

INTERSTATE COMMISSION ON THE POTOMAC RIVER BASIN

51 Monroe Street, Suite PE-8
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 984-1908
FAX (301) 984-5841
<http://www.potomacriver.org>



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POTOMAC RIVER WATCH A Public Service Announcement

FOR THE WEEKEND OF AUGUST 22-24, 2008

For more information contact Jennifer Willoughby, (301) 984-1908 ext.109; info@icprb.org.
Please credit the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin.

This year marks the 31st season for the Potomac River Watch. These weekly public service announcements, which run from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day, report on the conditions of the Potomac River and its tributaries, tell of local events along the river, and provide water quality and water safety information. Volunteers throughout the Potomac basin are contacted each week by Commission staff for first-hand information on their area of the river.

The Commission also provides needed information on river-related topics to media throughout the year and would appreciate being informed on environmental problems in their areas of the basin as they arise. **The Commission has experts on its staff that can be interviewed on water quality, water supply, living resources, and other topics.**

RIVER CONDITIONS: Expect temperatures in the low to mid 80s and sunny skies throughout the weekend. Water temperatures in the headwaters are at about 60 degrees, while temperatures in the middle and lower Potomac are about 80 degrees. Prepare for on-water activities by checking the weather and water levels just before venturing out, let family and friends know your float plans, and always wear a life vest.

FISHING: Rainbow trout will be released in the North Branch Potomac in time for this weekend's excellent fishing weather. These fish are a donation from the Freshwater Institute.

Farther downstream, catfish are biting in the evening and at night. Submerged grasses are doing well in some areas, particularly near Lander, Md. Fish the edges of the grass beds and submerged ledges for smallmouth bass.

In the Washington, D.C., area, smallmouth bass have been active near bridge foundations, the mouth of Pentagon Lagoon, Virginia side of Roosevelt Island, and the Maryland shore above Three Sisters Islands. At Mattawoman and Chickamuxen creeks, the grass beds also have been very productive. Fish the edges of the grass beds for the best action.

Croaker are still biting in the shallows in the tidal Potomac near the mouth. Spanish mackerel have been biting in the channel edge. Bluefish and flounder also continue to bite at the mouth of the river. Anglers have also been catching some red drum just out of the mouth of the Potomac.

From the rainbow trout stocking in the North Branch to the variety of fish in the tidal waters, there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy the region's fishing bounty.

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HIKING/BIKING: The Paw Paw Tunnel area of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Towpath is a terrific area during the month of August. The trail features a 3/4-mile tunnel that was built as part of the original canal. Take the walkway through the tunnel to see this architectural marvel. Dismount your bicycle to get through the tunnel. Bring a flashlight. Another short footpath leads to the top of the tunnel where jewelweed blooms at this time each year. Though there are plenty of paw-paw trees along the trail, picking the fruits or any others is prohibited on National Park Service land. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/choh/.

KAYAKING/CANOEING: Take a leisurely paddle or float through the Paw-Paw Bends this weekend. The river flows through a gorge, with forest as far as the eye can see. Plan for a long paddle and bring a picnic lunch. Put your boat in on the W.Va., side of the river by following Maryland Route 51, which becomes West Virginia Route 9. Just after entering West Virginia, look for signs to the river access. Plan to take out at Little Orleans, Md., off Orleans Road.

EVENTS:

August 24, Geology of the C & O Canal, C&O Canal National Historical Park, Cabin John, MD

We may not have the Rockies in our back yard, but we have the roots of mountains that were as high as the Alps. Although local earthquakes are rare now, this area broke in two twice and an ocean flowed in. The C&O Canal's geology tells a story as fascinating as any place on the planet. Callan Bentley will use rock evidence to deduce geologic history of our region. For more information, contact Potomac Conservancy's River Center Coordinator, Bridget Chapin, at chapin@potomac.org or 301.608.1188, x213, or go to www.potomac.org.

Check out our complete calendar of events at www.potomacriver.org.

This week in the watershed:

The Potomac Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership (DWSPP) is holding an Ag101 workshop for its members on Thursday, August 21. The workshop will focus on the relationship of agricultural issues to water quality and source water protection issues. The DWSPP partners, who consist of water suppliers, municipalities, and state and regional water quality groups, will gain an understanding of how to deal with agricultural issues in their operations.

Specific topics to be discussed include confined animal feedlot operations (CAFO), permitting and regulations, state nutrient management programs and best management practices, and how to manage bacteria and *Cryptosporidium*. The ICPRB has served as the DWSPP coordinator since its inception in April 2004.

For information about these and other ICPRB projects, contact the Commission at info@icprb.org or call (301) 984-1908.

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