2024 ANNUAL REPORT



C&O CANAL TRUST

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



Dear Friend of the C&O Canal Trust,

Reflecting on 2024, I am filled with immense gratitude for the dedication of our supporters, volunteers, and partners who continue to champion the preservation and enrichment of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. Last year was one of remarkable progress and lasting impact, furthering our work to help the park fulfill its mission and to ensure the protection and preservation of its resources for today and future generations. Through your generosity, we expanded our stewardship efforts, enhancing visitor experiences, caring for historic structures, and ensuring that the park remains an accessible and vibrant resource for all.

Our Canal Quarters program welcomed thousands of guests, offering them a unique opportunity to step back in time and experience history firsthand. For our team, it is always energizing to hear feedback from guests like John and Matt, who shared: *"Walking through the front door transports you back in time. Remove all the technological trappings and you are left with peace and solitude that is rarely experienced this close to the nation's capital."*

In the fall, I was thrilled to represent the Trust and share a presentation during the American Association for State and Local History's annual conference in Mobile, Alabama. The session titled "We'll Leave the Light On For You: Using Historic Sites for Accommodations" focused on Canal Quarters as a unique revenue-generating program for historic sites. It was encouraging to hear how many folks from around the country have heard about the program and visited the C&O Canal.

In addition to helping to care for historic structures and sharing the canal's history, environmental stewardship also remains at the core of our work. In 2024, we mobilized hundreds of volunteers who dedicated countless hours to removing trash and invasive plant species, preserving the ecological integrity of the park. These efforts not only safeguard the canal's natural beauty but also enhance the experiences of the millions of visitors who find solace and adventure along the 184.5-mile towpath.

Looking ahead, we are committed to building on this momentum, continuing to strengthen our partnerships and engaging our canal community in meaningful ways. Your support makes all of this possible, and we invite you to join us in our mission to protect, restore, and celebrate the C&O Canal.

On behalf of the entire team at the Trust, thank you for your commitment and support. Together, we are ensuring that our local national park thrives now and for future generations.

With gratitude,

Lauren Riviello

Lauren Riviello
President & CEO



PHOTO BY BRIAN J. PORTER

OUR MISSION:

The C&O Canal Trust, as the official nonprofit partner of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, works in partnership with the National Park Service and local communities to raise funds to preserve the Park for future generations and to broaden support through programs that highlight the Park's historical, natural, and cultural heritage and recreational opportunities.

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LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE C&O CANAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



Hello Friends,

I am so happy to have this opportunity to thank the staff, board of directors, volunteers, and supporters of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park's official philanthropic partner, the C&O Canal Trust. Working together, we have achieved great milestones that have enhanced the beauty of the park and have enriched the experiences of all who visit.

As our partner, the Trust plays a vital role in addressing challenges and enhancing the park's capacity to accomplish its work by expanding community engagement and leveraging additional resources. The Trust is uniquely positioned to foster a canal community, engaging neighbors and visitors from Georgetown in Washington, D.C., to Cumberland, Maryland.

This partnership has led to significant achievements, including the preservation of key features of canal history for unique visitor experiences and the protection of rare plant species. Additionally, the Trust has developed educational and outreach programs that have successfully connected learners of all ages with the park in their own neighborhoods.

In 2024, volunteers with the Trust made remarkable contributions, dedicating over 7,000 hours to removing trash, eliminating invasive species, and completing various projects within the park. These volunteer efforts provided more than $300,000 of in-kind support to the park over the past year. In addition to in-kind and programmatic support, the Trust directly granted over $130,000 to the park in 2024, including more than $50,000 for the Canal Classroom program. Trust funding has enabled the park to enhance critical initiatives such as towpath resurfacing, conservation of rare, threatened, and endangered plant species, park beautification, and community outreach programs.

