

The Chesapeake Paddler



Volume 31 Issue IV

Publication of The Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc.

May 2021

Cape Henlopen: a park for all seasons



Bottlenose dolphins are a common sight when kayaking near the point at Cape Henlopen State Park. They arrive in early spring and stay until late fall.

By Bill Upton

Sometimes you hear them first. A “whoosh” of air as they break the surface. Some primordial connection kicks in and spurs a rush of joy and wonder - dolphins are near! As they go by, feeding or just playing, you sit in awe and appreciate how close to the water you are in a sea kayak.

And better yet, it’s right in our backyard at one of Delaware’s best parks, [Cape Henlopen State Park](#). A fellow paddler in my neighborhood first turned me on to kayaking there years ago and it’s been my go-to spot ever since.

You can choose to go out in calm conditions and dolphin watch or experience some of the area’s most challenging

surf conditions on an ebb tide at the point.

And it’s not just for kayaking. There’s a great rails-to-trails [bicycle loop route](#) from the park to Rehoboth. In the fall, you can spend time in the morning helping count migrating raptors at the [Cape Henlopen Hawk Watch](#) and then take your pick to kayak or bike in the afternoon.

The park sits at the mouth of the Delaware Bay and is a former military base. At the north end, a point juts out and separates the bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

Most kayakers start their trip at the park’s fishing pier on the bay side. The best spot to park is in the overflow lot

[See Henlopen on page three](#)

From the CPA Coordinator**Getting back on the water with old friends in 2021**

Greetings, Paddlers!

The season has begun and it is a far cry better than last year, so I hope everyone is out and taking advantage of the new improved season. So far, I am off to a good start since I have paddled a few times around my neighborhood on the Magothy River, the Patuxent, Trapp Pond and with the Pirates of Arundell.



Bill Smith

I really enjoy the piracies especially since they are usually a laid-back paddle with no place in particular to go so the paddle plan is usually made up as you go. I have been paddling with the POA since joining CPA eleven or so years ago and really enjoy the camaraderie of the group. When I started with the group it was the Pirates of Pier Seven but with new ownership of the marina, they decided to take the fun out of paddling there.

As luck would have it, Homeport Farms opened a week before we lost Pier Seven so transitioning to a roving piracy was painless. At first, I was disappointed in losing the Pier Seven location but in the long run it was a blessing in disguise because we are now a roving piracy and get to see new destinations, so you never really get tired of seeing the same place since it changes every week.

Over the years I see many paddlers who faithfully attend

POA since I started with them and some who have come and gone. The good thing is we are always getting new members, so the group size stays steady. If you happen to get a free Wednesday, then please join us for an evening of fun.

I keep threatening to pop in on some of the other piracies just to hang out with other groups and see new destinations and renew old acquaintances. I am always looking for new destinations so visiting another piracy is a good way to see new territory and meet new people. I was told the Pirates of Sugarloaf is the most fun, so it is on my bucket list. The pirates of Sugarloaf were dormant for a few years, so I am grateful that Laurie Collins and Marilyn Cooper are starting it back up again.

One paddle I really enjoyed was Trapp Pond in Delaware. Dave Battey and I traveled over and met up with Cragg Howard who recently moved nearby so I probably would have never paddled it since you pass so many nice paddle locations getting there.

I always pictured Trapp Pond as just a lake paddle, but I was pleasantly surprised since once we made it to the end of the lake, we discovered that you could work your way through the cypress swamp, so we traveled inward a few miles before being blocked by downed trees. The scenery of the pond was really nice, with mostly cypress trees and the wildlife was abundant with hundreds of box turtles, eagles, herons and a beaver.

Paddle on, hope to see you all on the water.

Share your paddling adventures!

Do you enjoy reading about the paddling adventures, local and distant, of other members? Do you like getting new ideas for paddling trips?

Are you advocating for paddling access or amenities in your area?

