot, one block away, is free. After you've booked your seat(s), send an email to programs@candocanal.org and let us know who will be attending so that we can look for you and gather for a photo. In the email subject line, enter "field trip."

Please note that all services and amenities are being provided by the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, not the Association.

Annual Meeting 2026

By Jane Hanna

Once again, the folks at the Upper Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department welcomed us for the Annual Meeting. Besides social time and a delicious lunch and dinner, there were several highlights:

Steve Dean was honored with the William O. Douglas Award and with lifetime Association membership for his length and quality of volunteer service.

C&O Canal NHP Acting Superintendent Ed Wenschhof, along with Christiana Hanson,

Shaun Lehmann, and Emily Tyler-Hewitt reported on the status of park projects and thanked us for our support.

President Arthur Tsien reported “that the Association is financially sound but, as always, in need of volunteers for key positions. We recently donated \$5,000 for bus transportation for school field trips and \$30,000 for culvert repairs.”

Committee Chairs reported on projects including canal cleanup efforts, store sales, social media

successes, level walkers, programs, finance, environmental concerns, the Canal Towns Partnership, and upcoming events.

The following members were elected to officer and board positions:

President – Arthur Tsien

Vice President – Barbara Sheridan

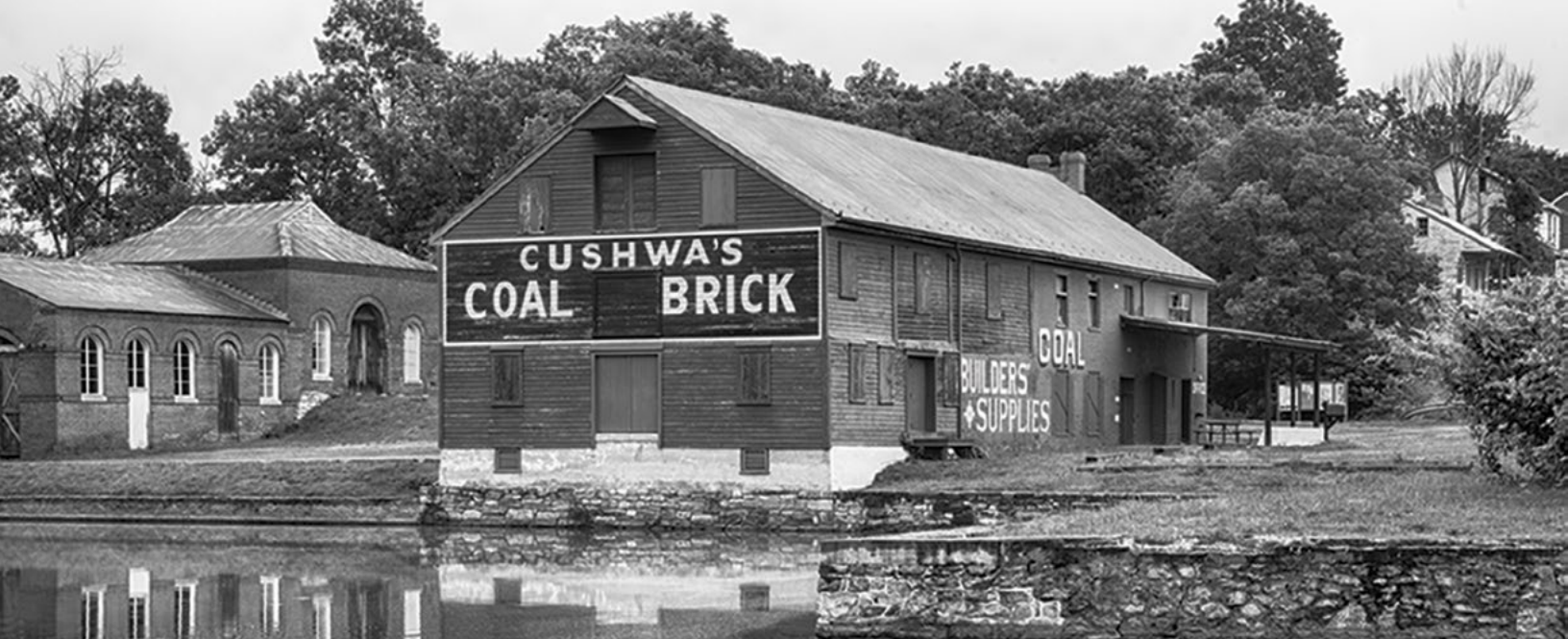
Secretary – Jane Hanna

Treasurer – Robert Carpenter

Directors – Bill Holdsworth, Paul Lubell, Allyson Miller, Tim Snyder



(Above) Over 30 members and friends gathered for our annual meeting on March 25. (Right) National Park Service employees Ed Wenschhof, Christiana Hanson, and Shaun Lehmann (along with Emily Tyler-Hewitt, not shown) represented the C&O Canal NHP.



Cushwa Basin warehouse and brick stable barn in the background, Williamsport, MD.

Stakeholder Meeting on the C&O Canal NHP Long-Range Interpretive Plan

The contents of this article are based on a report by Jon Wolz to the C&O Canal Association after attending the above meeting on its behalf. Jon is a longtime park volunteer and the Poolesville representative for the Canal Towns Partnership.

The meeting was held at the C&O Canal NHP Park Headquarters in Williamsport, MD. The objective of the meeting was to discuss plans to update the long-range interpretive plan for the park, the last version of which was generated in 2010. A newer version is considered overdue.

The meeting was led by three members of the contract company designminds that has been tasked with coming up with the updated plan. Other attendees included NPS employees, members of the C&O Canal Trust, and the Chair for the Canal Towns Partnership.

There was a discussion on updating the information about the history of the park that is made available to the public by the NPS. One idea was to make the information more accessible online instead of relying on historic wayside signs. It was noted that not all locks have wayside signs today, and some of the locks with missing signs have a lot of history associated with them. The possibility of creating digital wayside signs was brought up. Also noted was the concern that some existing wayside signs were not current and may have incorrect information.

Jon suggested that the NPS finish the new campground at White's Ferry and also build a canal museum at White's Ferry—if money were no object.