Looking ahead, the Trust and the C&O Canal National Historical Park plan to expand the Canal Classroom program into Washington, D.C., aiming to engage more school students for years to come. We are committed to the continued conservation of natural resources, such as our rare plants, and to the preservation of historic structures, including essential features like the culverts that protect the towpath from flooding by conveying water under it. Together, we strive to ensure that the park remains a welcoming resource for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

Tina Cappetta

Tina Cappetta
Superintendent of the C&O Canal National Historical Park



PHOTO BY PAUL GRAUNKE

ABOUT THE C&O CANAL TRUST

Since 2007, the C&O Canal Trust has proudly served as the C&O Canal National Historical Park's official nonprofit philanthropic partner. Through the generosity of individuals, foundations, and community partners, the Trust has been instrumental in providing essential funding for conservation efforts, historic preservation, educational programs, and visitor resources throughout the park.

The C&O Canal ranks as the highest-visited historical park within the National Park System and is considered one of the nation's most popular parks - with millions of visitors each year.

To successfully maintain, preserve, and protect the C&O Canal's natural, cultural, and recreational resources, we rely on the support of our canal community - throughout the 184.5 miles of park land - from Georgetown, in the District of Columbia to Cumberland, Maryland.

PHOTO BY STEPH CLEMENT POGONOWSKI

Since 2007, The Trust has ...

Granted over $1.5 million to the C&O Canal to fund critical conservation, education, and preservation initiatives.

Organized over 14,000 volunteers who have contributed **nearly $2 million** of in-kind support to the park.

Welcomed over 2,000 underrepresented and underserved youth and adults for Canal For All programs.

Rehabilitated 7 lockhouses welcoming 3,000 visitors each year through the Canal Quarters program. Annual revenue of $160,000+ funds their ongoing maintenance and preservation.

Collaborated with 11 Canal Towns in an economic development partnership.

A COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

The C&O Canal Trust is committed to our stakeholders through transparency and accountability, using every dollar you donate to make a lasting impact in the C&O Canal National Historical Park. Our careful stewardship of your financial support is why we receive the highest ratings through entities like Charity Navigator and Candid (formerly Guidestar).

As a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the C&O Canal Trust undergoes an annual independent audit to ensure our financial statements are consistent with generally accepted accounting principles.

Platinum Transparency 2024 Candid.

SPUR LOCAL 24 CRITICAL NONPROFIT

Charity Navigator FOUR-STAR

EarthShare NONPROFIT PARTNER



PHOTOS BY ACB PRECISION FOCUS AND VISIT MONTGOMERY

Lockhouse 10

During the heyday of its operation, the C&O Canal was home to various bustling communities. At any given time, as many as 530 or more canal boats worked their way back and forth between Georgetown and Cumberland and points in between. For the lock tenders who operated the locks and fluctuating water levels to allow traveling boaters through, it was challenging work. Each of the canal's 77 locks needed to be operational at any time during the daylight hours, and for that purpose the canal employed the lock keepers. The 8-10 minute lock-through process usually demanded two people. Lock keepers were responsible for minor maintenance of the lock and the regulation of the canal's water level. Like the boat pilots, lock keepers lived in lockhouses with their families within a few feet of the locks. Standard lockhouses such as Swains lockhouse were 30 x 18 with a living room and kitchen on the first floor and two bedrooms on the second floor. Those built after 1836 added a basement and two end chimneys.

Of the 74 original lockhouses, there are only 27 still standing. To date, through federal funding and philanthropic support through the C&O Canal Trust, seven of these lockhouses have been rehabilitated for use in the Canal Quarters program - an interpretive overnight experience that allows visitors an opportunity to stay in these houses while visiting the park. Each of these lockhouses has been designed with specific moments from the canal's history in mind. For example, Lockhouse 6 interprets the 1950s, when Justice William O. Douglas sought to save the canal and turn it into a national park and is thus furnished with mid-twentieth century items.

Each year, the Canal Quarters program welcomes an average of 3,000 visitors, from avid historians to casual recreators. Our lockhouses have hosted various celebrations and commemorations, from engagements, weddings, and birthdays to historical moments. Annual revenue of over $160,000 goes directly into the program to ensure the maintenance and preservation of these historical structures.













