



# THE CANAL QUARTERLY

WWW.CANALTRUST.ORG

## C&O CANAL FACES COVID-19 CHALLENGES

Daily life has changed in drastic ways over the past month, but what has rapidly become apparent is how much the local community loves the C&O Canal National Historical Park. Stay-at-home orders are keeping us cloistered, but allowances for exercise have sent thousands of people to the towpath for hiking, biking, stress relief, and an escape from the tedium of quarantine.

Unfortunately, this influx of visitation is placing unanticipated stress on the Park's infrastructure at a time when only mission-critical National Park Service staff is currently working in the Park. Additional dangers loom as visitors are not always practicing social distancing, wearing their masks, or removing their trash from the Park at the end of their stays.

Our Canal Pride events, which in a typical year would be happening now, have been postponed. Aimed at preparing the Park to

welcome springtime visitors, Canal Pride volunteers paint buildings, pull invasive plants, spread mulch, and pick up the trash that accumulated over the winter months. We look forward to working with volunteers to address some of these issues in smaller teams throughout the Park when it again becomes safe to gather. At that time, our park lands will need the tender love and care that our corps of volunteers bring to each Canal Pride event. You can learn more about our COVID-19 response as it relates to Canal Pride on page 3 and Park operations on page 4.



PHOTO BY JEANNIE BREWER

At 184.5 miles long, the C&O Canal towpath offers walkers and cyclists a scenic place to exercise and commune with nature while practicing social distancing.

We have also shuttered our Canal Quarters lockhouse program during the quarantine, and our volunteer Quartermasters, who

*“COVID-19” continues on page 5*

## NEW SUPERINTENDENT OUTLINES CANAL VISION

### *Tina Cappetta assumed leadership role at the C&O Canal in January*

Tina Cappetta took up the position of superintendent of the C&O Canal National Historical Park (NHP) in January 2020, following eight years as



PHOTO COURTESY TINA CAPPETTA

Superintendent Tina Cappetta

superintendent of Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, Hampton National Historic Site, and Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. Over her 30-year National Park Service (NPS) career, she has held positions in 10 parks around the nation, including at the Women's Rights National Historical Park in upstate New York, where she was the superintendent. From 2002 to 2004, she was Chief of Resources at the C&O Canal NHP. We sat down with Superintendent Cappetta shortly after her first day on the job.

**Trust:** The C&O Canal Trust is the philanthropic partner of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. What experience do you have working with philanthropic partners in your past positions?

*Cappetta:* As superintendent of Fort McHenry, I worked closely with the Friends of Fort McHenry, a group under the umbrella of Living Classrooms, which worked to preserve the historical legacy of the Fort through living history, education programs, and the development of interpretive facilities. They were key to our ability to provide educational programming along the Star Spangled Banner Trail, which included both a water and land trail. I also worked with Historic Hampton on programming at the Hampton Mansion. I look forward to working with the C&O Canal Trust, the C&O Canal Association, the Friends of the Historic Great Falls Tavern, and Georgetown Heritage for the benefit of the C&O Canal National Historical Park.

*“New Superintendent” continues on page 7*

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Tymber Compher

### INTERNS

Callie Fishburn, Esther Herbers

# A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

My first draft of this letter was pre-COVID-19 and was about the hopefulness signified by our transition into spring. The transition we ended up with is one we could not have anticipated and certainly did not plan for. Nonetheless, we find ourselves first and foremost concerned about the health of our loved ones and all those around us. My most fervent wish is that you and yours are well.

So, transition it is, just not the one we hoped for. We have spent the last month or so working from home and getting creative about post-COVID-19 programming. While we will not welcome our usual large numbers of volunteers this spring to care for the Park as it experiences unanticipated crowds, we will refine our Canal Pride program and do our very best to engage smaller teams of volunteers to spruce things up once we are able. We look forward to re-opening our Canal Quarters lockhouses to guests yearning to enjoy nature while social distancing.

Earlier in the year we had some very positive transitions. We welcomed the new C&O Canal National Historical Park Superintendent Tina Cappetta.