There was a discussion about changing the designation of the C&O Canal NHP from a National Historical Park into a National Park (nps.gov/articles/nps-designations.htm). It was noted that the C&O Canal NHP was the fourth most visited park in the National Park System in 2025, and that, in addition to history, it offers recreation and nature. Perhaps Congressmen Gude and Beall did not foresee what the park would become in future years when they introduced the Congressional Act to make the canal a NHP in 1970.

There was no date set for future meetings on the long-range interpretive plan. The designminds representatives said that the expectation was for the plan to be completed in a year.

Attendees were given a card to fill in at the end of the meeting. Suggestions were requested for other invitees to future meetings. In his response, Jon also brought up the topic of the restoration of the Seneca Aqueduct. He also inquired about the transfer of the Seneca Stone Cutting Mill from Maryland's Seneca Creek State Park to the C&O Canal NHP, and gathered that the transfer is still in the works.

Environmental Committee Report – April 2026

By Rod Mackler

Potomac Interceptor Sewer Collapse

The Potomac Interceptor, a huge sewer pipe originating near Dulles Airport, collapsed near Lock 12 on January 19. DC Water pumped sewage from above the break into the historic C&O Canal and let it drop back into the intact pipe at Lock 10. A temporary fix for the sewer line was finally completed on March 14. A permanent repair for the sewer will not be completed until this fall, while full environmental and infrastructure rehabilitation will take the rest of this year.

Initial “rehabilitation” focused on removing the sewage sludge from the canal. First, DC Water simply opened the canal to Intake 2 at Violette’s Lock and let the water in the canal to wash the lock chambers and canal prism, capturing the contaminated water through the hole back into the Potomac Connector at Lock 10. Later, beginning in the level above Lock 13, they are using excavators and manual digging to remove the soil in the canal “down to the clay lining.” That would be the puddling clay that was used to line the canal prism when it was dug in 1828–29. DC Water says it is coordinating with the Park Service on its rehabilitation efforts, but close monitoring will be necessary to restore the canal to a healthy state.

Potomac Riverkeeper Network and the University of Maryland have been conducting testing of the water at three places: 1) below 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 has revealed extremely high levels of *E. coli*, *staph* (*Staphylococcus aureus*), and MRSA (an

antibiotic-resistant strain of *S. aureus*). High levels of *E. coli* persisted into April.

Scotts Run Sewer Work

Meanwhile, across the river, Scotts Run Nature Preserve, a Fairfax County Park just west of the American Legion Bridge, will be closed for “about three months.” The park will be closed for an “urgent” project to rehabilitate a siphon facility that carries wastewater across the river to connect with the Potomac Interceptor at Carderock. The work will be performed by a Fairfax County contractor.

Great Falls Area Development Concept Plan

The Park Service released its plan for control and development of the Great Falls area, defined as from the parking lots opposite Old Angler’s

Inn to Lock 21, Swain’s. The plan is an attempt to balance user experience at the park’s most visited area with the obligation to preserve natural and cultural resources. The Association submitted comments. Mention is made of the bike loaner program, but the implication is that any revival would be a concessionaire rather than as a volunteer operation. In fact, there is rather little in the plan about volunteers more generally, although Association volunteers have historically been extremely active in the Great Falls area, from painting historic buildings and the boat, manning the desk and shop, even tending the mules. All-in-all, the plan is long on problems—traffic, food, safety, accessibility—but short on solutions. Improving signage is one exception, including electronic signs at the top of the access road at the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Falls Road, where they also propose a roundabout to improve traffic flow.



The Potomac Interceptor cleanup continues with workers loosening muck and sewage for removal between Locks 11 and 12. Photo by Allyson Miller



Sewer Overflow: Update on Locks 10 to 14

By Allyson Miller

As reported in the March issue of *Along the Towpath* and numerous local and national news outlets, the Potomac Interceptor sewer collapsed on January 19 and overflowed into the Potomac River. The collapse occurred just east of the I-495 Beltway and opposite Lock 12. With the cooperation of the National Park Service, DC Water crews began clearing the section of the canal from Lock 14 to Lock 10 so the canal could be used as a bypass around the interceptor break and repair site. Large pumps and pipes diverted the sewage, or wastewater, into the canal between Locks 12 and 13 starting on January 24. The wastewater was pumped out of the canal just above Lock 10. Since the towpath remained open, it was easy to observe sewage flowing along this section of the canal. The smell was unpleasant.

During the repair of the interceptor, DC Water developed a Rehabilitation Concept Plan in coordination with the National Park Service and the Maryland Department of the Environment. The rehabilitation area was divided into four areas:

Area #1: Channel where initial collapse occurred and surrounding area, approximately 1,800 linear feet. This is the channel behind Lock 12 and along Clara Barton Parkway where the sewage initially flowed.

Area #2: Overflow limits in canal Culvert 12, tributary, and confluence with Potomac River, approximately 550 linear feet. This is the unnamed stream that drains from Culvert 12 into the Potomac.

Area #3: Observed overflow in Potomac River, approximately 8.1 acres. This is the area around Swainson's Island in the Potomac, immediately impacted by Area #2.

Area #4: Controlled bypass in the C&O Canal from Lock 14 to just above Lock 10, approximately 3,100 linear feet. This is the area addressed in this article.

DC Water was able to repair the damaged section of the interceptor, and sewage flow was restored to the interceptor on March 14. Soon after the bypass pumps were turned off, the flow in the canal quickly dropped, as the wastewater that had been diverted around the collapse site drained from the canal. To prepare for the canal clean up, Inlet Lock 2 at Violettes Lock was opened to restore fresh water to the canal. Much of the water was diverted back into the river via a weir just above Lock 14 until the

DC Water crews were ready to “flush” the canal. The initial cleanup involved flushing the canal with freshwater from the Potomac River, followed by debris clearing, mucking, and removing contaminated soil.

After the canal was flushed, so to speak, the crews immediately began work on the environmental rehabilitation of the canal and surrounding areas.

