

Late Winter 2021

Washington Canoe Club

CURRENTS



Photo by Bill Woodruff

Welcome to our late Winter issue of *Currents*!

Hi everyone and welcome to our late winter issue of *Currents*!

In this issue, we have lots of great and timely content:

- Greetings and update by President Andrew Soles
- An update on Spring Construction on the Capital Crescent Trailhead/DC Stormwater Pipe Project
- Your Role in Crowdsourcing Pollution Solutions: The Potomac Riverkeepers App
- Liz Pennisi's inspirational story on the PaddleFit 1000-Mile Challenge
- Kathy Summers' introduction to our new prone board – the newest member of the WCC fleet!
- Nate Day's entertaining update on the WCC outrigger paddlers
- A report on the grounds from Jim Ross

and more!

If you'd like to join our newsletter team or have a contribution idea, just shoot us an [email](#).

Just a quick technical note, dear readers... Gmail "clips" email messages that it deems too "content-heavy" – which this newsletter certainly is! So make sure that when you come to what you might think is the end of the newsletter, you click on "view entire message." You will know you've come to the end when you get to the shout-out!



Greetings and update by President Andrew Soles

WCC Members,

On behalf of the board, I hope that you've been managing and adapting well to the current crisis, and that the impacts on your friends, family, and finances have been minimal. I've heard from many members who mentioned how much they appreciated getting on the water during the past year. Perhaps not surprisingly, we had a surge in new member applications in 2020. In addition, even with a very "independent" minded membership, we had terrific compliance with protocols and management of any possible exposures. We are looking forward to implementing a phased process whereby members will be gradually able to paddle with others in boats and bring guests to the club. Who knows, maybe we will even be able to have some sort of larger social event in the fall?

When you're next at the club, you'll see continued progress on moving boats and racks and increasing boat storage, as well as continued winnowing of surplus boats. Our commodore **Tim Johnson** reports that as a result of these efforts, we've been able to reduce the boat storage waitlist by more than 50%, and with some additional work we hope to reduce it even further this spring. That said, our goal is also to ensure that members who do not store watercraft at the clubhouse have equivalent access to equipment. We'll ask our commodore to share an inventory of club equipment in a future update – but we hope that you're aware of all the excellent boats at your disposal – not just standard aluminum canoes or tippy sprint boats. We have surfskis, sea kayaks, SUPs....and now even a prone paddleboard (see Kathy's post below!)

I hope that you were each able to participate in one of **Chris Brown**'s terrific boathouse history talks. These stories help to reinforce our club culture and remind us of our history, and they have been a great way to bring together members from past and present to celebrate during such a challenging year. On top of it all, book sales brought in a nice amount of income for WCC that will help to support our boathouse restoration efforts. We can't thank Chris enough!

On the topic of restoration, while there have been some delays, our building committee has continued to make progress, and had a good preliminary meeting at the end of 2020 with key review agencies and stakeholders to identify major considerations and processes to secure endorsement for our plans. We're not close to doing actual work on the building, but – relative to what it took to get the 60-year lease formalized – things seem to be moving along at a decent pace. We will keep you updated as we have more definitive information to share, and in April and May, we will be engaging all of our members in a survey to gauge your financial support for restoration work.

We hope to see everyone back at the club and starting to return to a normal routine as soon as practical. With the influx of new members and time away from paddling for many, please make an extra effort to introduce yourselves to others.

Best, Andrew Soles

News and Information

CONSTRUCTION NOTICES FOR WCC: DC Clean Rivers Project and Capital Crescent Trailhead

WATER STREET STAIRCASE REHABILITATION & CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL TRAILHEAD PROJECT UPDATE

At the Potomac Aqueduct, the existing concrete staircase is in poor condition and does not provide a safe or functional connection between the two trails. On the Water Street level (near the WCC/NPS gate), the existing conditions are also poor, with packed dirt, loose gravel, overgrown weeds, ponding water (and copperheads). More information can be found [here](#).