We are eager to support her goals and initiatives in this new phase of leadership. Congratulations and welcome, Superintendent Cappetta!

Staff transition includes welcoming Heather Barnes as our new director of programs and partnerships and Tymber Compher as our new communications and development associate and congratulating Ellen Kinzer on her promotion to development associate. Each of the new members of the staff look forward to working with you.

Despite anticipating challenging financial times, we will get through this by working together to care for those things that are important to us. For the C&O Canal Trust, this happens through the one essential constant – your commitment as donors and volunteers to support our shared mission through your generosity.

I look forward to one day soon being able to greet one another warmly as we pass on the towpath. Stay safe and healthy!



Robin Zanotti, *Trust President*



PHOTO BY JOHN GENSOR

Have you sought peace and solace along the C&O Canal during this difficult time? Or are you longing to resume your regular visits once restrictions are eased?

**Please show your gratitude today by investing in the preservation of the Park with a gift to the C&O Canal Trust.** The Trust remains focused on our core mission of preserving and protecting the C&O Canal National Historical Park.

Under the new CARES Act, you can take the standard deduction on your 2020 tax return AND claim a brand new “above-the-line” deduction of up to \$300 for a donation to the C&O Canal Trust.

**Give today online at [www.CanalTrust.org/GIVE](http://www.CanalTrust.org/GIVE) or donate by check by returning the enclosed envelope.**

# CANAL PRIDE DAYS POSTPONED, NEED REMAINS

Spring would normally find us gearing up for our public Canal Pride Day events, when hundreds of volunteers join C&O Canal Trust and National Historical Park staff in readying the Park for the seasonal influx of visitors. Last year's public events at Great Falls, Williamsport, and the Paw Paw Tunnel saw volunteers beautifying campsites, painting picnic tables and fire rings, spreading 40 cubic yards of mulch, picking up trash, pulling invasive species, and planting native plants.

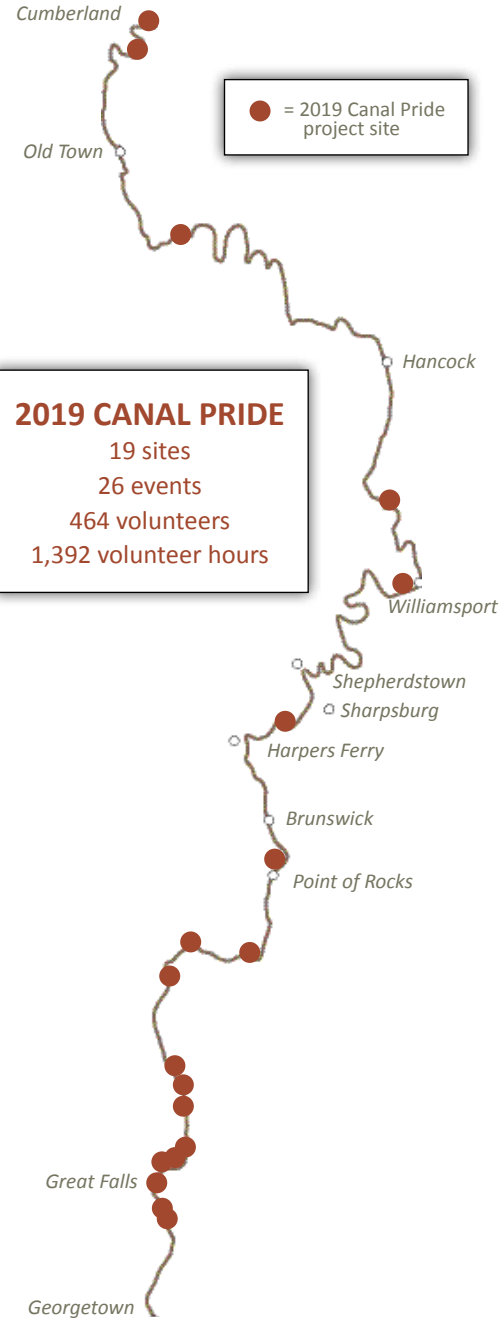
Along with our public clean-up events, we also host a variety of corporate and community groups for private Canal Pride clean-up events throughout the year. In 2019, 464 volunteers contributed 1,392 hours to cleaning up the C&O Canal during 26 events at 19 different sites, marked on the map to the right.