Starting at Lock 14, crews inspected and cleaned the lock walls and stone cribs. The initial rehabilitation work included clearing brush and debris, mucking, and removing contaminated soil down to the clay layer. Mucking is a rather tedious process of loosening hardened muck so it can be vacuumed into tanks. To get the equipment into the canal, quite a bit of vegetation and small trees were removed from the berm side of the canal. In some cases, large trucks with tanks were parked next to the canal to haul away the muck. Once the muck was removed, the soil was removed down to the clay liner. Small excavation equipment was used in the canal to move soil to a location where a crane could then hoist it into a dump truck. All muck and contaminated soil was moved to an approved

Continued on next page



(Opposite, top) Temporary dam bridge holding fresh Potomac River water to be used to “flush” the canal at Lock 14. (Opposite, bottom) Reinforced access point for work equipment between Locks 11 and 12. (This page) Worker removing waste product near Lock 12. Photos by Allyson Miller

environmental site, per Maryland Department of the Environment regulations. Next, some crews continued to remove vegetation by hand.

I was able to observe this work from the towpath on multiple occasions during March and April. A fence runs along the entire length of the affected section of the canal, safely separating the towpath from the canal. In my experience, the “muck” smelled much, much worse than the raw sewage. Fortunately, there is no smell in the sections of the canal that have been cleaned to the clay layer.

As of April 14, DC Water had cleaned to the clay layer from Locks 14 to 12. Cleaning the longest stretch, Lock 12 to Lock 10, is underway.

Once the cleaning is completed, crews will repair the canal walls where they were damaged by equipment, and the clay liner will be repaired with new clay where it has

been damaged. Once these repairs are completed, they will seed the canal with approved seed native to the area. Some seed will be collected from other parts of the park to seed this section. Trees and shrub plantings will be implemented in accordance with NPS guidelines.

Once all restoration activities within the canal are complete and accepted by the NPS, the lock gates will be reconstructed and reinstalled per NPS repair guidelines, restoring the canal to its intended condition and function. DC Water will continue to inspect and reinforce other sections of the Potomac Interceptor where it runs along the canal, so expect construction equipment in this area for some time. No completion date has been given for the canal cleanup and restoration, or for the ongoing work with the interceptor. Visitors should feel free to visit the area, since the towpath remains open.

An excavator is removing spoiled soil in the canal near Lock 12.





Michael Cresap House and Museum. Photos by Stephen Nelson

Oldtown, Maryland's Past: Native Heritage, Colonial Settlement, and Early America

The Ginevan House, the Cresaps, and the History of Oldtown

By Stephen Nelson

In Oldtown, Maryland, history is all around you. A short walk along the C&O Canal takes you past a Native American settlement, a colonial frontier homestead, a Victorian house from the 1800s, and the grave of one of Maryland's most famous frontier settlers, Thomas Cresap.

Before the Cresaps arrived, Native Americans valued this site. Originally called "Shawnee Oldtown" for its Shawnee heritage, historical accounts date settlements here back thousands of years. Also known as King Opressa's Town, it was linked with travel, refuge, and movement on the Potomac frontier. (Oldtown, Maryland, 2024) This deep-rooted Native American presence set the stage for the changes that would follow with colonial settlement.

Against this backdrop, Thomas Cresap arrived in the 1730s and 1740s. An English-born settler and trader, he became one of the most well-known figures on the Maryland frontier. In Maryland, he was seen as a defender of colonial claims, while in Pennsylvania, he

earned a harsher reputation as "a Rattlesnake Colonel and a Damned Rascal" during the border disputes known as Cresap's War. (Smith, 2005)

Cresap settled in Shawnee Old Town on Maryland's side of the Potomac, where he built an inn, trading post, home, and fort near key Native trails and river crossings. His cabin and fort became a familiar stop for travelers in western Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. By the French and Indian War, it marked the edge of British control in the area.

This site is part of George Washington's story. In 1747, while surveying land for Lord Fairfax, Washington visited Thomas Cresap's cabin and, due to heavy rain, stayed for several days. (Snowden, 1902) This brief visit, one of Washington's many to Oldtown, links the town to his early years and national significance.

The thread of family legacy continued with Thomas Cresap's son. Michael Cresap, Thomas's son, was a key figure

Continued on next page



The Ginevan House.

in Ohio Valley frontier conflicts in the early 1770s. He led settlers in disputes over land and authority throughout the border regions. In 1774, he served as a militia captain in Lord Dunmore's War, just before the Revolution. (Michael Cresap, 2024)

As the Revolution approached, Michael Cresap's role became even more prominent. At the American Revolution's outset, Michael Cresap led the First Company of Maryland Riflemen. His unit marched to Boston, among the first southern rifle units to join Washington's army. Michael died in 1775, soon after joining the Continental Army.

The Michael Cresap Museum

The Michael Cresap Museum, on Opessa Street, is the home of Thomas Cresap's son and is often misidentified as Thomas Cresap's settlement. The Allen family saved and restored the Michael Cresap house, including a brick addition built around 1781 by John J. Jacob, whom Michael's widow married. The museum is owned by a nonprofit corporation and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Cresaps' story adds depth to Oldtown's history, linking the colonial frontier to the Revolutionary era. Thomas represents early settlement; Michael stands for the next generation's conflicts and military service.

The Ginevan House

The Ginevan House, built in 1878 for Elwood Ginevan and also called the Moore House, displays Greek Revival–Italianate architecture that reflects Oldtown's transition beyond frontier days, as families built lasting, more refined homes. Nearby, a large field marks the former site of Cresap's house and fort, as well as Thomas Cresap's burial place. A small, rough headstone marks the spot; you must look closely to read: "TC dcd (deceased) Jan 31, 1787." The site sits on a hillside adjacent to C&O Canal Lock 69. Most publications and sources note incorrectly that the gravesite overlooks nearby Lock 70. According to my personal visit and measurements from Google Maps, the Ginevan House is closer to Lock 70, while Thomas Cresap's gravesite is almost 700 feet closer to Lock 69. The Ginevan House is visible from the towpath during the winter when the leaves have fallen from the trees.

