



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal
National Historical Park
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Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park News Release

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C&O Canal invites public comment on proposal to improve safety in the Paw Paw Tunnel Hollow

HAGERSTOWN, Md. – The National Park Service (NPS) invites public comment through July 25 on a proposal to improve visitor safety near the Paw Paw Tunnel Hollow in Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. This section of the park, between mile marker 155 and the downstream portal of the Paw Paw Tunnel, has experienced rockfalls and landslides that present a safety hazard to park visitors.

For this project, the park proposes to:

- Remove rocks and debris from a landslide in 2016.
- Stabilize the rock faces on both sides of the towpath and boardwalk.
- Replace the wooden pedestrian boardwalk.

The Paw Paw Tunnel is one of the most significant engineering features along the canal. To save building six miles of canal along the river, the C&O Canal Company decided to construct a tunnel through a steep ridge now called Tunnel Hill. The 3,118-foot tunnel took 14 years to complete and first opened in 1850. Today, visitors come to the tunnel to view this engineering feat and hike the Tunnel Hill Trail, a two-mile trail that traverses the top of the mountain where laborers lived during the construction period.

How to Comment: Public participation is vital to our planning process, which is conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). There are two ways to comment:

- Online through the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website (preferred method) at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/pawpawrockfall2020>
- By mail comments postmarked no later than *July 25 or 30 days after release, 2020* to:
Tina Cappetta, Superintendent
C&O Canal National Historical Park
ATTN: Paw Paw Rockfall Mitigation
1850 Dual Highway, Suite 100
Hagerstown, MD 21740

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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 million visitors a year enjoy the opportunities for recreation and discovery that the park has to offer. For more information, visit the park's website at www.nps.gov/choh.

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