This spring, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the C&O Canal will not benefit from our volunteers' hard work. We have postponed

our Canal Pride Days events in Great Falls, Brunswick, Williamsport, and Allegany County, although we hope to reschedule them for later in the year, once authorities declare it safe. We have also cancelled all private group clean-up events.

The Park, however, remains open and is being heavily used by visitors. We are concerned about littering and damage to Park resources that could be occurring while staff members work from home. When stay-at-home restrictions lift, we will be ready to hit the ground running with our Canal Pride activities, working to beautify the Park and return it to its pre-COVID levels of maintenance. Since we won't be able to gather in large groups, we will pivot to small group maintenance and preservation activities.

The need will be great, and we hope you will be able to join us! Watch our website and our social media, and be sure sign up for our email newsletter to stay informed of our plans.



## THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 CANAL PRIDE SPONSORS

### CANAL PATRON



### CANAL TRAVELER



### CANAL EXPLORER



### CANAL PRESERVER

Community Foundation of Frederick County  
 • FedEx • Friends of the Historic Great Falls Tavern • Minkoff • Younger Toyota

# SWAINS LOCKHOUSE PROJECT WINS AWARD

The C&O Canal Trust was awarded the Maryland Historical Trust's Award for Project Excellence in Preservation Partnerships at January's Maryland Preservation Awards for our rehabilitation of Swains Lockhouse. These awards recognize outstanding efforts in historic preservation, including education, restoration and revitalization projects, and organizational and individual leadership. The C&O Canal Trust shared the award with the C&O Canal National Historical Park, the C&O Canal Association, and the Friends of the Historic Great Falls Tavern, who all played an integral part in the rehabilitation project.

Now that Swains Lockhouse has been rehabilitated, it is one of seven lockhouses in the Canal Quarters program, which allows guests to spend the night and experience life along the canal. The lockhouse is furnished to depict the year 1916.



Pictured at the awards ceremony are Maryland Historical Trust Director Elizabeth Hughes, C&O Canal Superintendent Tina Cappetta, C&O Canal Trust President Robin Zanotti, C&O Canal Association President Bill Holdsworth, and Friends of the Historic Great Falls Tavern President Don Harrison.



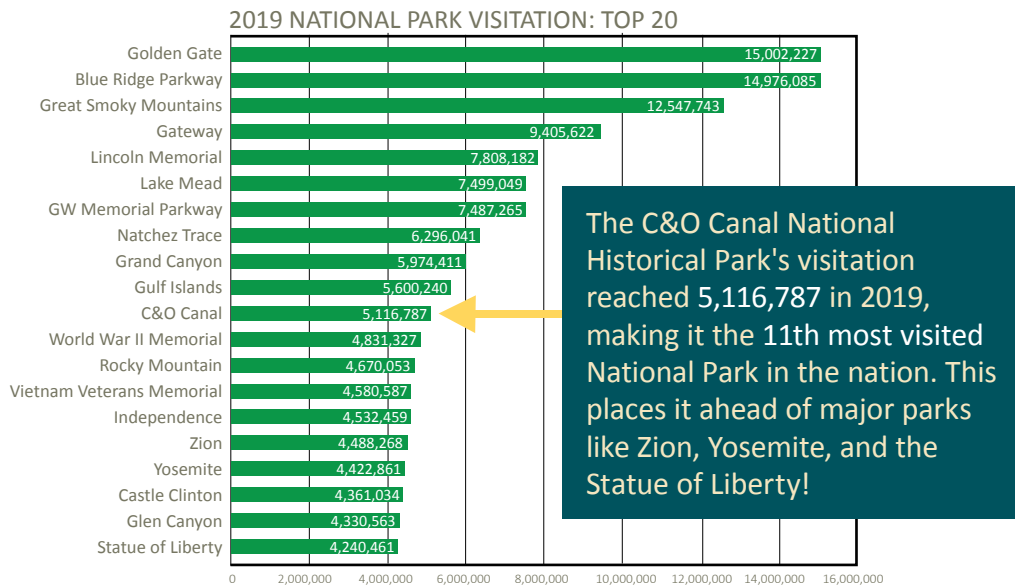
# NEW WILLIAMSPORT HEADQUARTERS UNDERWAY

