

# The Chesapeake Paddler



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## CPA's first post-lockdown day paddle

By Ralph Heimlich

After a rocky start under the various Bay-state shelter-in-place orders, kayaking was finally recognized as a legitimate solo exercise activity that could be done by individuals and related household members in early April. CPA decided NOT to schedule any group paddles under this interpretation since they would clearly violate the letter and spirit of the rule, but various individuals and families were kayaking all through April and early May.

On May 13, Governor Hogan [relaxed](#) the previous lockdown to allow opening state and local parks and marinas. Because of this relaxation, I went ahead with a previously planned day paddle on the Patuxent River on May 15.

Most experts agree that there is less risk of COVID-19 transmission in properly distanced outdoor activity



*Bela Mariassy is back on the water for his first paddle since last October.*

where equipment is not shared (see <https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/return-to-play>).

While at one time more than half a dozen people had RSVP'd to attend, due to various circumstances, only Bela Mariassy accompanied me. We paddled out of the newly-expanded beach launch at Hallowing Point on the eastern shore of the Patuxent, just below the Route 231 bridge.

In addition to the previous boat ramp wedged in close to the DNR HQ building, a 2015 purchase and a 2017 acquisition of [1.83 more acres](#) immediately to the south expanded the park to include a nice sandy beach launch. This area will be managed by Calvert County and upgrades to the roads, beaches, and facilities are planned, but haven't proceeded as yet.

By the time Bela and I arrived at the launch in mid-morning, a few fishermen were already set up on the beach, practicing minimal social distancing and with a



*Ralph and Bela practice proper social distancing at the Hallowing Point launch site.*

[See Paddle on page three](#)



*On the return, more people showed up at the launch where Ralph and Bela donned their masks and loaded up their boats.*

### **Paddle** from page one

scattering of face masks. We drove to a more distant part of the beach, unloaded with our masks on, and launched, heading north under the bridge and across the river to the mouth of Swanson Creek.

We didn't feel the need to wear masks when paddling. There were few boats on the water, and we coasted up the southern shore of Swanson Creek, on the border of Charles County's Maxwell Hall park, and by an eerily quiet Chalk Point power plant, apparently shut down while power demand remains low in the early Spring.

When we got to the landing for the Maxwell Hall paddle-in campsite (maintained by Charles County Parks and Rec), a family group was already set up to fish, so we stayed offshore and talked to them, but did not land. Paddling on, we went up the creek, looking for wildlife and passing a few observation points and rustic wooden boat slides along the way.

We eventually got so far up the creek that shoaling water forced us to turn around. We investigated one of the boat slides, and found that it was on private property, so didn't stay. We hauled out farther down the creek at an observation platform jutting over the creek, donned our masks and had our lunch, carefully maintaining our social distance.

The fishing family was still at the campsite when we

passed, so we didn't try to land. Not tired yet, we paddled south under the bridge and turned into the mouth of Indian Creek, with the village of Golden Beach on the south shore.

Years ago, I had led a kayak camper to the paddle-in site on Indian Creek, but we couldn't find the sign this time (not sure we went far enough up the creek).

There are a number of small inlets and sloughs, and a nice, sandy point sticking out into the creek, but a couple in a canoe was already there, so we turned back across the river and made a bee line for Hallowing Point.

When we arrived at the beach, even more fishermen had arrived and located right next to our vehicles. We landed, donned our masks and proceeded to load up.

It was good to get out on the water again after a bit of a hiatus (I hadn't paddled since March and Bela since last October). We found that with proper attention to social distancing and use of masks at launching, lunching and landing, we felt reasonably safe in paddling on a day trip, following the [CPA guidelines](#) (see page 8).

On May 29, I have a previously scheduled car camper at Tuckahoe State Park in Maryland, with 7 people RSVP'd. I'll let you know how that goes.

Pictures at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/qunEamSo3wLKawHi7>. ♠