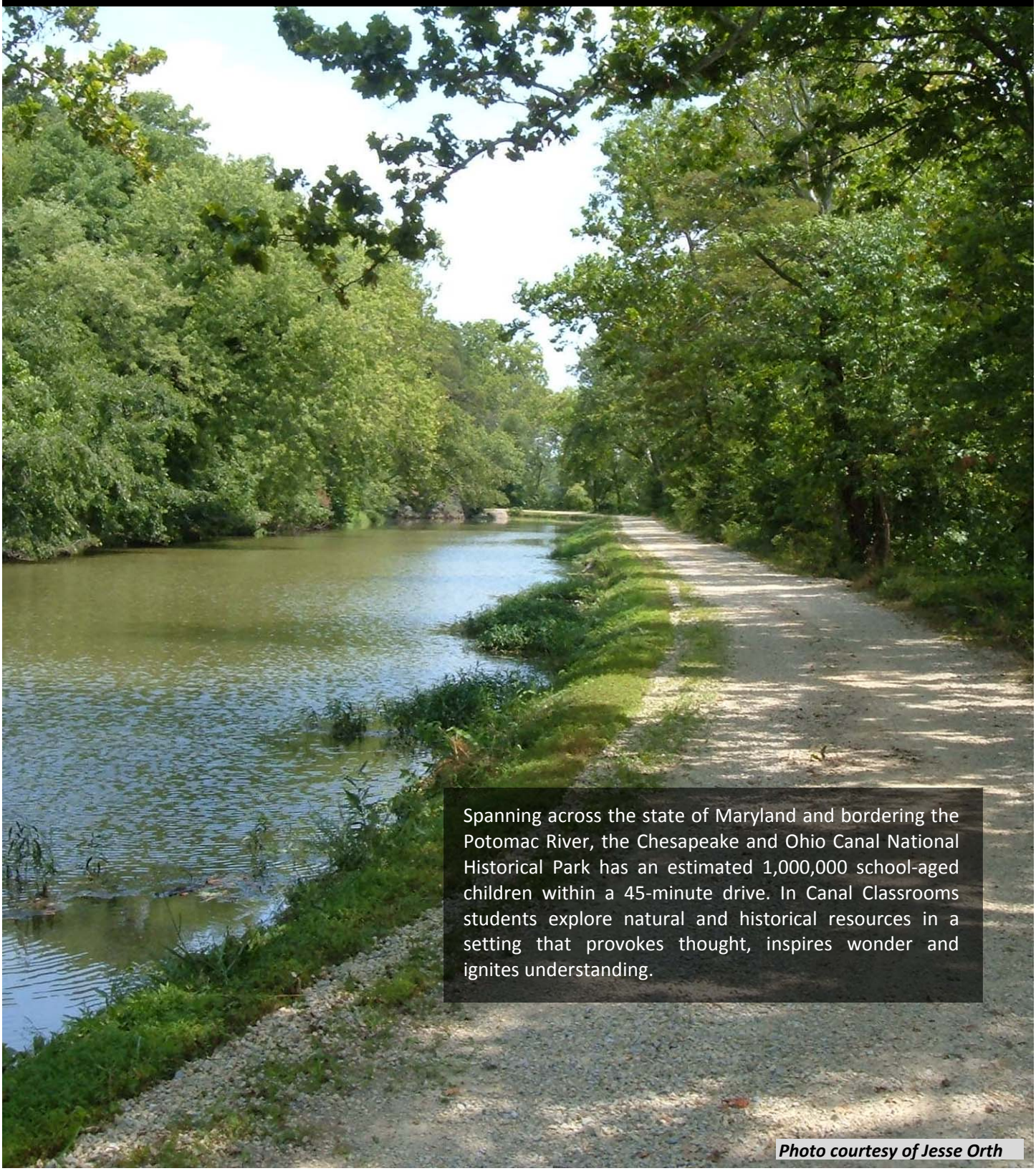
A Place of Refuge, Recreation and Reflection



Spanning across the state of Maryland and bordering the Potomac River, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park has an estimated 1,000,000 school-aged children within a 45-minute drive. In Canal Classrooms students explore natural and historical resources in a setting that provokes thought, inspires wonder and ignites understanding.

Photo courtesy of Jesse Orth

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A Place of Refuge, Recreation and Reflection

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal operated for nearly 100 years and was a lifeline for communities along the Potomac River as coal, lumber and agricultural products floated down the waterway to market. It stood as a true testament of human ingenuity, adaptation and pride in heritage.