Construction on the new headquarters building for the C&O Canal National Historical Park in Williamsport got underway in March 2020 when several buildings were cleared from the lot at the former Miller Lumber Plant along West Potomac Street. The new building will stand on the site of the old planing mill, while several of the historic homes fronting West Potomac Street will remain, allowing the quaint town to maintain its roadside charm. Located across the road from the Cushwa Basin Visitor Center, the new headquarters will place staff near the Park; they currently occupy a building on Dual Highway in Hagerstown. The C&O Canal Trust will also move their offices to the new building when it opens in the spring of 2021.



An architect's rendering of the new headquarters building, which is being built by the Maryland Economic Development Corporation in Williamsport, MD.

## PARK VISITATION TOPS 5 MILLION



## TRUST WELCOMES NEW STAFF

The C&O Canal Trust has welcomed two new staff members in 2020.



Heather Barnes is our new Director of Programs and Partnerships, overseeing the implementation and function of programs, volunteer service projects, and events in the Park. Originally

from Michigan, she has a background in outdoor education and facilitating programs with youth, nonprofit, and corporate groups. She also spent nearly two years teaching English in Taiwan.



Tymber Compher has joined the Trust as our new Communications and Development Associate. She is a writer and editor specializing in nonprofit communications,

having worked with the Tecumseh Land Trust in Ohio and the Moonstone Arts Center in Philadelphia, creating social media content and organizing community events.

## COVID-19 NEWS & NOTES

### Changes in Park Operations

As of April 28, 2020. Subject to change.

- All Visitor Centers are closed.
- Restrooms, vault toilets, and portable toilets are closed.
- Water fountains and wells are off.
- Parking lots at Great Falls, Fletchers Cove, Carderock, and Anglers are closed.
- All campgrounds and campsites are closed.
- All park lands remain open. Visitors must practice social distancing and Leave No Trace guidelines.

Check [www.nps.gov/choh](http://www.nps.gov/choh) for updates.

### How You Can Help

- Stay in touch with us for the latest news. We are on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. You can also sign up for our email newsletter by visiting our website at [www.canaltrust.org](http://www.canaltrust.org).
- Plan to volunteer at our Canal Pride events — watch our communications for dates and details.
- Book a stay for a future date at a Canal Quarters lockhouse or buy a gift certificate.
- Support the local businesses in our 10 Canal Towns.
- Make a gift to the C&O Canal Trust. As a relatively small nonprofit with no endowment or cash reserves, the Trust is dependent on your generosity for close to 90 percent of its annual revenue.

[www.canaltrust.org/give](http://www.canaltrust.org/give)

# 42 MILES OF TOWPATH HAVE BEEN RESURFACED

Thanks to the funding support of private donors to the C&O Canal Trust, along with funds from the National Park Service and the State of Maryland, resurfacing crews continue their march up the towpath. As of this spring, 42 miles of the C&O Canal's towpath have been improved between Edwards Ferry and Shepherdstown.

The work is part of the "Towpath Rehabilitation: A Safe Towpath" project aimed at improving more than 80 miles of the 184.5 mile-long towpath by removing the rocks, roots, and ruts in the towpath surface that can be dangerous to cyclists and hikers. "Over 5 million visitors recreate along the C&O Canal each year and nearly all of them used the towpath for a variety of activities," Superintendent Tina Cappetta said. "We want to ensure that our visitors have a safe, durable towpath for years to come."

