

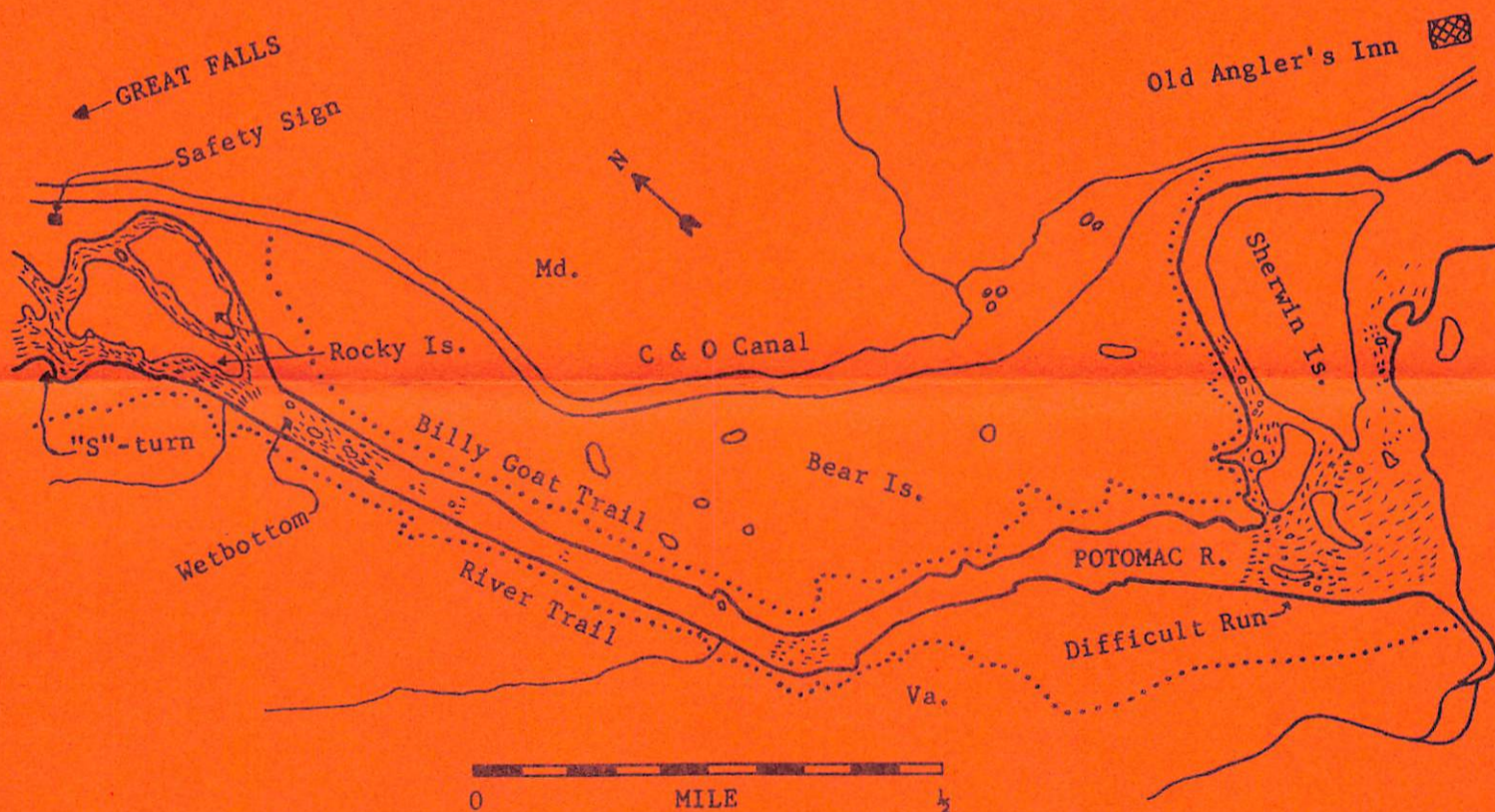
LOCK 17

This area is commonly referred to as the Sand Beach entry or Catfish Hole. It is one of the most popular areas for EXPERT paddlers; at the same time it can lure the unwary into unexpected dangers. This is the first safe entry below the Great Falls dam one-third mile upstream. Everything above this point to and including the dam is IMPASSABLE!!! At this junction the boater is offered the options of paddling upstream into the main channel or running either the center channel or along the Maryland channel to join the main river below Rocky Islands. Immediately downstream the only rapid of note is Wetbottom Chute.