Have you pondered questions relating to kayak gear? Variety is the spice of life, and of newsletters.

Please write an article reflecting your thoughts, experiences, and discoveries to share with our paddling community.

We all become a bit wiser and excited to be on the water again. We need your input to make *The Chesapeake Paddler* the best it can be.

Submit stories or ideas to news_editor@cpakayaker.com. We look forward to sharing your story.

[Henlopen, from page one](#)



The point and lighthouses at the north end of Cape Henlopen State Park mark the mouth of the Delaware Bay, left, and

near the pier. It has been closed because of Covid restrictions, but when open it has a path straight to the beach.

For an easy paddle, the best bet is to go when low tide is mid-day and launch about an hour before low tide. You can ride the last of the ebb out to the red lighthouse and then across to the point. By that time, the currents around the point subside and if conditions allow, you can follow the ocean beach down to the southern part of the park. If it's not too rough, you can surf land, have lunch and then ride the incoming tide back.

Most trips, groups of [bottlenose dolphin](#) are abundant. They arrive in early spring from warmer waters in the south and stay until October and November. There's a large shoal parallel to the shore on the ocean side that seems to funnel fish towards the point.

Often, the dolphins gather there to feed. It's the law to keep a safe distance and not harass them, so usually I just drift and watch them to go by.

A word of warning, currents at Henlopen can be treacherous. Until you get familiar with the area, go with experienced paddlers and avoid the strong currents on the outgoing tide.

Even coming back on the flood can get tricky, so use caution. One time when returning I passed an obviously unprepared group going out to the point during the ebb.

Not long after the Coast Guard arrived for a rescue.

Experienced paddlers can take advantage of the standing waves that form at the point on the outgoing tide. Currents upward of four knots create two-to three-foot waves that you can surf over and over.

Best times are spring and early summer when the point is closed to the public. There's a nice calm eddy near shore that makes a good rest stop when surfing. You can't get to it after August 31 when the point is open and there are lots of fishermen.

You can also take a nice side trip out to the white lighthouse at the far breakwater. It's best to have a VHF radio and monitor if the Cape May-Lewes ferry is leaving. It sometimes goes between the point and the lighthouse. It's not a fun place to be in a kayak when it does.

Junction Breakwater Bike Trail

Kayaking isn't the only opportunity to get out. When the wind is too strong on the water, there's an awesome [15-mile bike trail](#) that makes a loop between the park and the town of Rehoboth.

You can start at the fishing pier in the park, hook up with the [Junction Breakwater rail trail](#) in Lewes, take the trail to Rehoboth and then come back along the shore to the

[See Henlopen on page four](#)

[Henlopen, from page three](#)

south entrance of the park. From there, you pick up the beautiful Gordon's Pond Trail and take the park's bike trail back to the start.

There's only one small section in Rehoboth where you have to ride with busy traffic. Otherwise it's all on a trail or a low-traffic street.

There are several parking lots along the Junction Breakwater Trail where you can park for free. If you bike into the park there is no entrance fee. The out-of-state day use fee is \$10. If you are 62 or older you can get a yearly pass for all Delaware parks for \$35.

When doing a bike-only trip, you can add a side trip to [Bombay Hook Wildlife Refuge](#) about an hour north from the park. They just paved the road through the refuge and if you go during the midweek, there's hardly anyone there. It's a great way to see the refuge and the wildlife moving through. Best time is early spring before mosquito season starts.

Hawk Watch

Lastly, in the fall thousands of raptors pass through the area. There's a vantage point in the park on top of one of the old gun emplacements where a naturalist and volunteers operate the [Cape Henlopen Hawk Watch](#). They count the migrating birds from September 1 through November 30.



In the fall, stop by to help count migrating raptors in the morning and kayak or bike in the afternoon.

The view from the Hawk Watch is across the mouth of the Delaware Bay to Cape May, N.J. so you can daydream about crossing by kayak while scanning for birds.