Besides removing obstacles from the towpath, the resurfacing work also includes removing the grassy median strip that contributes to puddling. Crews are then grading the towpath to facilitate water runoff and resurfacing it with the same crushed stone dust that is used on the Great Allegheny Passage, the rail trail that connects to the C&O Canal towpath in Cumberland, MD, and runs to Pittsburgh, PA.



Two cyclists enjoy the improved towpath surface last fall.

PHOTO BY SIMON BARBER

The C&O Canal Trust has raised funds to support this work and engage an engineering consultant to provide technical expertise to the National Park Service for this project. We have also assisted with advocacy work to secure \$2.25 million from Maryland's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

By the end of 2020, the Park plans to complete a further 14 miles from Swains Lock to Edwards Ferry and is seeking \$1.14 million in FY21 TAP funding to resurface 12 miles from the Shepherdstown Bridge to the Big Slackwater boat ramp.

## "COVID-19" continued from page 1

care for the lockhouses on a regular basis, have had to stand down. As we move into what would be our busy season, we are missing the visitors who bring life and joy to these lockhouses. We are also feeling the sharp loss of revenue for this important preservation initiative. Guest fees for lockhouse stays support the continued preservation of the lockhouses, and, without this revenue, our ability to care for these historic homes is diminished. However, we continue to perform essential routine care and maintenance of the structures and outdoor areas.

From our homes, we continue to work closely and collaboratively with our National Park Service colleagues to assist them in weathering this storm. Our first priority is always the health and safety of our visitors, volunteers, and staff, but we also remain focused on our core mission of preserving and protecting the Park, confident that those who love the C&O Canal will continue to contribute generously to its wellbeing. The best way to show your gratitude is by investing in the preservation of the Park with a gift to the C&O Canal Trust. With your financial support, we will continue to work on your behalf today and into the future to keep the C&O Canal safe, welcoming, and well-cared-for.

## FOUR YEARS OF CANAL FOR ALL

Four years ago, the Canal for All program was launched, thanks to a grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) and the Kendeda Fund. A two-year pilot program focused on connecting African-American and Latinx communities in Montgomery County with the C&O Canal National Historical Park (NHP) through the themes of work, play, learn, and serve.

The program has seen the C&O Canal Trust form new partnerships with organizations who work with youth of diverse backgrounds. A group from Identity experienced the Park through a variety of activities during Latino Conservation Week, and two groups of girls from Community Bridges were given a free overnight stay in Lockhouse 6 accompanied by a mini-lesson from a Canal Classrooms teacher.



PHOTO BY ELLEN KINZER

Latino Conservation Week participants work on mason jar bee homes during a pollinator workshop.

Thanks to funding from the Montgomery County Council, a Conservation Jobs Corps (CJC) program was added in the spring of 2019 in partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation's TeenWorks program and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. This program allows teens to work alongside National Park Service staff to preserve the C&O Canal's assets and learn job skills. Youth crews worked along the canal through the spring and summer on a variety of projects and provided invaluable labor in helping the Park recover from the July 2019 flash flood at Great Falls.

The Trust anticipates expanding the Canal for All initiative into other communities along the canal in the coming year.



# PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Congratulations to Keith Carter, MJ Clingan, Preston P. Piper, Jr., Tim Walters, and Jon Wolz for their winning photographs. Visit <http://www.canaltrust.org/photocontest> for details on how you can enter your canal photography in our monthly contest, and visit our Facebook page at the beginning of every month to vote for your favorites!