Years after boats carrying goods ceased floating down the canal, one man would take a stand to save this national treasure from development and destruction. This man, Justice William O. Douglas, recognized that that the C&O Canal offered a place of refuge, recreation and reflection to all who took the opportunity to just "take a walk." Because of his efforts, today it endures as a pathway for discovering historical, natural and recreational treasures!

This curriculum-based lesson plan is part of a thematic unit, which culminates in a self-guided site visit. Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Jesse Orth developed this for the park in partnership with Washington County Public Schools in Maryland. Additional lessons and resources may be found at: http://www.nps.gov/choh/forteachers.

Included in this lesson are several pages of supporting material. To help identify these pages the following colors will be displayed in the headings:

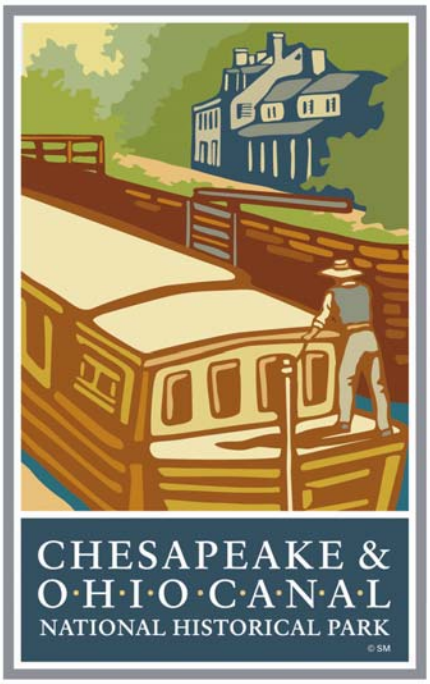
RED to indicate a student handout
BLUE to indicate a teacher resource

Lesson Timeline	Number of days for pre-visit lesson: 2 Self-guided site visit: 5-6 hours total Number of days for post-visit project: determined by each teacher
Best Time to Plan Trip	Spring or Fall
Cost	Free
Group size	Classroom
Grade	Fourth

Photo courtesy of Jesse Orth

Maryland Common Core Standards	**English Language Arts, Literacy, Reading** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3: Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1a Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1b Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1c Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition). CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1d Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.
Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum for Social Studies	**1.0 Political Science:** A. Analyze the role of Maryland government regarding public policy and issues a. Analyze perspectives and policies in Maryland regarding historic and current public issues b. Explain the effect that regional interests have on shaping government policy in and around Maryland, such as Chesapeake Bay issues, availability of land for mining, land use
College, Career and Civic Life Framework	• Developing questions and planning inquiries • Applying disciplinary concepts and tools • Evaluating sources and using evidence • Communicating conclusions and taking informed action

Lesson Objectives and Outcomes



The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal winds its way through Maryland along the north shore of the Potomac River for 184.5 miles from Cumberland, Maryland to Georgetown, Washington D.C. From its groundbreaking on July 4, 1828, "The Great National Project" would test the innovativeness, adaptability and determination of the men who planned, built, worked and lived on the Canal. Despite the trials and tribulations encountered during its construction and operation, the C&O Canal thrived for almost a hundred years as a water route transporting goods such as coal, bricks and iron between the Appalachian Mountain Region and the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Today, the C&O Canal provides opportunities for all who visit to learn about the transportation heritage of bygone era, the power of human ingenuity, the role of change and adaptability in life's daily struggle, and the importance of seeking one's own personal place of refuge, recreation and reflection.

In this learning experience, students learn about the how one man's determination to save the C&O Canal from development and destruction led to the creation of a National Historical Park. Students will also learn that nature speaks to all of us in some way and that it is critical that we take a few moments in our lives to enjoy the amazing places that surround us. Students will learn that the C&O Canal offers all visitors a chance to appreciate our past while simultaneously consider the prospects of our future. Most importantly, through this learning experience students will understand how the decisions we make can have a lasting impact.

Enduring Understanding

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park provides educational and recreational opportunities to individuals, students and families who visit

Essential Question

In what ways does visiting the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park change my understanding of how I can connect with nature and our community's history?