Maintenance of the lockhouses is constant. Thanks to long-term volunteer Quartermasters who frequently support the lockhouses throughout the year, community groups who volunteer their time, the National Park Service, and Trust staff, the Canal Quarters lockhouses can continue to welcome people all over the country and the world for an immersive overnight experience.

In FY24, the Canal Quarters program saw a nearly 100% occupancy rate at select houses during the summer months. Throughout the year, Quartermaster work days were held at each of the lockhouses. Projects included painting shutters, the front and back porches, doors at 49 and 25, and the porch and ramp at 28.

The Trust hosts open houses a few times each year at select lockhouses for tours and educational programs. Visitation and awareness of the Canal Quarters program keep the history of the canal alive. For guests who stay at the houses, this program is a unique opportunity to experience the park in a wholly different way - while also preserving these historic structures for generations to come.

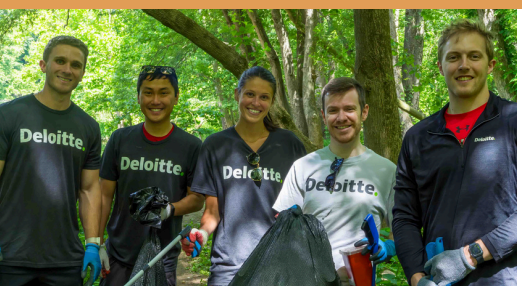
Book a stay now with our award-winning Canal Quarters program!



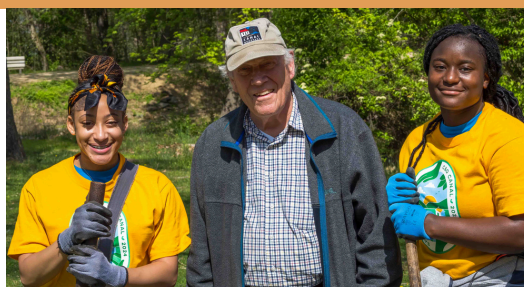




VOLUNTEERS AT WORK







Each spring, as the river warms, migratory fish flock to one of the most renowned fishing holes along the entire length of the C&O Canal – Fletchers Cove. Where the fish return, fishermen are soon to follow, in search of shad, white perch, catfish, and more. Located just outside the nation's capital in Washington, D.C., Fletchers Cove is visited by thousands of visitors each year – not just for the abundance of spawning fish, but also for the various recreational opportunities it provides. Visitors can choose between exploring the adjacent towpath or visiting the Fletchers Boathouse for boat rentals to float along the Potomac River.

Due to its various recreational offerings, Fletchers Cove is one of the most highly visited areas in the park. While this is something to be celebrated, heavy visitation to this popular place has had a large impact on the land and river. To combat debris and trash left by visitors, the C&O Canal Trust partners with community groups, individuals, and families to provide essential support to improve this area in the park. Each year, volunteers remove items such as tires, feet of fishing wire, abandoned coolers, motorized scooters, and more.

Fletchers Cove is just one of many areas in the park that requires additional care. Since 2007, the Trust has mobilized thousands of volunteers to preserve the park. In FY24 alone, volunteers contributed a record-breaking 7,000+ hours of service, where they collectively removed 20,000 pounds of trash and invasive or overgrown vegetation and restored over 200 structures in the park. Over 700 volunteers, including 12 corporate partner groups, contributed over $300,000 of in-kind support to the park throughout the year. Thanks to the dedication of Trust volunteers and partners, the park will continue to be a place for people to escape daily life and reconnect with the natural world.

In 2024,

700+ volunteers contributed **7,000+** hours and removed **20,000+** pounds of trash and invasives and restored **200+** park structures



PHOTOS BY FRANCIS GRANT-SUTTIE

C&O CANAL BIODIVERSITY

Home to over 1,500 species of plants, including over 260 non-native plant species, the C&O Canal National Historical Park is one of the most biologically rich national parks in the nation. Since 2022, the C&O Canal Trust has raised over $200,000 to protect and preserve rare, threatened, and endangered (RTE) plant species. With this funding support, C&O Canal natural resources staff have planted nearly 3,000 plants from 29 RTE species, boosting populations in habitat niches throughout the park.

