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U.S. Department of Interior

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C&O Canal National Historical Park News Release

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National Park Service completes restoration of only operational canal aqueduct in North America and breaks ground for new visitor center

Celebrate the completion of the restored Conococheague Aqueduct and the groundbreaking for a new park visitor center and headquarters on August 8

Williamsport, Md. — The National Park Service (NPS) and Town of Williamsport invite you to celebrate the completed restoration of the Conococheague Aqueduct and the groundbreaking of a new Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (C&O Canal) visitor center and headquarters. The event will be held on Thursday, August 8 at 10 a.m. at the Cushwa Basin in Williamsport.

For the first time since 1924, the historic Conococheague Aqueduct is now watered and fully operational, allowing a canal boat to pass over Conococheague Creek. Williamsport is now the only place in North America where visitors can view a variety of canal features in one place, including an operational lift lock and refurbished lockhouse, a railroad lift bridge, a canal turning basin and warehouse and now a watered aqueduct.

Nearly 100 years after two stone walls of the Conococheague Aqueduct collapsed, the National Park Service has restored the aqueduct using timber and original stones. The \$10.2 million project took two years to complete, and was funded through federal, local and private dollars including national park entrance fees and Maryland's Transportation Alternatives and Bikeways programs.

Eventually, the entire section of the C&O Canal in Williamsport will be restored to its 1920s appearance so it can tell the story of this important time in American history. Secured funding will support a new crossing of the canal and a rail trail. Additional funding will be sought to create a new interpretive landscape surrounding the Cushwa Warehouse to bring the story of the industrial revolution along the canal to life for visitors of all ages.

The August 8th event will also include a groundbreaking ceremony for construction of a new visitor center and park headquarters adjacent to the park in Williamsport. New construction of the

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park headquarters and visitor center will begin in 2020 and is projected to be complete in late 2021. The planned headquarters move from Hagerstown will bring about 70 jobs to Williamsport with an annual payroll of about \$5 million. The total project cost is \$15 million.

Guest speakers for this event include Maryland Governor Lawrence J. Hogan; U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin; U.S. Senator Christopher Van Hollen, Jr.; Maryland Senator George C. Edwards; Maryland Delegate Michael W. McKay; Congressman David Trone; National Park Service acting Deputy Director for Operations David Vela; Williamsport Mayor William Green; Washington County Commissioner President Jeffrey Cline; and C&O Canal Superintendent Kevin Brandt.

This event is free and open to the public and will take place at the C&O Canal National Historical Park Cushwa Basin, 205 West Potomac Street, Williamsport, Md. Parking is available at Williamsport's Riverbottom Park. For more information about the event, including a detailed agenda and site map, visit the [C&O Canal National Historical Park website](#) or call 301-582-0813. Follow the event on Facebook at [chesapeakeandohiocanal](#) and on Twitter [@COcanalNPS](#)

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ABOUT THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO CANAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK: The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park preserves and interprets the historical, natural and recreational resources of the C&O Canal. Over 5,000,000 visitors a year enjoy the opportunities for recreation and understanding that the Park has to offer. For more information, visit the Park's website at www.nps.gov/choh.