Camping at the park, especially midweek, used to be a nice option to spend a few days exploring. Since Covid, however, demand for local spots skyrocketed and the park is almost full all the time. I've gotten it down to a long day trip when I go.

No matter how many times I've done this trip, it never gets old and the thrill of seeing a group of dolphins coming your way is as strong as it was the first time I was there. Cape Henlopen is a treasure, we are lucky it's right in our back yard.



The Junction Breakwater trail goes from Lewes to Rehoboth and connects with other trails for a scenic 15-mile loop for bicycling.

CPA Paddlers give back to the Patuxent

Three cleanup events to clean up trash and maintain paddle-in campsites



CPA paddlers Suzanne Farace, Bill Smith, Ralph Heimlich, Jenny Plummer-Welker and Greg Welker on their way to the paddle-in campsite at Emory Landing in the first of three CPA-sponsored cleanup events on the Patuxent River.

By Ralph Heimlich

Three separate work events that benefit paddlers and others on the Patuxent River organized by the Chesapeake Paddlers Association took place over the last month.

On the weekend of April 9-11, Greg Welker organized a work party to maintain the Anne Arundel County paddle-in campsite at Emory Landing (also known as the Riggleman property), part of the Jug Bay Wetland Sanctuary.

Paddlers Suzanne Farace, Bill Smith, Ralph Heimlich and Jenny Plummer-Welker assisted Greg in collecting trash from the campsite, trails, and shoreline, emptied fire pits, and cut back weeds and greenbriar. Several of the work crew camped Friday and Saturday nights.

Greg organized a second work party for April 23 to maintain Anne Arundel's upstream paddle-in campsite at Stockett's Run (also called Ford's Landing), just downstream from the Queen Anne Canoe launch.

Work including picking up trash on the site and on the shoreline, weeding tent pads and cutting back green briar and poison ivy vines. Greg, Suzanne and Ralph participated.

On May 1, Ralph Heimlich organized a belated Patuxent River trash cleanup in conjunction with Fred Tutman, the Patuxent Riverkeeper.

Working from three canoes, trash cleaners Leigh and Bela Mariassy, Katherine Neale, Ben Mayock, Bob Justice and Ralph gathered trash from the water and shoreline downriver from the Riverkeeper HQ in Upper Marlboro to Hall Creek, on both sides of the river.

Many thanks to Fred for providing a canoe and letting us launch from the HQ and leave the accumulated trash for pickup. Earlier in April, paddlers Chip Walsh and Steve Grant did another cleanup near the Queen Anne Canoe launch, more in the traditional time frame.

[See Patuxent on page six](#)

Patuxent, from page five

Clockwise from top left: 1.) Bill and Ralph tow a propane tank found in the river. 2.) In camp at Stockett's Run paddle-in campsite. 3.) The trash haul from cleaning up the shoreline (minus the propane tank). From left, Suzanne, Bill, Greg, Jenny and Ralph. 4.) Ben Mayock and Bob Justice pick up trash on the Patuxent River 5.) Proud (and dirty) trash collectors, from left, Ralph Heimlich, Katherine Neale, Bela and Leigh Mariassy, Bob Justice and

New Solley Cove launch to open this summer



Public commenting works! Anne Arundel County's new public boat ramp at Solley Cove Park opens in early summer. It's the third county public boat ramp to open since 2015 when there were none!

By Lisa Arrasmith

Launching our kayaks from [Solley Cove Park](#) will be a lot more posh when Anne Arundel County opens the newest public county boat ramp there early this summer.

For decades many of us used a dirt ramp to launch our kayaks from the park onto Curtis Creek. The boat ramp project includes a spiffy kayak sand beach, a big parking lot and “dual” portapotties.

The county bought the 75-acre Solley Cove Park in Glen Burnie, MD in 1998. The new public boat ramp is the first investment in the park. The Solley Cove ramp will be the county's third public boat ramp, up from zero in 2015.