In 2024, the Trust partnered with the National Park Service to target invasive plants that threaten the park's natural ecosystem and the preservation of RTE plants. Japanese knotweed, for example, is notorious for disrupting sensitive turtle nesting habitats as well as areas of the park that house various rare plant species, such as S1 critically imperiled Hasteola suaveolens, S1S2 critically imperiled Scutellaria nervosa, S1 critically imperiled Valeriana pauciflora, and S1 critically imperiled Scutellaria saxatilis. Throughout the year, the Trust, with help from volunteers, removed thousands of pounds of invasives and girdled English Ivy from 228 trees at Rileys Lock.

Additionally, the Trust planted a native pollinator garden at Antietam Creek Campground with 27 pollinator-loving species of native plants, including species such as Butterfly Milkweed, Black-Eyed Susan, Tall White Beardtongue, and Oxeye Sunflower. Volunteers across the park have planted a total of 59 native plants and other gardens. For the park, native plants are the foundation of natural habitats and play a critical role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem. It is vital for the park's beautification and the ongoing conservation of natural resources to continue this important work of invasive plant management and rare and native plant plantings.



Snow Trillium



Common Shooting Star



White Trout Lily

TOWPATH REHABILITATION



In 2024, the C&O Canal National Historical Park successfully rehabilitated almost 25 miles of the towpath, between mile markers 155.78 to 173.37 (Paw Paw Tunnel) and mile markers 110.38 to 116 (Big Pool to Licking Creek).

Funding for the towpath project comes from C&O Canal Trust donors and stakeholders, grants, the National Park Service, and the State of Maryland. To date, over $7 million dollars has been spent rehabbing the towpath. Since rehabilitation has begun, the park has restored over 100 miles of the towpath.

The towpath is the life line to the park and is visited by millions each year. Thank you for helping us ensure our trail is here now and for future generations to enjoy.


PHOTO BY FRANCIS GRANT-SUTTIE

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION



PHOTO BY PALS

To ensure the C&O Canal's legacy, the Trust works alongside the NPS to inspire the next generation of park stewards.

Through the Canal For All program and funding support for Canal Classrooms, the Trust has engaged young people in hands-on learning with the goal of encouraging these young park stewards to take on a personal responsibility in maintaining and preserving our natural and historical resources.

Throughout 2024, the Trust welcomed over 1,000 people into the park for Canal For All and community engagement events. In total, the Trust hosted 24 events, where over 60% of participants were youth and families.

In FY24, we partnered with 18 community organizations, including six new partnerships, to Canal For All programs in the park. Some of the participating organizations included Community Bridges, Girls Who Hike, PALS, TeenWorks, and more.



PHOTO BY FRANCIS GRANT-SUTTIE



PHOTO BY FRANCIS GRANT-SUTTIE

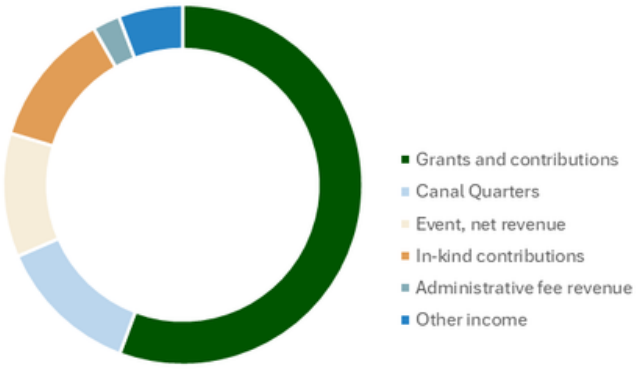
Since launching the Canal Classrooms program in 2013, the park has engaged nearly 70,000 K-12 students in experiential learning opportunities. For many students, this is their first introduction to a national park.