The main hazard is the "S"-turn, one of the most dangerous canoeable sections of the Potomac. The "S"-turn and the Upper Fishladder Rapids above should be left to EXPERT boaters only since this area has accounted for the majority of canoe-related drownings in the immediate vicinity. The Rocky Islands Rapids generate waves to a height of seven feet, depending upon river level.

Water levels: EXTREME CAUTION should govern a trip beginning at Sand Beach at any water level. There is EXTREME RISK at levels over 6.0 feet in the main channel. The "S"-turn is NOT RECOMMENDED FOR OPEN BOATS. At levels of 5.0 feet and above, the center and Maryland channels are passable to EXPERIENCED whitewater boaters. Care should be exercised at the top of the center channel. The Maryland channel has a hydraulic phenomenon that varies with water level from an exciting rock-rimmed chute to a treacherous reversal at 6.5 feet and above that is not apparent from above.

River level recordings are available in tenths and hundredths by dialing 899-3710.



Most incidents of drowning or what will at best be a harrowing experience are caused by ignoring a few basic tenets of safe boating. An awareness of these concepts will enable you to enjoy and appreciate one of the last bastions of personal adventure, the solitude of tranquil waters or the power of a raging wilderness river.

WEAR A LIFE JACKET !

BE A COMPETENT SWIMMER !

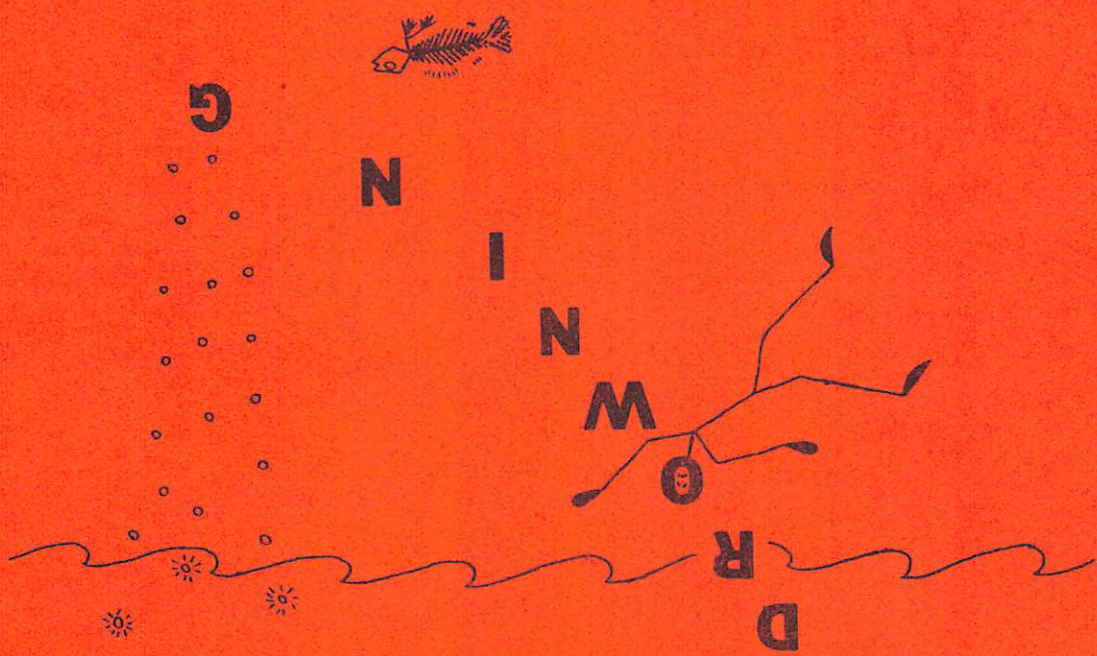
BE AWARE OF RIVER HAZARDS !

REMEMBER: COLD WATER KILLS !

For additional information, contact the National Park Service, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, 11710 MacArthur Boulevard, Potomac, Maryland 20854 (301) 299-3613, 299-4157.

EMERGENCY
CALL POLICE
CALL VA. PARK POLICE
703-526-6800

MATTER



SAFETY IS NO