Solley Cove Park is my hurricane hole when winds are howling on the Bay. I can head upstream to sheltered Marley, Furnace and Back Creeks for miles of paddling out of the wind. On quieter days I head out Curtis Creek past the Coast Guard Yard to Curtis Bay and the Patapsco.

Solley Cove is also the favorite launch for full moon kayaking eight months of the year. Full moons attract dozens of kayakers who launch for a moonlit paddle to dinner at Rams Head Dockside, the old Reckless Ric's, on Furnace Creek. Night fishing and crabbing are popular. Kayak anglers go out before dawn. Crabbers and anglers launch jon boats and dinghies for night fishing and crabbing.

The Solley Cove boat ramp shows the benefit of kayakers advocating for public boat ramps. There are funding sources, such as the state Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF), for boat ramps. The WIF comes from the 5% excise tax on big boats. Although kayak launches don't qualify for WIF funding, a WIF funded public boat ramp usually comes with a kayak launch off to one side. A lot of WIF money went into the Solley Cove boat ramp. The end result at Solley Cove is a paved ramp on one side for trailered boats and a lovely beach for kayaks on the other side. I'm looking forward to launching there this summer.

AA County Plan2040 and Public Water Access

By Lisa Arrasmith

Public Water Access Committee

The Anne Arundel County Council voted in early May to adopt Plan2040, the new county [General Development Plan \(GDP\)](#).

The GDP is a state requirement. Plan2040 will set county land use policy for the next twenty years. The GDP land use policy matters because it is the basis for the decisions which will determine whether or not the eighty percent of county residents who do not live in water privileged communities or waterfront homes will be able to reach the water. County administration began drafting the GDP over a year ago and sent it to the Council on February 1, 2021. The Council amended the administration's GDP prior to passing the final GDP on May 3, 2021.

The Public Water Access Committee, boating advocates, community leaders and water access activists slogged through the complicated year-long GDP process. We made a difference. The final GDP is much stronger on public water access than the deeply flawed first draft. Unfortunately, despite our efforts, Plan2040 still bakes in a barrier, the Peninsula Privilege, to public water access for the next twenty years.

1) Public Water Access in Plan 2040

Anne Arundel County has a dismal history of buying hundreds of acres of waterfront land for public parks and then not opening the promised parks to the general public, usually for decades. We have publicly owned waterfront land. We need the leadership to open it.

Boat Act Advisory Committee Chair Thornell Jones, joined by the county NAACP and the Caucus of African American Leaders, worked with Councilwoman Lisa Rodvien to include "enhancing public access to the waterfront and parks upgraded so those who have traditionally been denied access can fully enjoy them" as a goal in Plan2040.

2) Plan2040 correctly classifies our public parks as Parks and Open Space, not Conservation.

The initial GDP misclassified most of our public parks,



The General Development Plan will set land use policy, including water access by the general public, in Anne Arundel County for the next 20 years.

both waterfront and inland, as Conservation. Conservation posed an obvious barrier to park improvements, whether boat ramps or ballfields. The misclassification also undermined the county's duty to provide the public use and access mandated by state Program Open Space (POS) and federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding.

Council Chair Sarah Lacey led the successful effort to create a new category of Parks and Open Space for our public parks and privately owned recreational areas. This Parks and Open Space category preserves maximum flexibility for recreational use, shields the land from development and encourages POS and LWCF compliance.

[See Water Access on page nine](#)

[Water Access](#), from page eight

3) The Peninsula Privilege and Public Water Access

Plan2040 grants special traffic and development protection to some of the most well off and politically well connected areas of the county via a Peninsula Privilege, i.e. Peninsula Policy Area, while leaving the rest of us sitting in traffic in already overcrowded areas.

The Peninsula Privilege will be a rallying cry against public use and improvement of parks in these areas, whether public swimming beaches, public ballfields or public boat ramps.