Content Objective/Outcomes

The students will:

- Describe how and why the C&O Canal is an important part of Maryland and our nation's history.
- Describe the role of Justice William O. Douglas in preserving the C&O Canal for future generations.
- Analyze both primary and secondary sources as well as historical and contemporary photographs to gain multiple perspectives about historical events.

Literacy Objective/Outcomes

The students will:

- Summarize information from a variety of sources on Justice William O. Douglas's mission to save the C&O Canal from development and destruction.
- Use evidence from text to make and support decisions about important topics.
- Write articulately and precisely to describe real world problems and persuade others to take action on implementing solutions.

Teaching and Learning Sequence

Pre-Site Visit Classroom Lesson

Day 1: Launch

Introduce the lesson with the question, "What would you do to save something that you loved or that was important to you?" Allow students to think for a minute or two and then do a pair-share with another classmate. After the pair-share, allow students to share what their partner would save and one action their pair-share partner stated they would undertake to save what they loved/found important. Create a running list of ideas as students share out and note similarities some ideas or the uniqueness of others.

Tell students they will examine some photographs (see Photograph Analysis) of a place that is very special to you (the C&O Canal). Have them analyze the photograph to identify what might make this place so special. In their analysis, be sure students in teams of 3-4 verbally describe and take careful notes on:

- Their first impressions as they look at the photograph
- The feelings that strike them they view/analyze this photograph
- What they might be doing/thinking if they were standing in this place

At the end of the lesson, have students share out answers and create an idea map/web that creates a class record of thoughts/ideas and links similar ideas together. Explain that tomorrow they will have a dilemma to solve that involves this place that you find so special. They will need to come with an open mind and a willingness to look carefully at all the evidence, just like a judge would in a courtroom.

Day 2: Exploration

Review yesterday's lesson by quickly re-examining the photographs that they analyzed yesterday and the idea map/web that was assembled at the end of the lesson.

Set the stage for the inquiry-based dilemma activity by telling students that today they are going to be reading about a very serious dilemma in our community. This dilemma has to be resolved and it is their job today to resolve the dilemma based on the information they are provided. They will need to think about all of the pros and cons of the decision they will make.

They will also need to carefully consider how people in the community will feel about the decision they have made.

After assigning students into teams of 2, 3 or 4, pass out the text "A New Future for the C&O Canal" and allow students to complete an independent, silent first reading of the text as way to familiarize themselves with the dilemma. After this first reading, have students complete an independent close analytical reading of the text. During this second reading they should highlight important ideas in the text, mark important pieces of evidence that they might use to make a decision with their group and make notes about thoughts and ideas they are having about the dilemma.

After the close reading, allow group members to discuss their thoughts and ideas with another. Remind students that as a group they must weigh the evidence carefully and come to a consensus about how they will resolve the dilemma. Have groups record their ideas on the "Dilemma Resolution Accord."

After all groups have made a decision and completed the "Dilemma Resolution Accord," call all students together in a central location and have the groups that decided to build the road on one side and the groups that decided to preserve the C&O Canal on the other side. Allow one member from each group to present their case in a debate style format. As the teacher moderates the discussion, they should record key ideas or pieces of evidence shared during the mini-debate. After all groups have shared discuss what you observed as the moderator/facilitator. Remind students that there is no right or wrong answer to this dilemma but that decisions that are made often can have long-term positive and/or negative consequences.

Conclusion

Share with students a letter written by Justice William O. Douglas to *The Washington Post* on January 19, 1954. Explain that Justice Douglas, alongside many devoted citizens, fought long and hard to preserve the C&O Canal from development and destruction. Read to students "Justice Douglas: One Man Can Make a Difference." Have students share out their initial reactions to Justice Douglas's actions how it relates to the dilemma they just explored. Also, have students discuss what lessons they can learn from Justice Douglas's actions. Lastly, have students watch a clip from Ken Burns' National Parks documentary, *America's Best Idea*, at http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/watch-video/#914 and discuss how ordinary people made a huge impact in preserving and protecting the land that would become part of the National Park Service.

Assessment

Have students form a circle to discuss the following questions in a shared-inquiry format:

- Were there any other options/ideas besides that could have been possible besides just saving the canal or just building a road?
- How should we decide when to preserve/conserve something from our past?

- When is it ok to allow technology and progress to transform parts of our community?

Use the "Shared Inquiry Rubric" to keep track of all students that participate in the discussion and assess the depth/complexity of their thoughts/ideas.