This project is designed to:

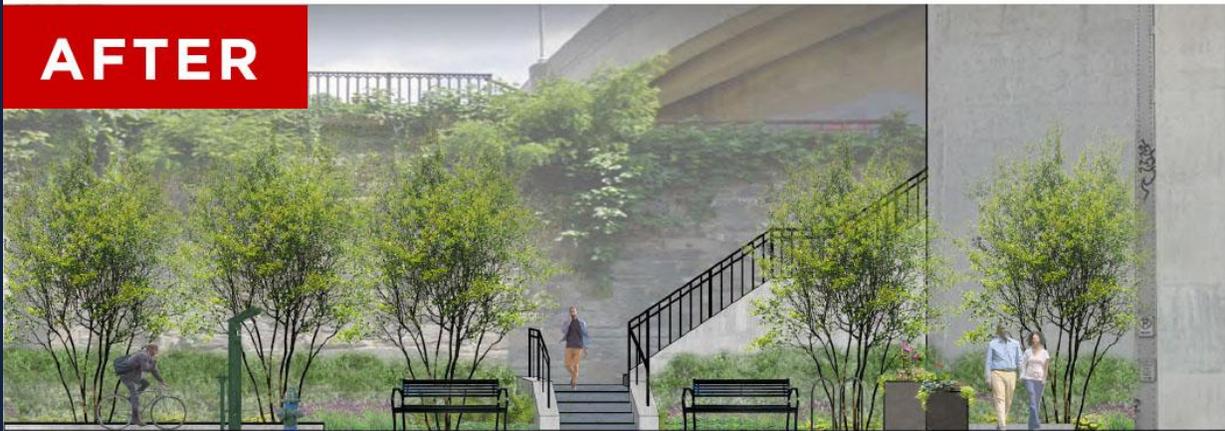
1. Create a safer pedestrian connection between the C&O Canal Towpath and the Capital Crescent Trail by rehabilitating the concrete staircase at the Potomac Aqueduct
2. Create a trailhead area for users of the Capital Crescent Trail, featuring seating, bike parking, landscaping, and improved drainage

Construction is slated to begin in March and end September 2021.

BEFORE



AFTER



DC WATER'S CLEAN RIVERS PROJECT

DC Water is performing investigations as part of the overall planning effort for DC Water's [Clean Rivers Project](#) which will reduce the volume of combined sewer overflows to the Potomac River and improve water quality. The Clean Rivers Project will consist of:

1. [Combined Sewer Overflow \(CSO\) Sewer Separations](#)
2. [The Potomac River Tunnel](#)

CSO SEWER SEPARATIONS IN GEORGETOWN

Construction will begin in Spring 2021 for the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) [Sewer Separation project](#) at two locations in Georgetown (CSO 025 – 026 —see picture below). This aspect of the project will reduce the volume of combined sewage and storm sewer overflows to the Potomac River.

Specific details regarding schedule and impacts will be provided at a Pre-Construction Community Meeting anticipated to occur in March 2021 prior to start of construction and will be announced once scheduled. WCC will have representation at this meeting.



CCTV INVESTIGATIONS

DC Water will be conducting closed-circuit television (CCTV) investigations of sewer pipelines at three locations in the Georgetown area:

1. K Street NW along 29th and 30th Streets NW
2. The intersection of Water Street NW and Potomac Street NW
3. The site adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail between the Alexandria Aqueduct Ruins and WCC.

Work has already begun on Water Street (sites 1 & 2) and will continue until (approximately) March 10, 2021. **Work nearest the WCC is scheduled for March 9 – 12, 2021.**