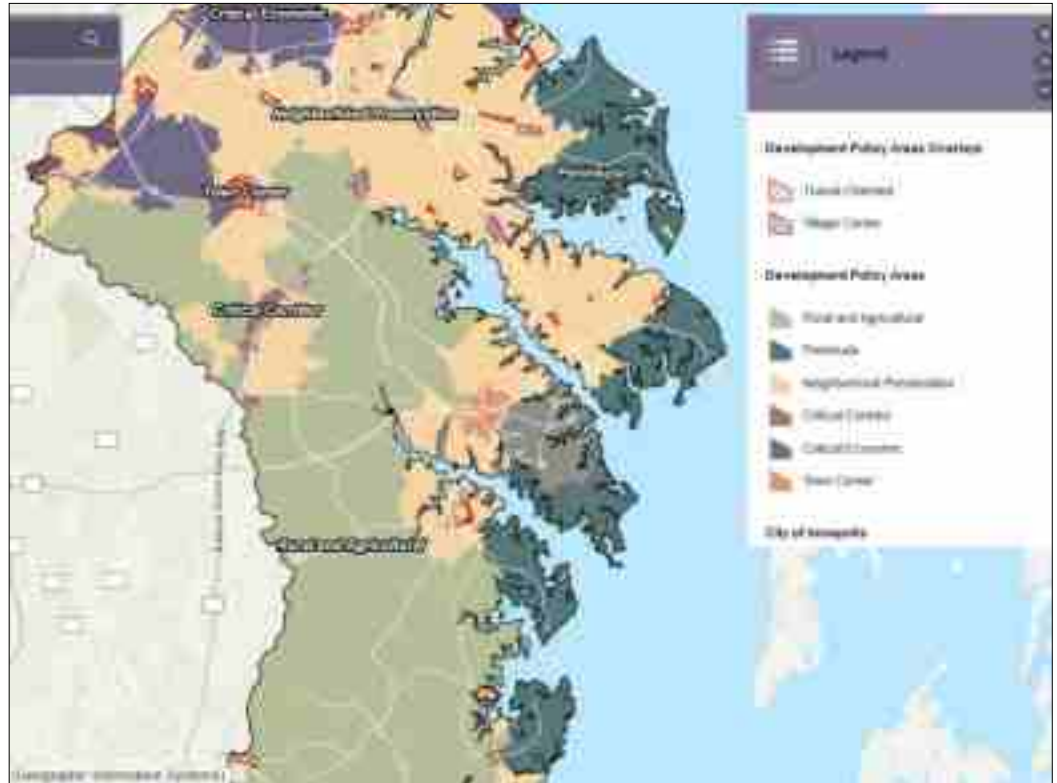
Peninsula Privilege turns every parking spot into a battlefield. We worked to get the Peninsula Privilege taken out of the GDP. Unfortunately, the special interests prevailed.

Waterfront parks and access areas in the Peninsula Privilege aka Peninsula Policy Areas include, north to south:

Weinberg Park	Beverly Triton Park
Fort Smallwood Park	Carrs Wharf
Downs Park	Shady Side Park
Sandy Point State Park	Shady Side Wharf
Greenbury Point	Discovery Village
Quiet Waters Park	Shady Cove Natural Area
Thomas Point Park	Jack Creek Park
South River Farm Park	Turtle Run
Mayo Beach Park	Franklin Point State Park

The Peninsula Privilege will also hamper recreational use of nonwaterfront parks in these areas.

