The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal stretches 184.5 miles from Washington, D.C., to Cumberland, Maryland. Originally George Washington had envisioned the Ohio Valley connected to the Potomac River but the financial and competition problems were too great. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal however, was built by federal government and completed with the railroad competition to the west.

The Old Stone House in Georgetown

The eventual location of the Old Stone House was selected as the eastern terminus of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. The House, built in 1790, is the oldest structure in the nation to be located within the National Park. The Old Stone House has been restored to its pre-revolutionary time period when George Washington was a new property. Staff dressed in colonial costumes, describes 18th century lifestyles of early Maryland society. A "Step into Life on a 19th Century Ship" program takes place on the third Friday of each month. (See schedule on this page.) The House is open to the public during the daytime, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The House is closed on Christmas, New Year's Day and Thanksgiving. Tours are given during the year, the house is not facilitated and the period of the museum is performed for the public.

Lift Locks. To compensate for the difference in elevation between the upper and lower end of the canal, built during the earlier engineering accomplishments in their time.

A passenger-carrying barge, the Canal Clipper, operates from late April to the end of October from Great Falls Tavern near Potomac, Md. Dressed in period costume, the crew re-enacts barge life through stories and music.

Canal Clipper Barge Rides

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Horseback Riding

Horseback riding is another activity enjoyed by many visitors to the C&O Canal. Approval of use is obtained in writing by the Committee on Recreational Use. Approved use may be for horse groups, or for individuals and families or small parties of 10 or less and for all-day or club rides, pages 3-4 for details. To obtain ‘Use Permit’ (see page 7) and permits are available at any of the visitor centers.

Riders in the park should be aware of the following:

1. No horses are allowed on the towpath. The park has not been landscaped for horse travel and it would be dangerous for both the horses and the pedestrians.
2. Horses are not to be fed hay or grain in the park. This is an attractive to wildlife and insects.
3. Horses must be kept on roads and trails, never on the towpath. This is for the safety and protection of all park visitors.
4. Horses must not be allowed within 150 feet of a stream or river. This is to protect the wildlife and the water supply.

It's a good idea to strike an agreement with the Park Superintendent for trips lasting more than 2 days. The agreement will specify the length of the trip, the number of horses, the size of the group, and the route to be taken.

Special Publications

The following publications are on sale in the visitor centers at White’s Ford and Round Hill, and at this Visitor Center. Additional copies may be ordered for $1.50 each.


NOISE! You will need good advice and enthusiasm, because you will be on the road for several days and nights. It is wise to have a good supply of water and food, and to plan your trip carefully.

Camping Regulations

1. All campsites are on a first-come, first-served basis, except for those in the Campgrounds. No reservations are permitted.
2. Campers are allowed not to be left unattended for a period longer than 24 hours. If a campsite is left unattended, it will be considered abandoned and the park will take possession of it.
3. Pets must be on a leash at all times. Dogs are not allowed on the towpath.
4. Quiet will be maintained in the campground between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.
5. All garbage must be collected and taken with you. Do not leave garbage on the ground or in the campgrounds.

In addition to the above regulations, there are several other things that you should remember:

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