The Ginevan House and Cresap's grave are about one hundred yards south of the towpath on Green Spring Road. Visitors can park in a small area near the gated entrance. From the parking area, walk up a dirt road through an iron

gate for about 110 yards to reach the house. To visit the grave, continue another 180 yards past the house.

After visiting the Ginevan House and gravesite, visitors may wish to take a short walk south on Green Spring Road to see the unique Oldtown Toll Bridge. Built in 1937, this rare, privately owned low-water bridge crosses the Potomac River between Oldtown, Maryland, and Green Spring, West Virginia. It is still in use today. The bridge sits low, so high water can flow over it. It has no railings. The toll is \$1.50 for cars and cyclists. Pedestrians can cross for free. (Oldtown Toll Bridge, n.d.)

Historic places such as Oldtown help us feel the continuity of a community. The Ginevan House and the Cresap burial site do exactly that. They remind us that Oldtown was shaped first by frontier families like the Cresaps and later by the canal, by farmers, and by the families who made the place their home in the decades that followed.

Resources

(2024). Oldtown, Maryland. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oldtown,_Maryland

Smith, J. (2005). *Cresap's War: The Maryland-Pennsylvania Border Dispute*. University Press. <https://www.example.com/cresaps-war>

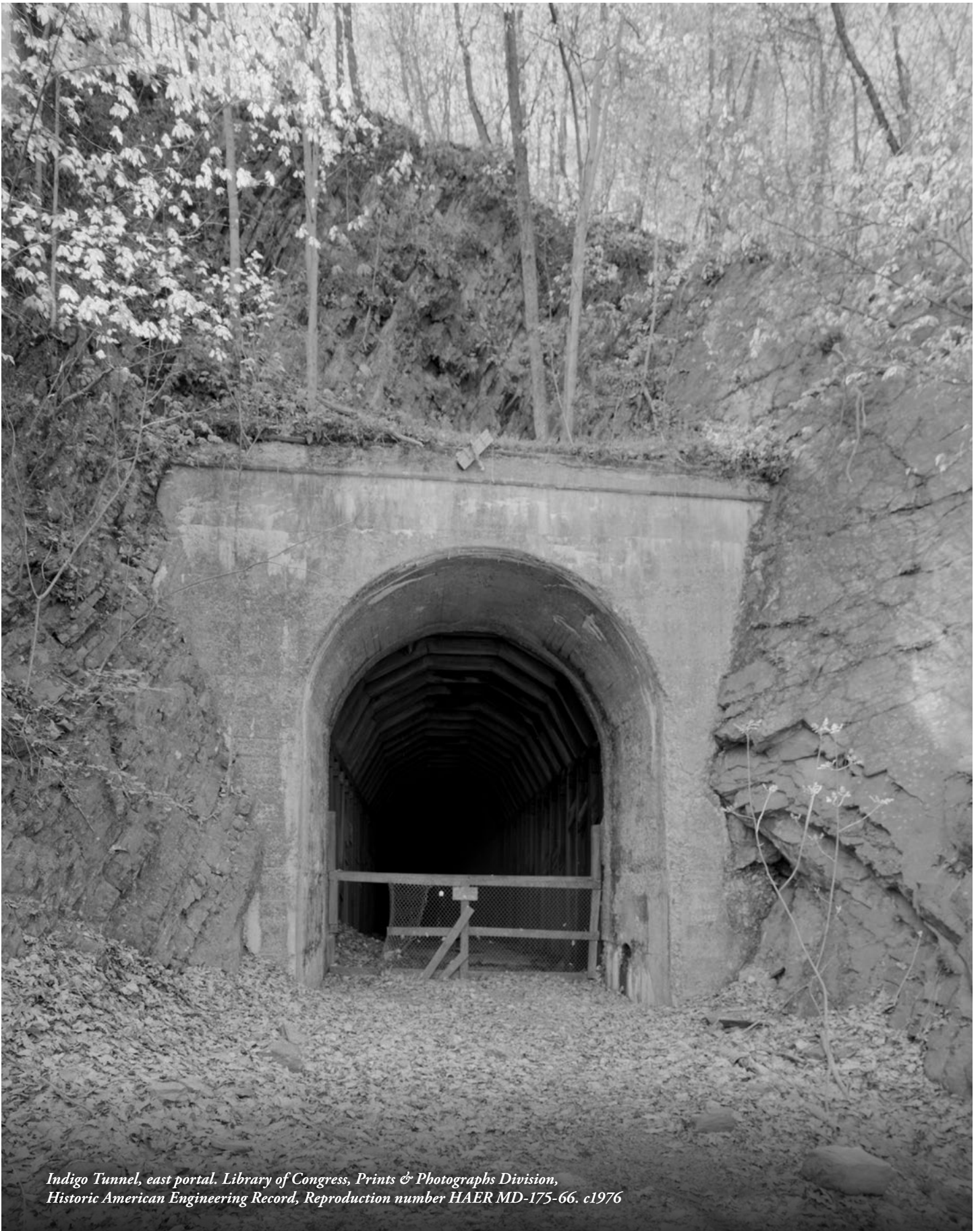
Snowden, W. H. (1902). The story of the expedition of the young surveyors, George Washington and George William Fairfax, to survey the Virginia lands of Thomas, sixth Lord Fairfax, 1747–1748. Alexandria. <https://www.loc.gov/item/02022722/>

(2024). Michael Cresap. National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/choh/learn/historyculture/pioneerthomascesap.htm>

(n.d.). Oldtown Toll Bridge. Oldtown Toll Bridge. <https://www.oldtowntollbridge.com/about>

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 and Mountain Maryland Trails, and serves as a commissioner on the C&O Canal National Historical Park Federal Advisory Commission. Contact: tristatetownplnner@gmail.com



*Indigo Tunnel, east portal. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division,
Historic American Engineering Record, Reproduction number HAER MD-175-66. c1976*

1906 Railroad Accident near Little Orleans Lands Two Cars in C&O Canal, Five Dead

by Steve French

In passing through steep mountainous regions, rockslides were an occasional but sometimes deadly problem for railroaders. The following resulted in the heartrending deaths of five men from Great Cacapon, WV, and injuries to at least ten other workers.