Look at the map. If you live in Anne Arundel County and



The county's plan uses the designation of Peninsula Policy Area (the areas shaded in dark green) to potentially limit public access to county parks and hamper future development of public amenities in those parks. Click [here](#) for an interactive map.

you don't live in a Peninsula Privilege area, please email County Executive Stuart Pittman countyexecutive@aacounty.org and your Councilmember. Ask them why it is OK for you to sit in traffic while the privileged peninsulas get special traffic treatment. Find your Councilmember here: <https://www.aacounty.org/departments/county-council/councilmembers/who-is-my-councilmember/>

Looking ahead: A lengthy regional planning process begins immediately. Plan2040 splits the county into nine areas instead of our usual seven county council district jigsaw puzzle. The county will plan three areas at a time. The County Executive will select a regional planning committee for each area and the Council will confirm the committee. Look for the opportunity to be named to the committee for your area and generally provide public input for the regional plans.

Parts of this article were originally published in the June 2021 issue of Proptalk.

AA County FY22 Budget

Advocating for more public water access: Part II

Part One of the FY22 Budget Request (items 1-3) appeared in the [April 2021 newsletter](#).

The second half of the FY22 Budget Request focuses on a variety of projects that use existing public land to provide everything from new kayak launches to a sailing and kayaking school for children.

4) Programming: Create a summer sailing and kayaking day program for children. Nonprofit Annapolis Community Boating (ACB) used to run great affordable boating day programs for children.

The demise of ACB left a big gap in opportunities for children to learn boating. A sailing and kayaking day program would take advantage of the county's 530 miles of shoreline and help all children reach the water.

5) South River Farm Park: Create a kayak launch from South River Farm Park onto Selby Bay for an investment of \$500 and volunteer labor. This launch would give recreational and novice paddlers access to sheltered Selby Bay and Ramsey Lake.

6) Weinberg Park: Create a kayak launch from Weinberg Park onto Rock Creek for an investment of \$1000 and volunteer labor. This launch would give recreational and novice paddlers access to sheltered Rock Creek and White Pond.

7) Riverwalk on the Little Patuxent: Create a parking lot, kayak launch and small fishing pier at the northernmost navigable point on the Little Patuxent River.

8) Valentine Creek Park on the Severn River: Create a parking lot, access path and kayak launch onto the beautiful upper Severn.

9) Boat ramps: Continue to identify a mid-county location for the next public boat ramp. The wild success of the Fort Smallwood boat ramp in North County and popularity of the Discovery Village boat ramp in South County show the demand for public boat ramps to serve the county's 9,000 trailered boats.

The opening of the new Solley Cove boat ramp will provide needed extra capacity in North County.



Help open up more public water access at Anne Arundel County parks such as Beverly Triton by sending in comments during the 2022 budget process. (photo: [Anne Arundel County](#))

10) Hawkins Cove is in Annapolis off Spa Creek and around the point from Truxton Park. It is heavily silted in and needs dredging. Robert Eades Park is on College Creek. It is dilapidated. Both parks are in areas that serve low income and disadvantaged communities.

FY22 Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF) money should be used to dredge Hawkins Cove rather than directed to "beach nourishment" of a private community beach, as happened to \$250,000 of WIF money in FY21.

FY22 stormwater fee money should be used to create living shorelines to rehabilitate these public parks, rather than used for living shorelines for private community beaches, as happened to almost \$400,000 in stormwater fee money in FY21. Public money must be used for public recreation instead of diverted to private recreation.

What's next: County Executive Steuart Pittman submitted his FY22 budget to the AA County Council on April 30, 2021. Remember, in AA County only the County Executive puts things in the budget. The County Council can only take things out of the budget. It leads to a lot of horse trading between the Executive and the Council as the Council deliberates on the annual budget.

