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Fletcher's Cove Fishing Report, April 10, 2005

After a deep Winter stillness that was at once peaceful yet disturbing in its silence, vibrant signs of life have reappeared at Fletcher's Cove. Both man and nature have dictated a slower start to this Spring along the fall line of the Potomac. Patience is the order of the day.

Daffodils, Virginia Bluebells and Cherry Blossoms have touched the landscape with color to remind mere mortals that the Mother will reward that patience.

The delicate flowers also tell us that fish are now active in the river searching for the right mix of elements and proper spot to satisfy the primal urge to sustain. Can Man not be humbled by all of this?

Being at The Boathouse at Fletcher's Cove is all about the merging of the elements that surround us. The wind and the water, the land and the sky, the city and the park, even the paradoxical desire to share our solitude. We Washingtonians (and visitors too!) are lucky to have places such as this so close to the hustle and bustle of everyday life. As many of you know, after over a century of operation by the Fletcher Family, the boathouse is now in the care of Guest Services, a very active recreational facilitator in our area.

GSI is working methodically with the US Park Service to carry on the traditions and services that have caused generations of natives and visitors to love this place seemingly out of proportion to its size and scope. Many of the familiar rowboats are bright red again, and after much high water the river dock is positioned for use. The store is posting regular hours and has tackle, bait and DC fishing permits for sale. New bikes will be ordered soon to replace the well worn old cycles. As soon as the C&O Canal is re-watered in our level, canoes will be available to cruise below the budding trees.

So far this Spring the Potomac has been too swift to rent fishing rowboats. Hopefully this week of the tenth will see the river drop to a level which allows their use. Hickory Shad and Herring are just making an appearance in the last few days and the White Perch catches will build in momentum as the water warms into the 50's. Large Striped Bass are most assuredly roaming the bottom looking for hapless baitfish. In a week or so the large American Shad should arrive in schools replenished with the help of biologist Jim Cummins of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River. All local fisher-people owe Jim a debt of gratitude for helping to rebalance the natural order of the river. (That's no small effort in this day and age!)

Of course many large Catfish and assorted Bass, Walleyes and panfish are hungry at this time of year too. Tardy congratulations go out to Ray Helmuth of Langley Park, Maryland who caught an approximately 47 pound catfish last October a few miles downstream from Fletcher's and brought it by to weigh. It bottomed out our scale but certainly was the largest cat I've ever shared slime with. By my account, Ray is Washington's "Catfish King".

Our temporary number at Fletcher's Cove is 202-237-1872. However, the old number for the boathouse (202-244-0461) may be resurrected in the near future. Welcome back to the new season at Fletcher's Cove!

Dan

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