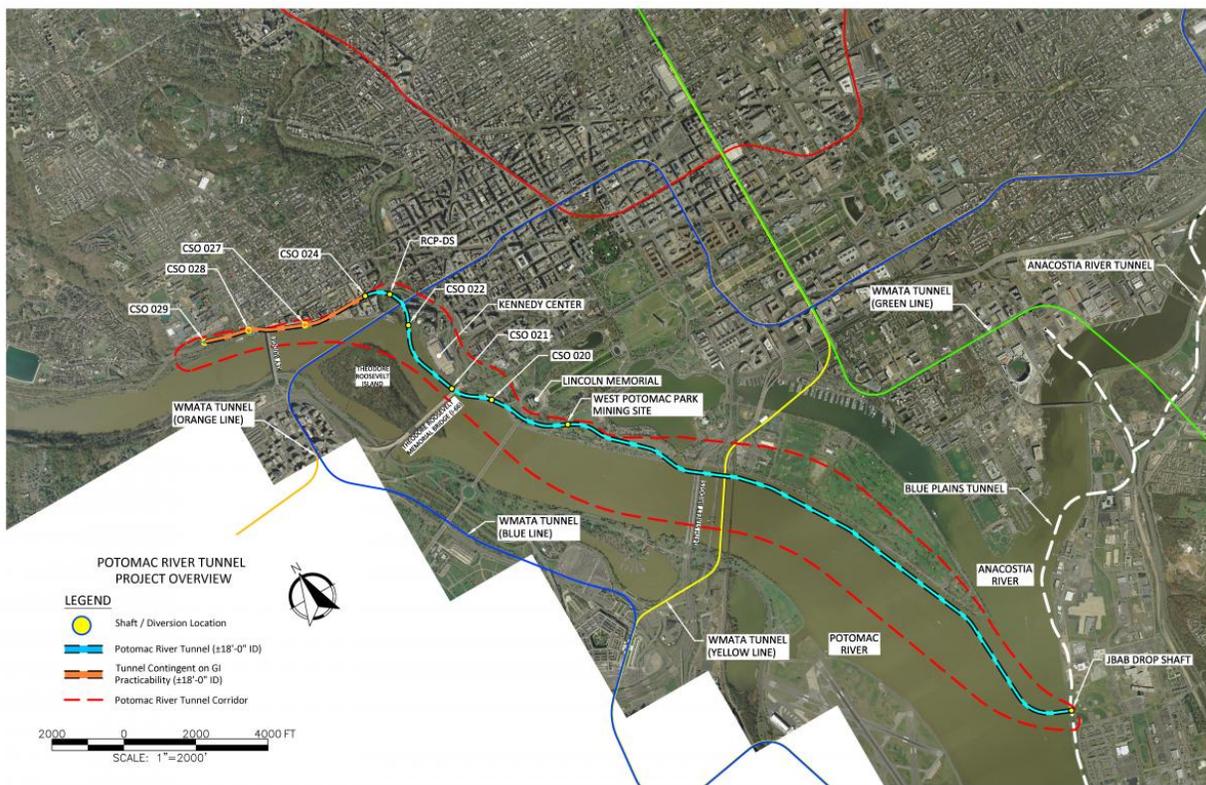
- Access to Capital Crescent Trail is not anticipated to be affected by this work.
- Signage will be posted for any temporarily necessary pedestrian or bicycle traffic changes.
- WCC access will be slightly impacted. Flaggers will be utilized to assist vehicular traffic to and from the club's access road.
- Work for this location is anticipated to be performed at night to lessen the pedestrian and bicycle impacts.

Capital Crescent Trail west of Alexandria Aqueduct Ruins (March 9 through March 12)



THE POTOMAC RIVER TUNNEL PROJECT

The Potomac River Tunnel Project is currently in the planning phase and DC Water is recommending a tunnel portion be built at CSO 27, CSO 28 (closest to WCC), and CSO 29. More information can be found [here](#). The WCC Board of Governors and boathouse restoration committee will be working closely with DC water to coordinate our future boathouse access, traffic management, and equipment staging to make sure our driveway is always accessible. More information will be forthcoming as plans take shape. **The tunnel buildout is scheduled to start construction by September 30, 2023, and be completed by March 23, 2030.**



Potomac River Tunnel Corridor Map

Your Role in Crowdsourcing Pollution Solutions!

In January, the Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRKN) held an interesting and informative Water Wednesday Webinar with **Chris Brown** and riverkeeper **Dean Naujoks**. You can check out the conversation here to watch the webinar and learn about PRKN's 'Swimmable Potomac' Campaign – which identifies where and when the Potomac is safe for swimming and paddling.