PHOTO BY PRESTON P. PIPER, JR. (December Winner)

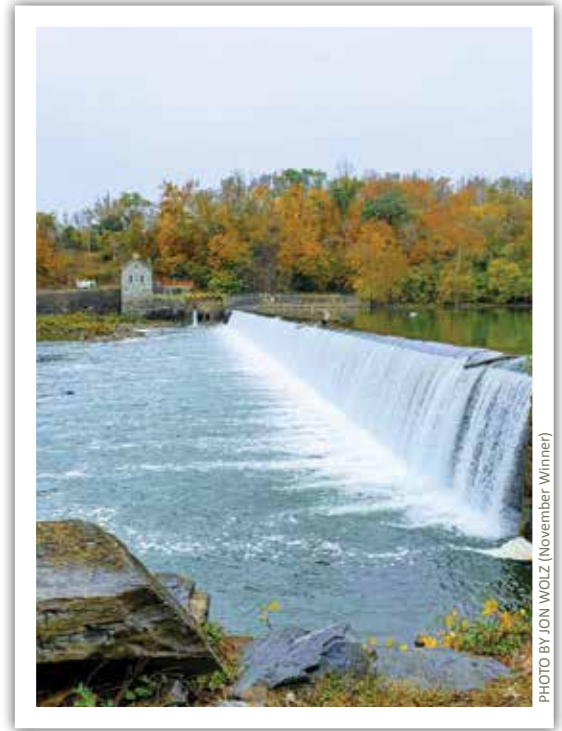


PHOTO BY JON WOLZ (November Winner)



PHOTO BY TIM WALTERS (January Winner)



PHOTO BY MJ CLINGAN (February Winner)

## POOLESVILLE JOINS CANAL TOWNS PARTNERSHIP

The Montgomery County, Maryland, town of Poolesville recently joined the Canal Towns Partnership, a community and economic development organization made up of 10 towns along the C&O Canal National Historical Park (NHP). “We are excited to welcome our first town from Montgomery County to the Partnership,” said Abbie Ricketts, the chair of the Partnership.

Through tourism marketing and advocacy, the Canal Towns Partnership aims to amplify the voices of its small canal town members so they can fully reap the economic benefits of trail tourism. The C&O Canal NHP hosts over 5 million visitors a year, many of whom visit the canal towns in search of food, drink, shopping, and lodging.



PHOTO BY KEITH CARTER (March Winner)

# REI AND THE TRUST: EIGHT YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

REI is well known as a retailer that sells quality gear to outdoor enthusiasts. What is less well known is that the Seattle-based co-op is also an industry leader in supporting organizations that provide stewardship for parks and public lands around the nation. Since 2012, as our premier Canal Pride sponsor, REI has contributed close to \$90,000 to fund the work our Canal Pride volunteers do to improve access to the C&O Canal National Historical Park's recreational assets. This generous support is driven by REI's philosophy that a life outdoors is a life well-lived. For folks to enjoy that experience, they need places in nature that are welcoming and accessible, be they residents of city, suburbs, or country.

The C&O Canal Trust is the recipient of an REI "Place Grant" that funds projects to improve access to the Park's great recreational assets. With REI's support, the Trust's Canal Pride volunteers work each year to repair the towpath, provide paddlers with access to the Potomac River, improve popular trails like the Billy Goat Trail, and spruce up campgrounds and picnic areas.



PHOTO BY ELLEN KINZER

*A crew of Canal Pride volunteers celebrate a job well done after picking up trash and removing invasive plants upstream of Williamsport's Cushwa Basin during a 2019 event. REI is an annual sponsor of Canal Pride.*

"With the 2019 visitation to the Park at a 30-year high of 5.1 million, this work is increasingly important," said Trust President Robin Zanotti. "REI's support helps ensure that today's visitors have a great experience and choose to come back again and again."

The co-op's engagement in the Park extends beyond grant-making. Employees from REI's local stores volunteer for Canal Pride and run a variety of programs in the Park such as climbing classes at Carderock and sunset hikes along the towpath. As the effects of climate change become more apparent, REI believes that getting people outdoors is an important part of the solution.

Since 2014, the co-op has closed its stores nationwide on Black Friday to encourage Americans to use that day to enjoy nature rather than hit the shopping mall. "On average, people spend 95 percent of their time indoors," said Naz Ahmed, Experiences and Philanthropy Manager for REI Mid-Atlantic. "They are facing a nature deficit and that impacts our ability to combat climate change. As the naturalist David Attenborough once said, 'No one will protect what they don't care about, and no one will care about what they haven't experienced.'" In partnership with REI, the Trust is working to overcome that deficit.