On the evening of Saturday, May 19, 1906, a 2-car Western Maryland Railroad work train transporting a forty-man construction crew back to camp had just exited the east end of Indigo Tunnel near Little Orleans, MD. Suddenly, Conductor Luther Hull spotted a massive boulder on the track, dead ahead.

With the engine pushing from the rear, Hull, riding in the lead car, pulled the emergency brake and jumped clear. Slowing somewhat but still sliding along at 25 miles an hour, the car slammed into the rock straight away. In Berkeley Springs, WV, *The Morgan Messenger* reported that “The two cars buckled in the center and fell over a bank about fifteen feet high, taking the men with them and landing into the canal.” They sank quickly.

Frantic men struggled to escape the covered cars and reach the surface. Once George Youngblood bobbed up out of the water, he realized that his friends George Hurley and Daniel Steinbaugh were missing. Youngblood “swam back and dived to where they were, removed a board that was holding them down, and saved their lives.” The paper hailed him as “the hero of this awful calamity.”

Five minutes before the wreck, some B&O track hands working just across the Potomac from the tunnel had heard the boulder crashing down Sideling Hill and spotted it blocking the track. Unfortunately, the men had failed to get across the Potomac in time to stop oncoming traffic. Now, they sent word of the wreck to Great Cacapon Station.

When the news of the smash-up reached town, an eyewitness described the scene “as one of excitement, worry, and anxiety on the part of the people, especially those who had loved ones on the ill-fated train.” Many of the community then rushed to the site, about four miles upriver. Soon arriving there, they helped “in getting the dead out and administering to the injured.”

In Maryland, a wire sent from Pearre Station, less than three miles down the line, relayed the awful news

to Western Maryland’s Hagerstown headquarters. Officials there soon dispatched the company physician, Dr. J. McPherson Scott, to lead the relief effort.

That night, Scott reported 3 men dead, 14 injured, and 2 still missing. The next morning, rescuers finally recovered the bodies of the ill-fated pair. According to the May 21 issue of the *Baltimore American*, McPherson identified the dead as Benjamin (Robert) Carter, Charles Clingerman, J.W., Charles Henry, and Charles Swope. Of those hurt, the doctor commented that, “all of the injured would probably recover. Their injuries consisted of cuts, bruises, and lacerations.”

By that afternoon, Assistant Trainmaster Robert Sheets, in charge of wrecking crews from Hagerstown, had “cleared up the wreck.” Back in “The Hub City” and recovering from his injuries, conductor Hull was widely praised. “But for his prompt action,” the *American* reported, “the heavy engine would have crushed the cars in front of it.”

One-legged Hull, however, was probably less concerned over his newfound fame than the fact that he lost his artificial leg when he jumped from the train.

“Monday,” *The Messenger* reported, “was a sad day for the village of Great Cacapon, where the hand of sorrow had entered so many homes.” That morning, Mt. Nebo church, about six miles to the west, was the location for Charley Clingerman’s service. Crushed between the cars, Charley, just 22, had recently moved to the county.

In the afternoon, a filled-to-capacity Great Cacapon United Brethren church was the setting for the combined funerals of the other railroaders. In fact, so large was the crowd that half the mourners stood outside. Behind the pulpit, Rev. R. N. Sybolt looked down at the coffins “of four young men who had been so suddenly cut off in the prime of life.”

Afterward, the remains of teenagers Robert Carter and Charley Swope, along with James Henry, were laid to rest in the town cemetery. Charley Henry’s family buried the 16-year-old lad in Berkeley Springs. All had drowned in the canal.

In its report of the accident, *The Messenger* criticized the company “for delaying the work of rescue and for not having a watchman at the point where the rock fell, where a watch box is located.”

Republished in slightly revised form with permission of the author.

Douglas Hike 2026



(Clockwise, from top left) Happy hikers along the towpath. Piglets scurry out of their enclosure to greet COCA members. Hikers near Lock 26. COCA members and guests enjoy a wagon ride and tour of the Calleva farm. Photos by Jon Wolz



On the Level

By Allyson Miller

This report covers level walker activity from January 2026 through April 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*

We had excellent response to the request for additional level walkers, with five new level walkers joining the program and some current level walkers picking up new levels. If anyone is still considering level walking, the following levels (name, level #) have no assigned level walker: Taylor's Landing (31), Upper Falling Waters (37), Millers Bend (39), Little Conococheague (40), Ernstville (45), Cacapon Junction (50), Dam 6 (51), Paw Paw Ferry (59), Little Cacapon (60), Oldtown (63), Kellys Road (64), North Branch (66), and Evitts Creek (68).

Level Highlight

By Allyson Miller

I chose Levels 3 and 4 because they are near my house and also because they are a quick escape from an urban area. Both are easily accessible from MacArthur Boulevard (by foot or bike) or by car from Clara Barton Parkway (eastbound). Like other level walkers, most of the trash I find is at or near the parking lots. But once on the towpath, you can finally leave that behind. Level 3 is popular with the kayak community, and I always enjoy watching Olympic hopefuls paddling in the Potomac near Lock 6. There is a beautiful view of the river just south of Sycamore Island where the towpath makes a gentle curve, with water in the canal on one side and the Potomac a steep drop on the other. Further upstream on Level 4 just south of

Lock 8, there is another section of the towpath where there is no room for error—the watered canal is on one side, and the river drops off steeply on the other side, providing beautiful views of the Potomac River. I figure if wildlife can be oblivious to the frequent airplane and parkway noise, then so can I. I've spotted beavers and wood ducks in the canal near Lock 7 and a copperhead near Lock 6. Wildflowers are abundant here too, but have to fight with the invasives. English ivy is a real problem on Level 3, and kudzu and porcelain berry are becoming more and more of a problem. However, these two levels show the variety of wildlife and beauty and the promise of adventure.

January to April 2026, Level Walker Activity

Level 3 – Lock 5 to Cabin John Creek: Allyson Miller reported in March and April: I continue to monitor the rebuild of Lock 5 and the inlet lock and guard lock. Construction work continues, and during my last visit in

April, I noticed that the ruts and potholes near the work site had all been filled in, which is much appreciated by runners and cyclists alike. The rest of the towpath on this level is in decent shape, though still rutted in places. The

Continued on next page

towpath surface is rough between Lock 7 and Cabin John Creek as a result of the flooding of Cabin John Creek last year—some yellow caution tape and an orange cone mark a severely eroded edge along the towpath in this area.