[See Budget on page eleven](#)

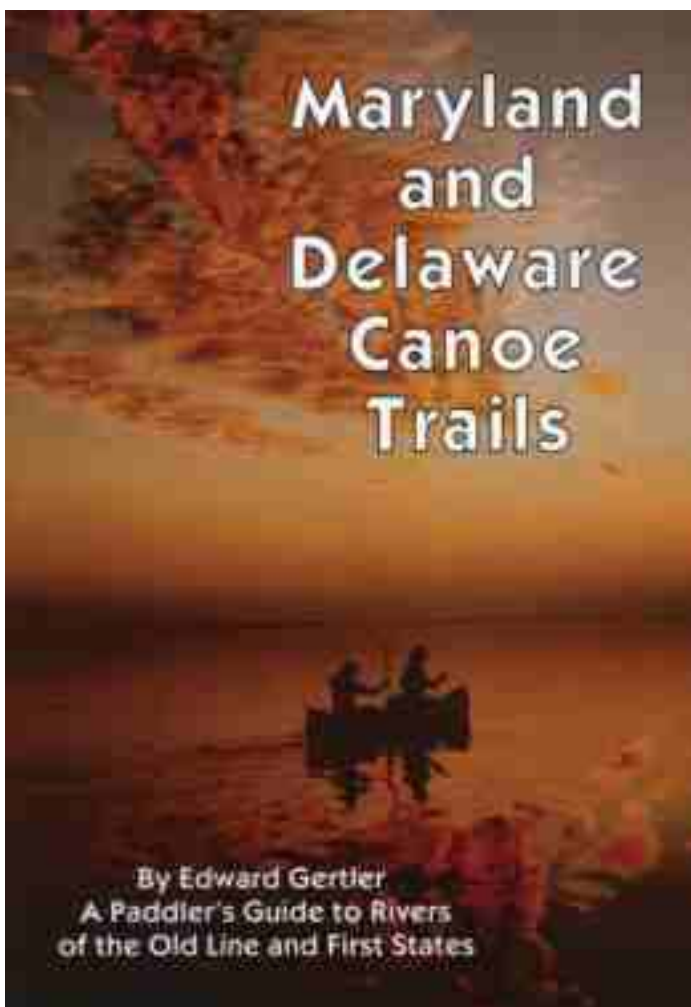
[Budget, from page ten](#)

Recreation and Parks presented County Executive Stuart Pittman's budget on May 5, 2021. It is an extraordinary reversal of the public water access budgets since 2013. Pittman's proposed FY22 budget effectively defunds new public water access. No new boat ramps. Long planned improvements at Mayo Beach Park cut back to patching the existing facilities. The \$268,000 annual line item dedicated to new public water access facilities, that produced both the acclaimed Homeport Farm Park and much loved Downs onto the Bodkin, diverted to fixing up existing county wharves. The only hint of progress is a promise to assess Valentine Creek Park on the Severn for improvements.

This Council must still vote on the budget. There are two opportunities to speak to the Council. There is a virtual hearing Monday May 10 2021 at 6 pm. Sign up to speak online [here](#). The second hearing is in person on Thursday May 20 2021 at 6 pm at North County High School in Glen Burnie. Sign up to speak in person [here](#). You can't speak at the May 20th in person hearing if you already spoke at the May 10th online hearing. You can also [submit written testimony online](#) to the entire Council until June 14, 2021. Much earlier is much better. As always, you can also email your County Councilmember. Find your County Councilmember [here](#).

Please keep an eye on [The Public Water Access Page](#) for updates and suggestion on the FY22 budget.

New Edition of Maryland and Delaware Canoe Trails



Maryland and Delaware Canoe Trails has been the go-to guide for paddlers for years. Author Ed Gertler has written a new 6th Edition.

Here's Ed's take on the updated guide:

"I have just come out with a 6th edition of this long-running guidebook. The previous edition (5th) was published in 2002, so this is long overdue.

"You would not believe how much changes in 19 years. Still hiding behind that sunset cover, the new version includes not only updates and corrections (yes, I made some errors), but significantly more miles of tidal venues.

