

HOW THE C&O CANAL BEGAN

Before it was a national park, the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal was one of a network of American canals dug during the late 18th and early 19th centuries to form water highways for commercial trade. These canals were part of the great Industrial Revolution.

The C&O Canal followed the shallow Potomac River above tidewater where falls and rapids hampered navigation. Intended to reach the Ohio River, construction stopped 184.5 miles from Washington at Cumberland, near rapidly developing coal fields that resulted in the canal becoming a major coal transportation system to the tidewater ports of the Federal District through World War I.

The history of the B&O Railroad that roughly parallels the canal from Point of Rocks, Maryland to Cumberland, is deeply intertwined with that of the canal, their stories often similar and their relationship the source of colorful truths and myths.

Plagued by floods and endless maintenance difficulties that largely denied it economic success, in 1890 the canal fell under the management of canal bondholders and court oversight until navigation ceased at the end of 1923 and the canal was sold in 1938 to the U.S. Government. The lower 22 miles were restored and rewatered for recreational use.

HOW THE C&O CANAL ASSOCIATION BEGAN

The idea of a scenic roadway along the Potomac to Great Falls developed in the early 20th century and grew into the vision of a parkway on the entire length of C&O Canal lands by 1950.

On January 11, 1953, the prominent Washington naturalist Irston R. Barnes advocated restoration of the canal lands for recreation and nature in a Washington Post article. This was followed by a meeting in May of 50 prominent environmentalists and naturalists opposed to the parkway and, in 1954, by a famous hike down the canal led by Supreme Court Associate Justice William O. Douglas that bought national attention to the anti-parkway movement.

A committee formed the last night of the Douglas Hike grew into the C&O Canal Association and the movement to save the canal from parkway development consolidated in 1956 around the goal of a C&O Canal National Historical Park, finally realized on January 8, 1971.

The C&O Canal Association continues today with its mission of protecting, preserving, and promoting the assets of the C&O Canal National Historical Park.

YOU can be a part of this effort, too, as a member of the C&O Canal Association.

C&O CANAL ASSOCIATION BENEFITS

A quarterly newsletter – *Along the Towpath* – is sent to members and relevant officials and gives updates of issues affecting the canal, historical articles, nature reports, details of hikes and volunteer activities, book reviews, and features about activities in canal towns and communities.

Two major hikes, several informal hikes and nature walks throughout the year provide opportunities for fellowship and education. In addition, the Association holds bicycle and canoe trips in the summer and fall. There are guided tours along specified sections of the towpath conducted by members and park rangers.

A chance to participate in the Level Walker program affords a unique way for individuals to help protect and preserve the canal. Members are assigned specific sections of the towpath which they monitor and, in effect, become experts about the history, geology, and culture of these sections.

Volunteer opportunities in the Association's outstanding Volunteers in Parks program, which conducts significant projects year-round throughout the park, offer outlets for those willing to give back to the Park.

Opportunities to use personal and professional skills to preserve, protect, and publicize all the advantages and assets of having the C&O Canal NHP – The Park for all People – so near our nation's capital.

C&O Canal Association

Helping to Establish, Protect,
Preserve and Defend the
C&O Canal National Historical Park
since 1954

The C&O Canal Association is an all-volunteer, independent organization of citizens dedicated to preserving and protecting the historical and natural resources of the 184.5 mile long Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park.

C&O Canal Association



Founded in 1954

www.candocanal.org

Park Advocacy & Support
Volunteer Programs
C&O Canal History Specialists
Nature Programs
Hikes, Bike Rides & Paddle Trips
Quarterly *Along the Towpath* Newsletter

What we do:

We work with the National Park Service and other organizations to maintain and restore the canal's historic structures.

We help ensure the continuity, safety and public accessibility of towpath stretching from Washington, D.C. to Cumberland, Md.

We advocate for the continued viability of the Park. Our status as an unofficial park partner allows us to advocate independently on behalf of the Park.

How we do this:

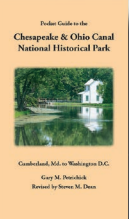
We provide funding to help maintain and restore the canal's historic structures, such as aqueducts, locks, culverts, and lock houses. We initiate projects by providing financial assistance to the Park and coordinating funding with other organizations. These funds come from large and small donations we receive from our members and the general public. Past projects we've supported include the Monocacy and Catoctin Aqueduct restorations and the Big Slackwater towpath improvement.



Our members provide thousands of volunteer hours of work each year through various programs to help ensure the accessibility, safety, and enjoyment of the towpath and park facilities through a variety of organized activities, such as our Level Walker program, invasive plant removal, and Volunteers in Parks work parties. The Level Walker program is the longest serving volunteer program in the park. Our volunteers support interpretive and educational activities to help educate the public about the canal.



We research canal history and publish the findings both in our popular quarterly newsletter Along the Towpath and on our website at www.candocanal.org. Our publications support includes production of the essential Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Official National Park Handbook.



We lead and sponsor hikes, bike trips, paddle trips, open houses, and nature walks in an effort to educate participants and bring attention to the Park.



YOU can help us accomplish this important work!

Join the Association today.

www.candocanal.org

@candocanal.org

@CandOCanalAssoc

candocanalassoc

Join Today

Join on-line at www.candocanal.org/join/
or mail this form to:

C&O Canal Association
PO Box 366
Glen Echo, MD 20812-0366

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

- MEMBERSHIP RATES
- ☐ INDIVIDUAL – \$25.00
 - ☐ FAMILY – \$35.00
 - ☐ PATRON – \$50.00

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE C&O CANAL ASSOCIATION

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

My C&O CANAL ASSOCIATION BADGE SHOULD BEAR THIS NAME: _____

SECOND BADGE NAME SHOULD BE: (FAMILY OR PATRON MEMBERSHIP) _____

PLEASE TELL US HOW YOU LEARNED ABOUT US: _____

The Association gathers the information on this form solely for the purpose of contacting and informing our members of Association business and events. We do not sell, rent, exchange, or otherwise provide your information to any third party.