Self-guided Site Visit: A walk on the towpath

The Power of Place

Before students begin their walk on the towpath, show them two photographs of the C&O Canal – one historic and one contemporary. Remind students of Justice William O. Douglas's walk to save the canal so that all who visit could have a place of refuge, recreation and reflection. Also tell students of the famous words that created our first National Park, Yellowstone: *"For the benefit and enjoyment of the people."* As they walk, have students record in a notebook and/or with photographs, things that they noticed that speak to why the canal is such a special place and why William O. Douglas fought so hard to save the canal from development and destruction. After returning to the starting point, have students share their observations and discuss how the quote *"For the benefit and enjoyment of the people"* also fits the C&O Canal.

Post Site Visit Classroom Activity

Extension Opportunity

After completing the site visit to the C&O Canal, have students identify and research a problem in their own community that needs to be resolved. Have students write a persuasive/argument piece that offers logical and reasonable solutions to be problem as well as encourages others to take action to resolve the dilemma.

PRE-VISIT PHOTOGRAPH ANALYSIS

Photo courtesy of Jesse Orth

Photo courtesy of Jesse Orth

Photo courtesy of Jesse Orth

A NEW FUTURE FOR THE C&O CANAL

It is 1954 and the 184.5 mile Chesapeake and Ohio can has been closed to boat traffic for almost 30 years. Much of the canal has fallen into a state of disrepair and options are being explored as to how to best use the land surrounding the canal. The C&O Canal runs parallel to the Potomac River and offers visitors a chance to see some of the most scenic views in the state of Maryland.

One group has proposed to build a highway along the route of the C&O Canal towpath. This highway would be a toll road that drivers would pay money to travel on to take in the beauty of the Potomac River and the surrounding Maryland countryside. This road would cost millions of dollars to build but would also bring in some much needed revenue, or money, to the communities surrounding it. Over time, this road would probably start many new businesses and help the communities near it grow and succeed. Many people say that this road will make millions of dollars every year from people visiting. However, while some of the historic structures, such as the towpath, locks, and lockhouses, would be saved as tourist attractions, many would need to be demolished to make room for the road. Furthermore, many of the animals living along the canal would be need to find new homes once the road was built.

Another group has proposed that the C&O Canal be turned into a state or national park that visitors could hike or bike along to enjoy nature and part of Maryland's transportation history. It is hoped that people would find this park to be a place of refuge, recreation and reflection. This would also preserve all or most of the important historical sites along the C&O Canal for future generations. Also, this plan would help preserve the important animal habitats along the canal. However, if turned into a park, it would cost millions of dollars of taxpayer money to repair the towpath, locks and lockhouses for visitors. It would also require that a large sum of money be spent over the years to pay rangers and other park staff to protect and maintain the sites within the park. The park would be free to visit so it would make any money from visitors.

Both sides feel very strongly about their ideas and opinions and so far have been unable to reach an agreement. You have been asked to make a final decision as to what will happen to the C&O Canal. Many will be looking to you to make a decision that is best for the communities along the canal, for the environment, and for the visitors who may come to enjoy the sites along the Potomac River. Your decision will forever change, on way or another, what happens to the once great Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

A NEW FUTURE FOR THE C&O CANAL: DILEMMA RESOLUTION ACCORD

Directions: Answer the following questions using support from the text and your own thinking. Answers should be detailed and explain WHY you made that decision. Be ready to defend your thinking.

Before you decide:

Besides those stated in the dilemma, what are some other possible consequences and/or considerations that you need to keep in mind before making your decision?

What other information would you like to gather/research before making a decision?

Circle the option you would choose:

Build the New Highway **OR** **Preserve the Canal as a Park**

Pros & Cons

List at least 2-3 pros (good things) that will result from decision you made.

List at least 2-3 cons (bad things) that could result from the decision you made

Decision

Why do you believe the decision you made is the BEST choice? How do you plan to convince other people/groups who disagree with your decision?

JUSTICE WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS'S LETTER TO *THE WASHIGNTON POST* (JANUARY 19, 1954)

Source: Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Long Range Interpretive Plan – July 2010

The discussion concerning the construction of a parkway along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal arouses many people. Fishermen, hunters, hikers, campers, ornithologists, and others who like to get acquainted with nature first-hand and on their own are opposed to making a highway out of this sanctuary.