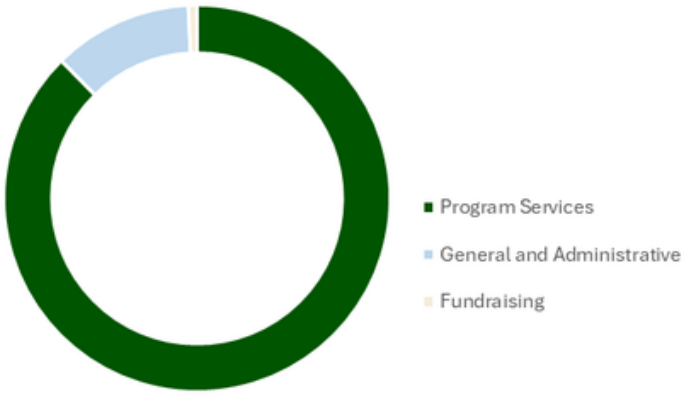
Throughout the year, the Trust raised $60,000 for Canal Classrooms. This funding directly supports program expenses, such as transportation, teacher training workshops, curriculum development, and teacher stipends.

AUDITED FINANCIALS FISCAL YEAR 2024

Support and Revenue	
Grants and contributions	$705,490
Canal Quarters	$162,270
Event, net revenue	$140,868
In-kind contributions	$153,640
Administrative fee revenue	$31,156
Other income	$73,211
Total Revenue	**$1,266,635**

Expenses	
Program services	$1,073,195
General and Administrative	$142,997
Fundraising	$8,754
Total Expenses	**$1,224,946**

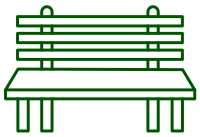




SUPPORT TO THE C&O CANAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

The Trust directly granted over $130,000 to the park in 2024, in addition to in-kind and programmatic support. We are grateful for the generosity of our committed individual donors, foundations, and corporate sponsors for their ongoing support.

In 2024, the C&O Canal Trust provided funding in support of the park for:



14 Benches



$40,000+ Park Beautification



$45,000+ Towpath Forever



$60,000+ Canal Classrooms



$40,000+ Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants

2023-2024 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS



PHOTO BY KIM CAWLEY

The following Honor Roll of Donors reflects donations of $500 or more given between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024. Our full Honor Roll can be found on our website at www.CanalTrust.org/HonorRoll. If we have excluded you in error, please contact us at development@canaltrust.org.

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In memory of Charles A. Weidenfeller, Jr.
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In memory of George "Hooper" Wolfe
Mike and Vicki Bender

TRIBUTE GIFTS

In honor of all those who work on the Canal
Scott and Heidi Lewis
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Susan Scarpelli
In honor of Steve and June Chaudet
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The Meg and Alison Team of Washington Fine Properties
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Barbara Davidson
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BENCHES

The Dao Feng & Angela Foundation Bench Collaboration:
Mile: 101.2 – Jordan Junction Campground
Mile: 128.1 – Hancock
Mile 130.7 – Widmyer WMA
Mile: 133 – Cacapon
Mile: 136.6 – Sideling Creek Aqueduct
Mile: 137.95 – Woodmont
Mile: 138.6 – Indigo Tunnel
Mil: 144 – Lock 58
Mile: 147.9 – Beanpatch Hollow
Mile: 152.04 – Three Otters
Donated by the family of Judy Olmer
Mile: 15.5 – near Swains

Donated by the family of Elyad Farajnia
Mile: 19 – near Pennyfield
Donated by Thomas Spano
Mile: 57 – near Weverton
Donated by the family of Guangjun Cheng
Mile: 88.1 – McMahon's Mill

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Sherif Ettefa, C&O Canal Trust Board Member and Long-Time Supporter

Support is essential in ensuring that the C&O Canal remains a precious piece of our local community. We are filled with gratitude for all of our donors, volunteers, and community membes who come together each year to make a lasting impact on the C&O Canal.

For the past 12 years, Sherif Ettefa has served on the C&O Canal Trust Board and committed his time as a corporate steward with KPMG. Since 2013, KPMG has supported the Trust as a corporate steward. Through their generosity, they have provided nearly $40,000 in support of the park.

"The C&O Canal Historical Park is an important part of our history and an invaluable treasure. My participation has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my life."
-Sherif Ettefa



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