



National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal
National Historical Park

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C&O Canal National Historical Park News Release

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C&O Canal Towpath Closure at Paw Paw Tunnel Update

Oldtown, MD - The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (C&O Canal) will close a portion of the towpath and tunnel at the northern, or downstream portal of the Paw Paw Tunnel (Mile 155.2) to remove hazardous, unstable rock along the towpath. The closure of the tunnel and towpath is expected to occur in early June. Visitors should also expect short intermittent closures and delays from the parking lot to the Paw Paw Tunnel entrance during the work.

This rock scaling project will enhance visitor safety by reducing the risk of injury from falling rocks. The rock formation through which the canal and towpath cuts through, north and downstream of the tunnel, has a history of rock layers shearing off and falling on the towpath. The rock formation is composed of shale called "slickenslide" and is common to this area.

To provide thru-access for bicyclists during the project, a bypass trail will be opened using an old logging road on the berm side of the Canal upstream of the south tunnel portal. A temporary "bridge" has been installed across the Canal prism that connects with the abandoned logging road that provides a gentler grade to the top of Tunnel Hill. This temporary by-pass trail then connects with the existing Tunnel Hill Trail. The existing Tunnel Hill Trail will remain open to hikers during the project, but for safety reasons, cyclists will be required to dismount and walk their bikes across the mountain using the bypass trail detour. The bypass will be clearly marked with signs.

Once the closures goes into effect, visitors will still be able to walk into the first 300 feet of the tunnel from the south (parking lot side) entrance. The park anticipates the project to last 120 - 150 days with completion and full re-opening in late October 2017. Completion of this project may be impacted by weather conditions.

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ABOUT THE C&O Canal: The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park preserves and interprets the historical, natural and recreational resources of the C&O Canal. Over 5,000,000 visitors a year enjoy the opportunities for recreation and understanding that the Park has to offer. For more information, visit the Park's website at www.nps.gov/choh.

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