The stretch of 185 miles of country from Washington, D.C. to Cumberland, Maryland is one of the most fascinating and picturesque in the Nation. The river and its islands are part of the charm. The cliff s, the streams, the draws, the benches and beaches, the swamps are another part. The birds and game, the blaze of color in the spring and fall, the cattails in the swamp, the blush of buds in late winter—these are also some of the glory of the place.

In the early twenties Mr. Justice Brandeis traveled the canal and river by canoe to Cumberland. It was for him exciting adventure and recreation. Hundreds of us still use this sanctuary for hiking, and camping. It is a refuge, a place of retreat, a long stretch of quiet and peace at the Capital's back door—a wilderness area where we can commune with God and nature, a place not yet marred by the roar of wheels and the sound of horns.

It is a place for boys and girls, men and women. One can hike 15 or 20 miles on a Sunday afternoon, or sleep on high dry ground in the quiet of a forest, or just go and sit with no sound except water lapping at one's feet. It is a sanctuary for everyone who loves woods—a sanctuary that would be utterly destroyed by a fine two-lane highway.

I wish the man who wrote your editorial of January 3, 1954, approving the parkway would take time off and come with me. We would go with packs on our backs and walk the 185 miles to Cumberland. I feel that if your editor did, he would return a new man and use the power of your great editorial page to help keep this sanctuary untouched.

One who walked the canal its full length could plead the cause with the eloquence of John Muir. He would get to know muskrats, badgers, and fox; he would hear the roar of wind in thickets; he would see strange islands and promontories through the fantasy of fog; he would discover the glory there is in the first flower of spring, the glory there is even in a blade of grass; the whistling wings of ducks would make silence have new values for him. Certain it is that he could never acquire that understanding going 60, or even 25 miles an hour.

JUSTICE WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS: ONE MAN CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Source: Chesapeake and Ohio Canal website

National Park Service photo

Imagine that a place you love, a place of refuge and retreat, perhaps your home or your school, or your favorite park or playground, is threatened with destruction in order to make way for a shopping center or an office building or a highway. What would you do?

That was exactly the situation that Justice William O. Douglas faced in early 1954 when the neglected remnants of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal were threatened by the construction of a scenic highway. It would be much like the Skyline Drive built right next to, if not on top of, the old canal.

Many people supported the idea of a highway. In the 1950's the explosion of the automobile culture in America and President Dwight D. Eisenhower's push for an interstate highway system, construction of highways was common throughout the country. Even *The Washington Post*, in an editorial on January 3, 1954, stated that the old canal was "no longer either a commercial or scenic asset" and that the highway, proposed by the National Park Service itself and approved by Congress, was a fine way to make the Potomac valley accessible to sightseers, campers, and hikers. "The basic advantage of the parkway is that it would enable more people to enjoy beauties now seen by very few."

Justice Douglas had grown to love the C&O Canal, hiking fifteen to twenty miles every Sunday to stay in shape. Finding his beloved canal in peril, Justice Douglas fired back a written response to *The Washington Post*,

> "The stretch of 185 miles of country from Washington, DC to Cumberland, MD is one of the most fascinating and picturesque in the Nation…It is a refuge, a place of retreat, a long stretch of quiet and peace…a wilderness area where we can commune with God and nature, a place not yet marred by the roar of wheels and the sound of horns."

In addition, Justice Douglas challenged *The Washington Post* editors, Merlo Pusey and Robert Esterbrook, to hike with him the entire distance to convince the Post to "…use the power of [*The Post's*] editorial page to help keep this sanctuary untouched…"

As a young man Douglas often challenged himself to carry a twenty pound backpack and hike in the mountains around his native Yakima, Washington. These arduous treks improved his health which had been damaged in childhood by a bout with polio. He further deepened his love of nature and developed his sense of conservation reading Henry David Thoreau.

Douglas provided a focal point for media attention and intensified the efforts of conservation groups such as the Wilderness Society and the National Parks Association that sought to preserve the canal. Many others, from preservationists to naturalists, from well-wishers to curiosity seekers, joined the hike, too, making it an unqualified success: *The Washington Post* retracted its initial editorial and the National Park Service abandoned the parkway idea in 1956. Nevertheless, Douglas and the conservationists did not immediately realize their dream: only after numerous reunion hikes and years of sophisticated lobbying on Capitol Hill did the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal finally become a National Historical Park in 1971.