Level 4 – Cabin John Creek to Lock 14: **Allyson Miller reported in March and April:** Since the Potomac Interceptor (a DC Water project) collapse on January 19 and the redirected sewage flow in the canal from Locks 14 to 10, I've been visiting this level about twice a week to monitor the ongoing work and restoration of the canal prism after the sewage was rerouted back into the Potomac Interceptor. From Locks 10 to 14, a fence separates the towpath from the canal and the towpath remains open. For the most part, this section has been fairly clear of trash, since most of the work has been either in the canal or on the berm side. I have noticed that contractors are mostly using smaller utility vehicles when working on the towpath and have repaired some of the ruts left by heavier vehicles. However, some rough sections remain, so hopefully the towpath will be resurfaced once the work is completed. The Lock 10 parking lot is open, although parking here can be challenging due to ongoing work in this area.

Level 12 – Sycamore Landing to Edwards Ferry: **Carol Ivory and Larry Broadwell reported in January:** Carol walked the towpath from Edwards Ferry down to the hiker-biker camp, and Larry walked along the river. We met at the Goose Creek inlet and cleaned up in the area. Aside from one deposit of fresh beer cans, most trash we encountered appeared to have floated in on high water. There were a couple of places where fires had been built near the riverbank. One had a stone circle; the other consisted of scorched driftwood, right on the bank. There was very little trash along the towpath. The hiker-biker site was also clean. There was very little trash at Edwards Ferry, except for some large items behind the woodshed on the river side of the lockhouse. The items were too large for us to carry offsite, so they remain behind the woodshed. We filled 2½ big trash bags and one kitchen bag. We also picked up a beat-up and rusted two-wheeled shopping cart, which we used to transport two of the bags back to the parking lot.

Level 20 – Catoctin Aqueduct to Lock 30: **Bob Carpenter reported in late January:** It was a typical cold winter day along the towpath. It seemed more noisy than usual in the first mile downstream from Lock 30, with lots of train activity in the railyard. This may be one of the most depressing miles of towpath, with 0.75 miles on the gravel road to the

Brunswick Family Campground, the railyard noise, and the general unsightliness of the canal prism along this road. I encountered four trucks from the NPS vendor responsible for tree management between Mile 54 and the footbridge over Little Catoctin Creek at Mile 52.5. This beautiful aqueduct is in excellent condition. Catoctin Creek was partially ice covered. No tree debris was visible on the upstream side of Catoctin Creek. The construction site continues to heal nicely, including the removal of the low-water temporary bridge. Little Catoctin Creek was substantially frozen over, with a light trickle detected in places.

Level 22 – Lock 31 to Lock 33: **Paul Durham reported in April:** It was a cool, bright sun. There were several hikers northbound on the Appalachian Trail. Large crowds were encountered crossing the railroad bridge from Harpers Ferry, most headed up to Maryland Heights. An old appliance was on the edge of the towpath, just downstream from the Route 340 bridge.

Level 23 – Lock 33 to Dam 3: **Paul Durham reported in March and April:** The towpath was very clean on both my visits. I observed quite a few cyclists and walkers on both my walks. The walkers/hikers appeared to be heading to Maryland Heights. In April, the spring wildflowers were starting to pop up and out. The bluebells and Dutchman's breeches were in bloom along with numerous trees budding and blossoming

Level 23 – Lock 33 to Dam 3: **Arthur Tsien reported in March:** I walked the towpath on a very pleasant spring day. The resurfaced towpath continues to be in good condition, with no impediments to foot or bicycle travel. Usage was moderate, but growing quickly as increasing numbers of walkers were headed to Maryland Heights. Spring is on its way, with trees and shrubs starting to leaf. Daffodils are in full bloom. The construction site at the Goodloe Byron Footbridge looked the same as it did during my two most recent visits (January and November), with no apparent work in progress and no workers visible. The highlight of the day was that a freight train rumbled by, just a few feet away, as I crossed the Byron Bridge on my way back to my car at the train station. (The railroad track on the bridge with the footpath is a siding that is only rarely used; the railroad mainline travels on the adjacent bridge.) The towpath was quite clean.

Levels 28 and 29 – Mile 72.8 to Snyders Landing: **Brigitta Shroyer and Joel Anderson reported in February:** It was sunny in the mid to upper 50s. The overflow parking lot at Shepherdstown was almost full, and the lot at Snyder's Landing had five vehicles. We passed many cyclists and walkers. There was a lot more trash than

usual, especially beer bottles. Other than a few sections of puddling, the surface is in excellent condition.

