



4940 Canal Road, NW
Washington, DC 20007
202-244-0461

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March 9, 2015



Great Blue Heron footprints in the snow at
Fletcher's Cove
(Photo by Dan Ward)

It's March and a thick blanket of snow covers the ground like sweet white frosting on a rich chocolate birthday cake. The promise of a glorious Washington spring, as sweet as the cake, lies under this temporary retrenchment into a dying season. It will indeed be a rebirth! The signs of the new season are evident even as we wait impatiently for the final crystals of winter to melt away. Robins spy worms on bare patches of ground. Mourning doves greet us with their distinctive sunrise song. Crocus bulbs peek out from sunny southern-facing slopes. And surely, the final episode of Downton Abbey means spring cannot be far behind!

In my lifetime as a Washingtonian I have never seen the Potomac so solidly and deeply iced-over as it has been of late. Those of us along the Potomac now hope for a gentle thaw, one that minimizes the dangers of an ice jam that can crush docks and boats like a vise. The landscape at Fletcher's Cove has been a frozen tundra since early January. It is amazing to think that in a few short weeks, fish from distant waters will school urgently

and thickly just out from the cove. Faith, my friend... and hope and trust.

Over the winter, personnel of the C & O Canal National Historic Park worked to maintain access to the dock at Fletcher's Cove. This was done under the difficult conditions mentioned above and a debt of gratitude is due for the effort. The elements, especially river floods, are hard on anything man-made by the water's edge. Our dock has seen many moons and has to withstand the winds, tides and currents as well as use and abuse of people. I'm crossing my fingers for a benevolent spring, but as a river-rat of old, nothing I might see coming down the old Potomac will truly surprise me.

Fletcher's will be opening later this month; no firm date has been established yet.



New Dock Elements on a Thawing Riverscape
(Photo by Dan Ward)

"AN IMMOVABLE FEAST"

Old friends add flavor to an annual fish fry
by Bill Heavey
(credit to www.fieldandstream.com
and A Sportsman's Life)



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[Check out Dan's article on Fletcher's Cove in the
March 2012 issue of *The Buzz*](#)
(pages 6-7)

[March 2011 issue of *The Buzz*](#)
(pages 11-12)

[Rowin' on the River at Fletcher's Cove](#)
article in *KidFriendly DC*
July 2013

[Click here](#) for a great interactive map
of the area around Fletcher's
(opens in new window)

CHAPTER SHAD REPORTS



During the shad run (usually April thru mid-June), our chapter sends out reports of fishing conditions at Fletcher's Cove and elsewhere as we receive information. If you know someone who might want to receive these reports, [email NCC-TU](#) with "SHAD" in the subject line and provide your name and email address. If you received shad reports last year, you don't need to resubscribe to get them in 2013.

There's lots to do prior to welcoming new and old friends: final boat prep and registration, oars to paint, cleanup of the facilities, bait and tackle to order, D.C. fishing permits to purchase and the assorted administrative and office system details that can't be ignored, even at a place that shouts for simpler times. One thing you can count on at Fletcher's Cove is a smile and the feeling that you've left the hustle and bustle behind for the day. Here at this very special spot along the Potomac, nature speaks with a voice that is impossible to ignore.



Winter sunset over Fletcher's Cove
(Photo by Dan Ward)

For those of you new to this site please [review some archived reports](#) to better understand the fishing and boating possibilities. Websites are great, but for up-to-the minute info and confirmations, a phone call still beats all. Fletcher's does not take reservations, and weather and water conditions determine what we can offer on a daily basis. Make no assumptions, Mother Nature is our CEO and keeping things safe and simple is our plan of action!

Hope to see you as soon as we defrost!

Dan

[Click here](#) for a great interactive map of The Boathouse at Fletcher's Cove Area Fishing and Outdoor Fun (opens in new window)



Dimo, our mascot waits to go fishing
(Photo by Dan Ward)

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