Report pollution on the [PRKN website](#) or download [The Water Reporter](#) or [Swim Guide](#) apps to report on the go or on the water.



What to watch out for/report:

- Trash/debris
- Foamy or discolored water
- Large algae blooms
- Failing construction barriers
- Fish kills or fish with lesions
- Direct pollution or chemical spills
- Active outfalls on dry days

Report online through:

<https://www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/report-pollution/>

<https://www.theswimguide.org/report/>

There is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.

—Kenneth Grahame

Paddling to be Fit: Tips from 2020's 1000-Milers

By Elizabeth Pennisi

With the PaddleFit 1000-Mile Challenge, the WCC has thrown down the gauntlet for its members. Worried that it might be too hard to paddle 1000 miles in a year? Don't be, says **Bill Woodruff**, who finished his first 1000 by July 4 and totaled 1600 miles in 2020. It's simple, he notes:

“Put boat in the water.

Paddle 'til tired, bored, or too dark.

Take boat out.

Rinse, and repeat.”

Conceived by **Linda Ross** and **Lisa Ramm** as a way to promote fitness and provide a goal for non-racers, the PaddleFit Challenge is modeled after a long-standing 1000-mile swim challenge that the American Red Cross hosted annually to encourage lifeguards to stay in shape. A thousand miles is a nice round number, but “it doesn't really matter if you get to a 1000,” Linda explains. “The rhythm of paddling just fills the soul, [and] it's a great way to exercise to get outside.”



When races were canceled, Bill Woodruff and Lisa Ramm embraced the Paddlefit Challenge and finished more than 1000 miles.

A recreational paddler, Linda found herself paddling far less than that, but wanted to get herself and her husband **Jim Ross** out on the water more – and to get more fit. So, she broke the mileage down into monthly and weekly chunks: “If you are using paddling for fitness, you should be aiming for 3 days a week and around an hour each outing, which is roughly 6 miles. Add a few more miles (since it is a challenge!) and you end up with approximately 20 miles a week, which gets to 1000 with enough room for a few misses.” At the end of each month, Linda would check her mileage and adjust as needed to stay on track, logging extra miles on the lakes in the Adirondacks during their summer vacation. “I didn’t hike as much as I usually do because I wanted to get the miles in,” she observed.

Thirteen other people signed on for 2020, and it proved inspirational. It set a discrete goal for racers in training such as Bill Woodruff and Lisa Ramm, who – along with Bill, Linda, and Jimmie McClellan – finished the challenge.



1000-miler Jimmie McClellan is passing his lifelong love of water to granddaughter Avery Mae.

For **Jimmie McClellan**, PaddleFit inspired him to do more than his usual 700 miles a year. “It’s good to be out on the river, and it’s good to have a reason,” he says. “And this is a good reason.” He’s been keeping track of his miles since 1991, having logged more than 23,000 since then. “My goal is 24,904 miles” – the circumference of Earth at the equator. At the beginning of 2020, Jimmie thought it would be a stretch to up his mileage that much, but working at home because of COVID gave him the flexibility to go more days (192 versus 132) and more miles each outing (5.4 vs 4.7). Each month he hit the water at least 11 days, up from 10 in 2019. “I haven’t missed a month since January 1995,” he says. By 2020’s summer’s end, he observed, “I could see the finish line.”



Rosemary Leblond paddled 800 hours and revels in the social aspects of the club.

Others were motivated as well. “The carrot worked for me,” says **Rosemary Leblond**, a recreational paddler who joined the WCC in 2018. She doesn’t have GPS, so logged hours instead — totaling 800 for the year. “WCC got me through COVID,” she points out, noting that it helped both her body and brain cope. She often comes to the WCC in the middle of the day, almost every day when the water and air are above 50 degrees. By 2020’s end, “I was in better shape,” she says.