For his immense efforts in preserving and protecting the natural and historic resources, the C&O Canal is the only national park dedicated to the memory of one person: William O. Douglas.

SHARED INQUIRY RUBIC

Name	Responded to Questions:			Approaching Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
	#1	#2	#3	I responded to at least one question. Many of the thoughts/ideas I shared were literal	I responded to at least two questions. Some of the thoughts/ideas I shared demonstrated deep levels of thought. I tried to make connections between ideas	I responded to at least two questions. Most or all of the thoughts/ideas I shared demonstrated deep levels of thought. I made clear connections between ideas

SITE VISIT PHOTOGRAPHS

National Park Service photo

National Park Service photo

SITE VISIT PHOTOGRAPHS

National Park Service photo

National Park Service photo

SITE VISIT PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo courtesy Jesse Orth

"For the benefit and enjoyment of the people"

National Park Service Organic Act of 1872

Appendix A: Planning a Successful Park Visit

If you have questions about visiting the park, email cocanaleducation@nps.gov

Directions to the Park

This lesson can be conducted at any place along the towpath. We recommend Oldtown (near Cumberland, Maryland), Hancock, Williamsport (Cushwa Basin), or Great Falls (near Potomac, Maryland/Washington, D.C.). For directions and a map, see our website: www.nps.gov/choh

What to Wear

• Remind students to wear appropriate footwear for this extended outdoor experience. Flip flops, slip-on shoes, or sandals are not appropriate.
• We suggest wearing long pants and layers. Pants are the best precaution against cool temperatures, bee stings, ticks, and poison ivy. Encourage everyone to have proper outer wear such as a rain or warm coat.
• Students should wear hats for sun protection and/or warmth.
• Everyone should carry a reusable water bottle (remember to label bottles with names). A drinking fountain is not available.

Planning for Lunch

• Picnic tables are available near many parking lots and park buildings.
• The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park is trash free. Bring a trash bag or two and plan to take all garbage with you. Encourage students to pack lunches in reusable containers.
• We want animals to eat only wild food sources, so do not leave your lunches and trash unattended.

Communication

• Cell phone coverage is spotty in the park.
• For non-emergencies, call (301) 491-1517. For emergencies, call 911 or (866) 677-6677 (this is the National Park Service dispatch center).

Great Expectations

• The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park is a federally-protected public use area. Please be good stewards during your visit. Do not pick the plants or take anything from the park.

Appendix B: Safety Considerations

Towpath Hazards
The Conococheague Aqueduct, near Williamsport (see photo at left) and other sections of the towpath have steep drop offs. Advise students to pay attention.

Bikers
The towpath is an active recreation corridor. Please ask students to remain in single file or gather in short, grassy areas off the towpath.

Ticks
The class will be in areas where ticks are found. Remind students to take precautions such as wearing insect repellant, staying on the towpath, and checking frequently and thoroughly for ticks.

Snakes
Two species of poisonous snakes are found in the park: the Northern Copperhead and the Timber Rattlesnake. Students should be cautious where they place their hands and feet.

Stinging insects
Students will be in areas with hornets, wasps, and bees, which can cause severe allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Chaperones should carry epinephrine pens with them.

Rabies
All animals in the park are wild and their behaviors are unpredictable. Treat all animals with caution.

Poisonous plants
Students will be visiting an area with poison ivy and other noxious plants. Stay alert and stay on the towpath or in mowed areas.

Sun and Heat Exposure
Remind students to wear sunscreen and a hat to avoid exposure to sun. Students are invited

to carry water (preferably from a refillable water bottle). Remember to stay in the shade to avoid heat exposure.

Wind and Inclement Weather

Because of falling tree hazards, we do not recommend you hike the towpath if wind gusts are more than 30 m.p.h. If there is lightning at any distance, return to your buses. Be prepared for all sorts of changing weather conditions during your site visit.

Appendix C: Additional On-line Resources about the C&O Canal and the National Park Service

Description		Website URL
C&O Canal NHP	The park's website for teachers hosts classroom materials and on-line resources	www.nps.gov/choh/forteachers
C&O Canal Trust	The park's partner in education provides 50 short stories about places along the C&O Canal for students to read	www.canaltrust.org
National Park Service	Learn more about the NPS mission, history, and organization	www.nps.gov/aboutus/index.htm
National Park Service America's Best Idea	More facts about the NPS, including an excellent timeline and movies	http://www.nps.gov/americasbestidea/