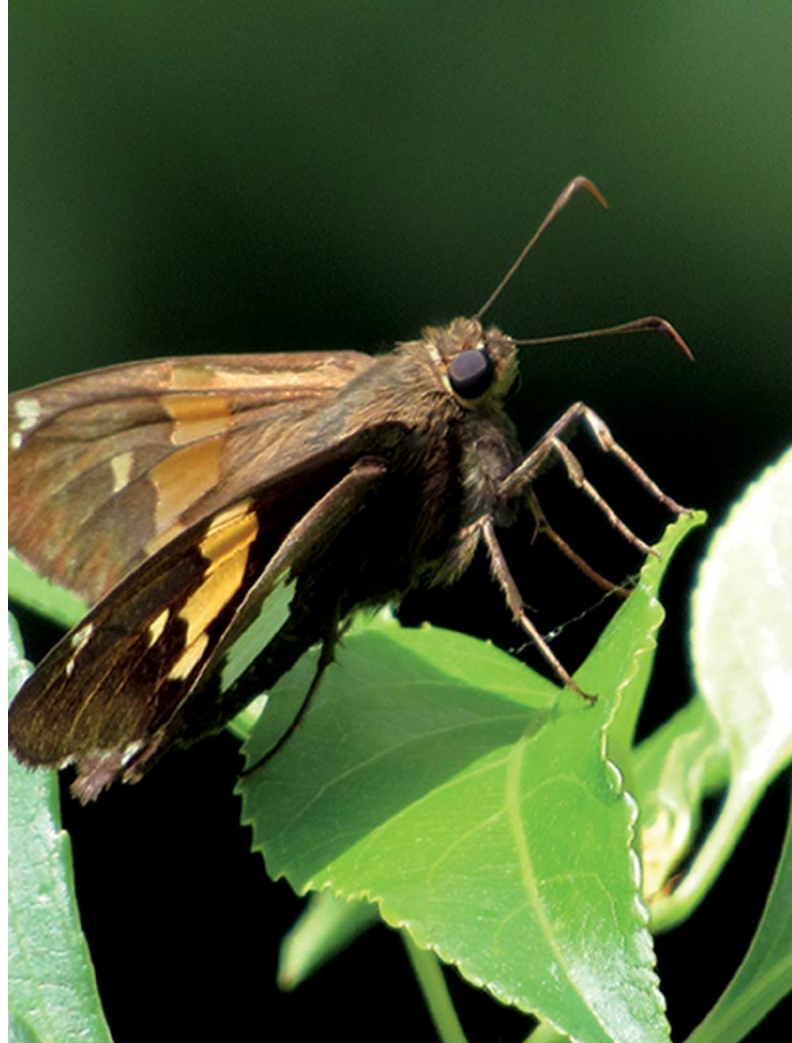
Level 49 – Mile 127.4 to Lock 53: **Paul Petkus reported in February:** It was a nice day to visit the park. Visitation was light, but not unusual for this area in the winter. The towpath was in good condition. The first mile of the level has been resurfaced. Deer tracks already mar the new surface in places. No changes were detected in the condition of any of the structures. Water in the lock and in parts of the prism was still mostly frozen. Squirrels were active during the afternoon. Birds were active in some areas, but quiet in others. Unusually, I didn't get photos of any of the wildlife during the outing.

Level 54 – Lock 59 to Lock 60: **Paul Petkus reported in March:** Recent storms had deposited branches onto the towpath. They were small enough for me to move them in Level 54. A log located in Level 53 a short distance downstream from Lock 59 was too large for me to move. A change was detected in the condition of the berm arch of Culvert 207. More graffiti was present on the abandoned railroad bridge at Mile 147.1. No changes were detected in any of the other structures. Spring wildflowers were beginning to emerge. Reptiles and amphibians were active during the afternoon. Bird activity was low. Three butterflies were seen during the afternoon, including a mourning cloak.

Level 55 – Lock 60 to Culvert 208: **Paul Petkus reported in February:** It was a beautiful day to visit the towpath, which was in good condition. No change was detected in the condition of the structures, but the hillside near the towpath arch of the culvert may have shed a stone. Turtles and red-spotted newts were plentiful. Spring peepers were only beginning their annual mating activity.

Level 57 and Level 58: **Arthur Tsien reported in April:** I walked my level (PawPaw Tunnel) and the adjacent downstream level (Twig Hollow) on Friday, April 10. It was a glorious spring day, relatively warm and sunny, with not much humidity. It was a great day for a walk on the towpath. The trees were not quite fully leafed. I encountered a group of about eight heavily laden cyclists (a few were towing trailers) heading downstream when I was in the tunnel returning to my car at the tunnel parking lot. I also saw a 10-person canoe trip preparing to leave from the Paw Paw campground. The towpath is in good shape, with no real impediments to foot or bicycle travel. I picked up one small bag of trash.

Warmer weather brings more wildlife to observe, including a silver spotted skipper butterfly (top) and dragonfly (bottom). While not observed on cooler days, this common practice of dragonflies, called obelisking, is done to minimize exposure to the sun and stay cool. Photos by Steve Dean







(Clockwise, from opposite left) Claire Connor, NPS, at the north portal of the Paw Paw tunnel. Claire Connor, Mike Bucci, unknown woman, Pat White and Dan Kaminski pose on the trail over the Paw Paw tunnel. Mike Bucci stands on tunnel marker stones at top of Paw Paw tunnel. Keystone on South portal of Paw Paw tunnel recognizing C&O Canal engineer C.B. Fisk. The inside of the tunnel is lined with nearly six million bricks. Photos by Jon Wolz



Atop the Paw Paw Tunnel

By Jon Wolz

On Wednesday, March 18, long-time member Pat White led a hike to find the six stones that marked the tunnel line during original construction. Claire Connor of the C&O Canal NHP requested that Pat lead the hike for her and four park volunteers. At times, the hikers walked through snow, and there were icicles coming down from the stones near the north tunnel portal. The stones are on ridges on top of the tunnel. We were able to find five of the six stones. The second stone has been reduced to rubble.

In the 1830s, canal surveyors used these stones to plot the course of the tunnel below the ground. The keystone atop the south tunnel portal bears the name “C. B. Fisk.” Charles Bezaleel Fisk (June 14, 1806–Jan. 11, 1866) is the only C&O Canal engineer who served throughout the construction period. He was hired as a mere assistant engineer in 1828, rising to the position of chief engineer in April 1837, and leaving the canal in 1852. Fisk’s name is also on the builder’s stone in the middle of the berm parapet of the Monocacy Aqueduct, the keystone of the upstream portal of the Paw Paw Tunnel, and the C&O Canal completion obelisk beside the Wisconsin Avenue bridge over the canal in Georgetown on the northwest side.