In March, a high-mileage paddling trip in Florida for a marathon canoeing camp inspired **Coralie Miller** to start tracking her mileage, something she had never done before. She had cut her hours at work to be able to paddle afternoons and found the workout to be a great stress reliever. “It helped me to have something to focus on in the pandemic and get away from screens and phones and email,” she says. Making 1000 miles wasn’t really a goal for her, but “it was fun to see where I ended up” – about 835 miles. For 2021, she’s more ambitious. With monthly milestones, “I am really focused on trying to make it” this year. With 75 miles in for January, she may very well do that.



Coralie Miller came close to 1000 miles and so in 2021 is determined to do that distance and more.

Aside from treating the challenge “like eating an elephant one bite at a time” (as Coralie puts it), it’s a good idea to mix up the paddling — going different ways on the river or finding other rivers and lakes to boat on, advises Bill. His favorite workout is heading out at the end of the day to the back channel of Columbia Island to watch the sunset. Also, find other people to paddle with, suggests Bill. Coralie agrees: “It keeps you motivated. If I had been by myself, I may have started to lose interest.”

But most importantly, says Bill: “Just get in a boat and paddle.”

If you want to take the challenge in 2021 (and we hope you do), just sign up and start logging your miles in the white binder that lives on the shelves in the foyer (we're fancy).

Orientation Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to give orientations to new members. We generally run 1 to 3 orientations a month that last about an hour. Volunteers can pick times and dates that work for them. We will have you attend an orientation to train you and give you a cheat sheet with all the info you need! If you can help out, please email [Kelsa](#)

New Addition to the WCC Fleet!

By Kathy Summers

The WCC is now the proud owner of the 2021 **14' Bark Commander Fusion V-Tech Paddleboard!** It's sitting warm and cozy in its box just waiting for the spring temperatures to tempt us to bring it out and formally introduce it to you all.



In the meantime, here is a little information about prone paddling. There are basically three classes of boards:

“Stock” (which is 12' long) – for those of you who have seen mine, that is what I have

Then there is 14' long – which is the one we just bought for the club

And then there's the UL or unlimited – which is really for open ocean racing, so you are not likely to find one anywhere around us

Prone paddling is making a huge comeback, so you can expect to see more stock and 14' boards recreationally and at races. We chose the 14' for the club because it will fit just about everyone who wants to train on it. It has a cushy deck pad with a chest rise so it sets your body in a position that looks uncomfortable but really allows you to access the muscles you need without straining the others, so in a weird way, it is oddly relaxing. Don't get me wrong – it's a serious workout and great cross-training, especially for paddlers and surfers, but it's not as uncomfortable as it looks.

We will have a 2 bottle cage on it and we will put a strip of Velcro on the deck for you to attach a chin rest if you want one, but for hygiene reasons, we ask that you each make or buy your own. Ideally, you will get to the point where you don't even need that, but in the beginning, while you are training your muscles for this new position, I highly recommend that you have one.

Once those spring temperatures start to show up, we will set up a few dates for you to come to learn more about the board and take it out, but in the meantime, check out this little [video](#) about the legendary shaper and my dear friend, **Joe Bark**. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at kathsummers@me.com



Joe Bark shapes a new board.

Club Operations and Maintenance

Looking Forward to Springtime

By Jim Ross

We made a replacement rack in the back 40' to take the place of the big green rack on the downstream end of the club. The big green rack has been dismantled and discarded. Thanks to the juniors who helped move all the boats back to the new rack!

Two final racks remain on the downstream side – the Alumacraft canoe rack and one other private boat rack. Both of these racks and their boats will be relocated to the upstream side in the coming weeks.

After the area is cleared of all racks, we will be in a position to engage a fence company to move the downstream entrance fence to the new location, closer to the clubhouse, as per our lease agreement. We will be able to provide more information on this in the next newsletter.

The main dock sections will be returning sometime in March (actual dates TBD) and the water will also be turned back on.

The Juniors helped clean up the grounds back in December.