## *"New Superintendent" continued from page 1*

**Trust:** What changes have you seen in the Park since you served as Chief of Resources here at the canal (from 2002 to 2004)?

**Cappetta:** A lot of wonderful big preservation projects have taken place over the past 16 years – restoration of three aqueducts, the rehabbing of seven lockhouses and the creation of the Canal Quarters program, the restoration of the towpath at Big Slackwater, the Georgetown project, and the Locks 5 through 22 project, to name a few. We have lost some ground, however, in some of the daily stuff. The Park has far fewer staff now than it did in the early 2000s, which has really impacted both day-to-day maintenance and interpretation programming. When I was here before, there were boat programs at both Georgetown and Great Falls, although there were no boats at

Williamsport. Fortunately, we will see boats back in both Georgetown and Great Falls in the near future.

**Trust:** What are your priorities in the Park?

**Cappetta:** I look forward to working with Park staff to complete a number of big projects already underway: the move of the Park headquarters to Williamsport and the proposed reinterpretation of Cushwa Basin, the Park improvements and new boat program in Georgetown, towpath resurfacing, and the renewal of the boat program in Great Falls. I also look forward to focusing on getting back to the basics of the Park's essential mission by making sure that we have the resources and staff to safely serve the public and preserve the Park.

**Trust:** What can the C&O Canal Trust do to help you meet these priorities?

**Cappetta:** The Trust can bring new resources to the table and build awareness of the need for public stewardship of our Park. It already does this through Canal Quarters and its other programs, but in the coming years, we are going to need more human and financial resources to supplement and complement what NPS is able to do. The Trust has the capacity to be more nimble and flexible than NPS in both accessing funds and spending them, and it can more easily develop creative synergies to bring donors and stakeholders together to support the Park's mission. As our primary ambassador out there in the world, the Trust provides the means by which those who love the Park can contribute directly to its preservation.





**C&O CANAL TRUST**  
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C&O Canal National Historical Park*

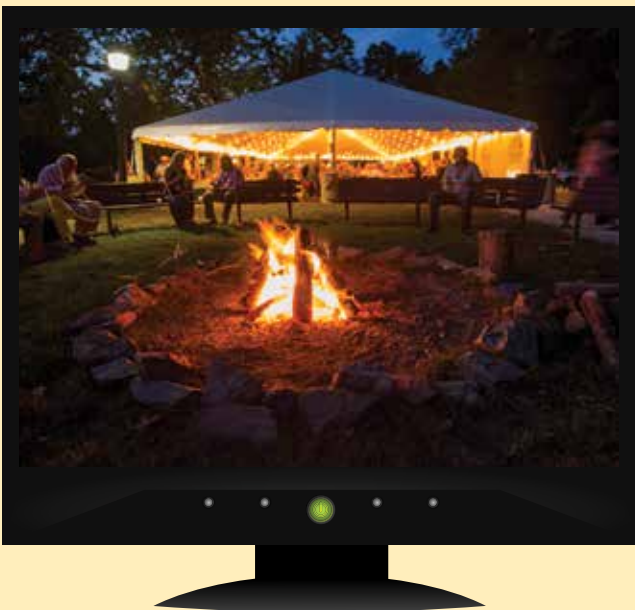


## SUPPORT THE TRUST

Make a gift that will help protect, restore, and promote the extraordinary resources of the C&O Canal National Historical Park by visiting [www.CanalTrust.org/give](http://www.CanalTrust.org/give) today!

# SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, September 12, 2020

## Park After Dark ...online?



Mark your calendars for this year's Park After Dark: Saturday, September 12. We hope to welcome you to Great Falls Tavern for our annual celebration of the C&O Canal, but, given the current uncertainty, we are also working on Plan B — a virtual event!

No matter what this fall brings, we will come together to celebrate the canal and raise money for its continued preservation for future generations to enjoy. Stay tuned for details!