Pat White approaches the Monocacy Aqueduct on a paddling trip in June 2019. Photo by Tony Laing

C&O Canal Association Calendar of Events

C&OCA Business	Aug. 2, Sun., 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting , Zoom
C&OCA Hike and Dinner or Other Event	
Non-C&OCA Event	
C&OCA Hike	
C&OCA Volunteer Event	
C&OCA Paddle Trip	Aug. 21, Sat., 9:00 a.m. Little Orleans to Hancock Paddle Trip Sixteen-mile float beginning at Fifteen Mile Creek boat launch with lunch stop, and finishing in Hancock. Visit candocanal.org/calendar for more information.
C&OCA Bike Trip	Currents of History: The C&O Canal & America's Bicentennial Sept. 13–25, 10:00 am The Goldman Art Gallery, in the Jewish Community Center (JCC) at 6125 Montrose Road, Rockville, Md. 301-881-0100 Contact person: Joel Cohen cohenji@comcast.net
June 7, Sun., 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting , Town Hall, Williamsport, Md.	
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 . See page 1 for more details.	Sept. 26, Sat., 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. President's Lunch Note new date and location: Captain Bender's Tavern 111 E. Main St., Sharpsburg, Md. <i>See page 8 for details.</i>
July 18, Sat., 9:00 a.m. Brunswick to Monocacy Paddle Trip Twelve-mile float beginning at Brunswick boat launch with a stop in Point of Rocks for lunch and finish at Monocacy boat launch. Visit candocanal.org/calendar for more information.	Sept. 26, Sat., 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. 3M Bike Challenge Cumberland, Md. A timed challenge between cyclists and the train locomotive organized by Mountain Maryland Trails, the 3M Challenge will follow a 15.3 mile stretch of the Great Allegheny Passage alongside the WMSR railroad tracks, from Cumberland to Frostburg. <i>See page 7 for details.</i>
Aug. 1, Sat., 11:00 am Summer Field Trip Western Maryland Scenic Railroad Station, 13 Canal Street, Cumberland, Md. Ride the steam-powered Frostburg Flyer from Cumberland to Frostburg, and visit the Coal Miner's Memorial. <i>See page 12 for details.</i>	Oct. 4, Sun., 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting , Town Hall, Williamsport, Md.
	Dec. 6, Sun., 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting , Glen Echo Town Hall, 6106 Harvard Ave., Glen Echo, Md.

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
 142 W. Potomac St., Williamsport, Md. 21795

C&O Canal NHP Contact Information
 choh_information@nps.gov or 301-739-4200

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

Palisades District

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

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

Western Maryland District

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

Interpretive Supervisor Joshua Nolen

Visiting the Park

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

Check park status before visiting.

www.nps.gov/choh/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:

HAZARDS CHOH_Hazards@nps.gov

COPYRIGHT © 2026 BY THE C&O CANAL ASSOCIATION
ISSN 2575-9876

Along the Towpath is published in March, June, September and December by the C&O Canal Association (C&OCA).
 P.O. Box 366, Glen Echo, MD 20812-0366

Written permission is required for reuse in any way of content from this newsletter. All requests for reuse of material must be sent to the editor via mail or email.

Refer to candocanal.org/submissions for content submission requirements. Submission does not guarantee publication.

Editor and Producer: editor@candocanal.org

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

C&O CANAL ASSOCIATION

Membership in C&OCA is open to all persons with an interest in the C&O Canal, the C&O Canal National Historical Park and the Potomac River Basin. Annual membership dues are: \$25 for individuals, \$35 for families, and \$50 for patrons, assessed on a calendar-year basis, and include a subscription to the newsletter.

Dues should be mailed to the C&O Canal Association or paid online. C&OCA is a non-profit organization as defined by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and all contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting the C&OCA at the address above or emailing inquiries@candocanal.org. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State for the cost of copying and postage.

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

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President: Arthur Tsien, president@candocanal.org

Vice President: Barbara Sheridan

Secretary: Jane Hanna, secretary@candocanal.org

Treasurer: Paul Lubell, treasurer@candocanal.org

Information Officer: Vacant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Terms expire in 2028: Kerry Gruber, Scott Parker, David Romanowski

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

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

COMMITTEES

Archives: Vacant | **Auditing:** Bill Holdsworth, Dick Stoner

By-Laws: Arthur Tsien | **Canal Towns Partnership:** William Bauman

Community Outreach: Dick Ebersole | **Editorial:** Jane Hanna

Environmental: Rod Mackler | **Finance:** Bill Holdsworth

Legal Advisory: Vacant | **Level Walkers:** Allyson Miller

Membership: Jeff Crooks

Membership Communications Coordinator: Steve Nelson

Nature: Paul Petkus | **PayPal Manager:** Kamille Kay

Programs: Tim Snyder, Jon Wolz | **Store:** Nan Johnson

Social Media Coordinator: Allyson Miller | **Special Projects:** Vacant

Volunteers in Parks: Jim Heins vip@candocanal.org

Webmaster: Shelby Garrison

CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL ASSOCIATION INC.

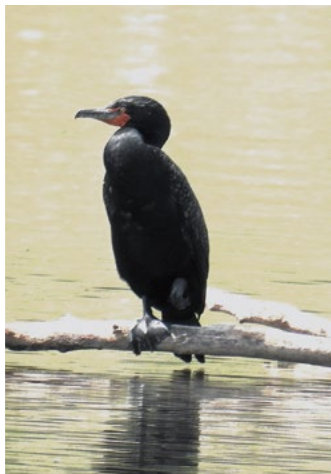
P.O. Box 366

GLEN ECHO, MD 20812-0366



Founded in 1954

PRESORT STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit# 1608
Baltimore, MD



On the April 25 Douglas Hike between the Monocacy Aqueduct and Dickerson, photographer Joel Cohen captured scenes that might be easily missed if you're not paying attention (Clockwise, from left): forest wolf spider, double-breasted cormorant, and phlox subulata (moss phlox).



ALONG THE TOWPATH Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Association candocanal.org

Friends and Family Summer Picnic	1
President's Notes	2
Steve Dean Recognized	3
Donors to Association Funds	5
New Members	7
3M Bike Challenge	7
President's Lunch Information	8
Honoring Coal Miners' Heritage	9
Summer Field Trip Information	12
Annual Meeting 2026 Update	13
Stakeholder Meeting Report	14
Environmental Committee Report	15
Sewer Overflow Update	17
Oldtown, Maryland's Past	19
1906 Railroad Accident near Little Orleans	22
Douglas Hike Photos	24
On the Level	25
Paw Paw Tunnel Hike	29
C&OCA Calendar	30
Contacts	31

Check us out on social media!

 @candocanal.org  @candocanalassoc