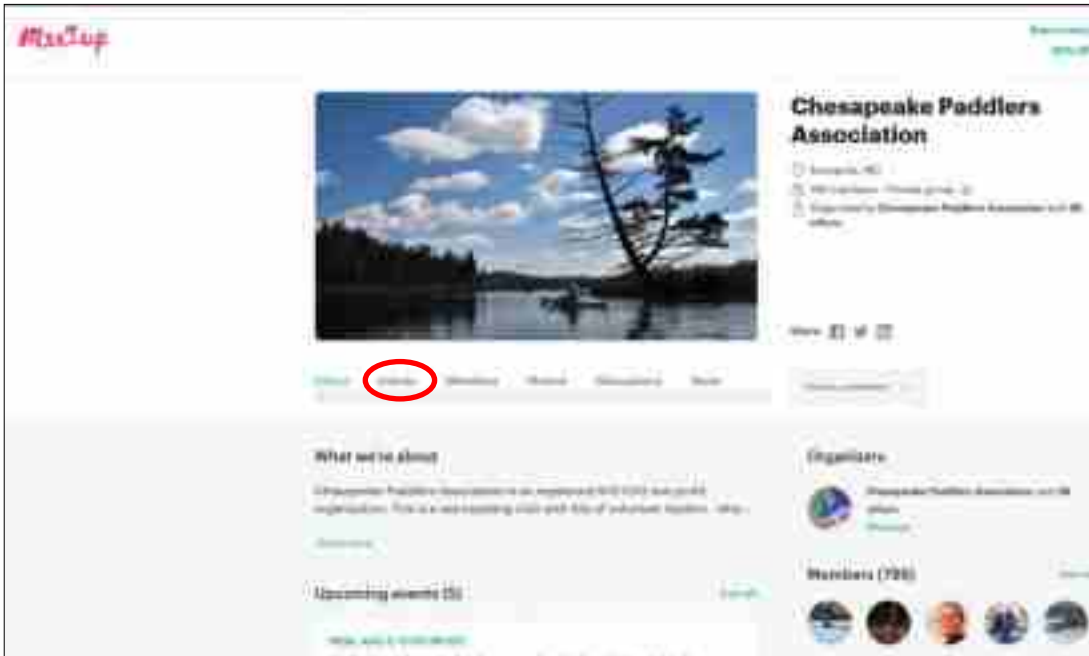
"So maybe it is time to retire your old duct-taped, dog-eared edition (probably older than the 5th) and treat yourself to a book you can trust.

"Currently it is available in-person at Annapolis Canoe and Kayak (support your local paddle shop) and online from the [Patuxent Riverkeeper](#) (support a good cause). Yes, one can find it on Amazon [currently unavailable].

"Hope you like it."

-Ed Gertler

Upcoming CPA events



Trips and Piracy paddles are being scheduled, stay up-to-date by visiting the [CPA Meetup page](#).

Check back often, events are subject to change because of COVID-19.

All participants should download the [updated CPA Waiver](#) and read the [CPA COVID-19 event guidelines](#) before participating in any in-person Club activity.

Kayak for sale



Necky Chatham 17 Composite kayak purchased new from ACK in 2014. Well cared for, only cosmetic scratches. Two new hatch covers. Available to show or try out in Severna Park. Call Bill at 410-570-8500



To buy, sell or trade kayaks and kayak-related gear of all kinds, be sure to visit the [Gear Swap](#) section of the Forums on CPA webpage at <https://www.cpakayaker.com>

The Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc.

The mission of the Chesapeake Paddlers Association is to provide a way for people to enjoy sea kayaking within the Chesapeake Bay area and to promote safe sea kayaking practices through educating the local sea kayaking community and the interested public.

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If your CPA membership has expired, or will expire soon, please send in your dues to: CPA, P.O. Box 341, Greenbelt, MD 20768-0341 or use the [Online Membership](#) option to use PayPal or find more information about membership.

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The Chesapeake Paddler

The *Chesapeake Paddler* is published 10 times a year, with combination issues in Nov/Dec and Jan/Feb. The deadline for submitting copy is the 15th of the preceding month. Articles and illustrations (graphics, photos) should be submitted as separate attachments to: news_editor@cpakayaker.com

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