Team Announcements

WCC Coaches: Kelly Rhodes (Women's Outrigger), Nate Day (Men's Outrigger), JoeCafferata (Novice Outrigger), Kathleen McNamee (Junior's), TBD (Master's Kayak), and Kathy Summers (SUP)

Beware the Wolfpack

By Nate Day

Like the swallows to Capistrano, at the beginning of Daylight Savings Time WCC outrigger paddlers return to the water for another season of training and racing... unless they stayed paddling on the Potomac all through the winter. Until paddling in team boats recommences, all workouts will be in small craft — but workouts there will be. On Mondays and Wednesdays at 6 pm, the Wolfpack launches for interval training. The interval format enables the group to stay together on the water while supporting paddlers of different speeds. These workouts are designed for experienced paddlers training to race, so folks new to outrigger paddling should first get oriented on their own craft or one of the club canoes and put in water-time to learn to balance these tippy craft while paddling hard before joining these workouts (contact me at nathan.a.day@gmail.com if you'd like to get an orientation to the club canoes once the water warms up).

For most WCC outrigger paddlers, the first race of the year will be a big race — **the 20-mile Blackburn Challenge in Gloucester, MA on July 17**. While we may or may not be able to field OC6 crews at that point in the summer, hopefully vaccination rates will be high enough and infection rates low enough that at least OC1s, OC2s, and surfskis can compete and the race can be held as planned (likely with some adjustments for social distancing at the launch and finish line). The **Cape Ann Rowing Club** has already begun meetings to plan this year's race. The photos below are from the 2019 race. **The Catalina Crossing on September 11 and 12** will be another major race this year, with 9-person crews racing distances of 26-30 miles between Newport and Avalon (on Catalina Island) in southern California, periodically substituting paddlers from support boats via water

changes along the way. At long last, WCC will break into the "unlimited" canoe division at Catalina (OC6s with no weight minimums or materials requirements) now that we have our own carbon fiber six-person outrigger to practice in. Hopefully the naming ceremony for the new pride of the fleet (currently literally under wraps in the upstream boat bay) will be one of the first club functions once we've weathered the present storm.

Men who are interested in outrigger paddling and competition should reach out to me, **Nate Day**, at nathan.a.day@gmail.com. We are always looking to expand our team. Women interested in the same should contact **Kelly Rhodes** at rhodesk25@gmail.com.



WCC racers at the 2019 Blackburn Challenge. Photos by Mike Sachs.

And Finally...

Past Due Membership Renewals

If you have not renewed your membership for 2021, please do so today!

All returning members must [re-register for 2021](#) through SportsEngine. We are close to membership capacity and we need to know how many new members we can admit before going to a waiting list.

To register, just sign in to your SportsEngine account to begin the process. The current fees for all membership categories are on the [website](#).

If you selected the quarterly payment option in 2020 you must set it up again for 2021 during the registration process (this does not carry over).

If you have any problems with the registration process, please let [Kelsa](#) know (membership@washingtoncanoecub.org) so she can help get you registered.

If you do not intend to renew your membership please let Kelsa know by sending an email to membership@washingtoncanoecub.org.



New Spring/Summer Merch

WCC Shopkeeper Bonnie Havens is thinking of SPRING and adding some great new items to our Spring/Summer Squad Locker store.

There you will find an array of WCC branded goodies for members of all ages (including infants and toddlers). She anticipates the Spring/Summer items to all be posted by mid-March. Both shops will be periodically updated and changed, so keep checking back. If there's something you would like to see offered, [let us know](#).

Visit the [Spring/Summer Store](#)

Visit the [Fall/Winter Store](#)

Shout Out!

Thank You to **Carmela Leath** (and family) for giving the WCC planters some TLC. Spring will be prettier this year due to your efforts.

If you know of a WCC member who should get a shout out (and there are many), [let us know](#).



Reminder: If and when you visit the Club, please be mindful of the rules currently in place during the COVID-19 emergency. The rules (and related updates) are available on the [website](#).

THANK YOU to all club volunteers

If you have an idea for a contribution to the next issue of *Currents*, please reach out to one of your newsletter team members:

[Gloria Vestal](#) | [Dawn Nunziato](#) | [Mary Stapp](#)

