



## Explore the Towpath

### Hiking and Bicycling

Brown concrete mileposts are located every mile along the towpath.

Bicyclists must observe these regulations:

- Do not exceed 15 mph.
- Sound your bell or horn when approaching other towpath users.
- Ride single-file and stay to the right.
- Yield to pedestrians, horses, and mules.
- Wear a helmet, as required by law.
- Walk bikes across aqueducts.

### Camping

- Drive-in camping areas (primitive facilities, no groups) operate first-come, first-served. Fees are charged. Length-of-stay limitations apply.
- Group campgrounds require a fee, and Marsden Tract requires a permit, obtainable at Great Falls Fee Station.
- Hiker-Biker Overnight campsites for tent camping occur approximately every five miles between Mileposts 16.6 and 180.1.

Camping is permitted only in designated areas. Camping supplies and food can be bought at stores near the park. Find restrooms and water pumps at all campsites. Potable water is not available in winter. Fires are allowed only in designated areas.

**Bicyclists like the mostly level towpath.**

### Canoeing and Boating

Canoeing and non-motorized boating are possible in watered sections of the canal from Georgetown to Milepost 22, and for short stretches above that.

Important note: Canal users must portage (carry their boat) around each lock. Motorized craft are generally prohibited. Contact visitor center staff about boat rental possibilities.

### For Safety's Sake

**The Potomac River must be considered extremely dangerous at all times. The river's current is strong and deceptive and can be unpredictable.**

- **Swimming and wading in the canal are prohibited.**
- **Hunting and trapping in the park are prohibited.**
- **Fishing is subject to Maryland or D.C. laws.**
- **Metal detectors and relic hunting are prohibited on park property.**
- **Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.**
- **Pets must be leashed at all times.**
- **The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park is a trash-free park. Please take your trash with you when you leave.**

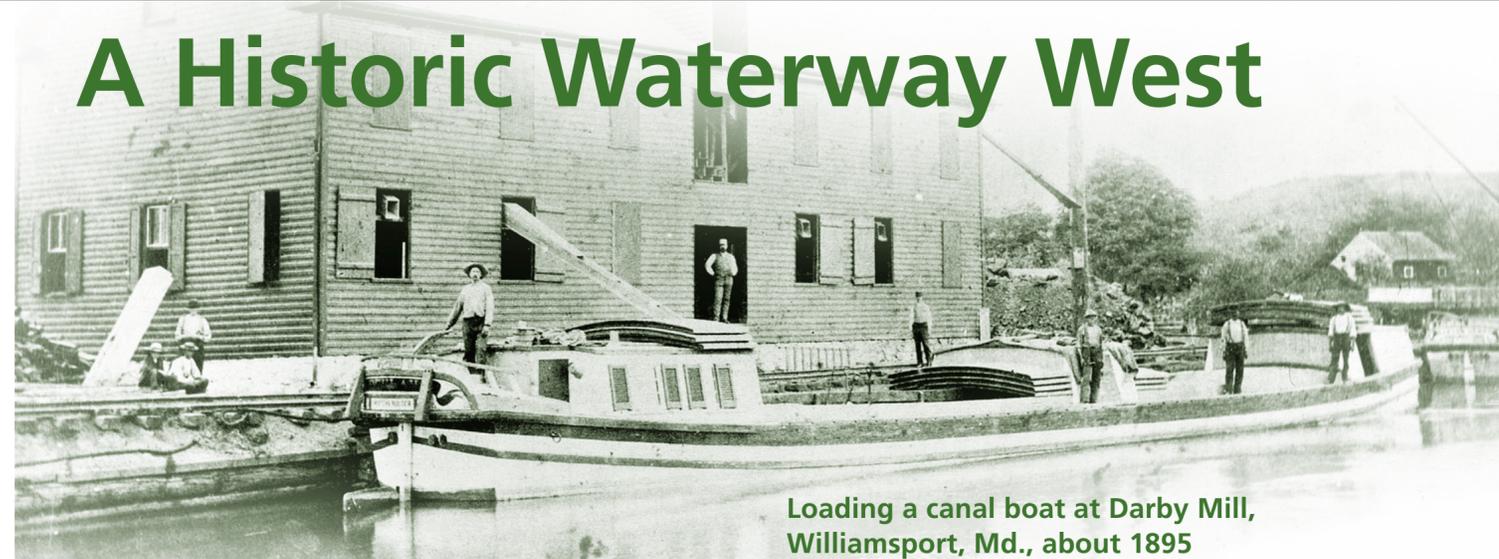
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park is one of over 380 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

### For More Information

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal  
National Historical Park  
1850 Dual Highway, Suite 100  
Hagerstown, MD 21740  
301-739-4200, V/TTY  
[www.nps.gov/choh](http://www.nps.gov/choh)

**Report crimes in National Capital Region parks toll-free 866-677-6677.**

## A Historic Waterway West



Loading a canal boat at Darby Mill, Williamsport, Md., about 1895

**A**midst cheers, toasts, and a blaring brass band, President John Quincy Adams broke ground for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal on Independence Day, 1828. The goal for the canal was ambitious. It was to improve upon nature with a navigable waterway from tidewater at Georgetown to the Ohio River. The nation had caught canal fever. People dreamed of a united, prosperous nation trading with the world. A growing nation later saw the dream fulfilled but by other means of transportation.

By the time its construction ended in 1850, progress had left the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal behind. Canals were already obsolete. Cost overruns, labor problems, and a rocky terrain delayed building the canal, but new railroad technology had made great strides. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad completed the link to the West, while the canal stopped short of reaching the Ohio River.

In a lifetime canals faded from beacons of a dawning age to quaint reminders of a bygone era. Nevertheless, from 1828 to 1850 thousands of immigrants found work and hope of a new life building this canal. Until 1924, hundreds of working families would spend their lives along it. In the massive stonework of locks and aqueducts, their memories linger like the footprints of a restless nation's westward migrations.

**The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal began as a dream of a waterway to the West. It carried Appalachian coal, suffered repeated ruinous flooding, and then resisted being paved as a highway. Today the canal endures as a national historical park—a pathway into history, nature, and recreation.**

Two mules pulled a canal boat

