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CHANGE ALERT FRIDAY, MAY 27th

Due to heavy downpours in the upper watershed late Thursday, it appears the river level will rise to un-rentable levels late Saturday through Memorial Day. Fletcher's **WILL BE OPEN** for rentals on the C&O Canal, as well as all the tackle shack and refreshment options. **If you plan to come fishing this weekend, Saturday, early, will be your best bet.**

MEMORIAL WEEKEND UPDATE 2011



Proud seven-year old Sam Rodillosso with a catch at Fletcher's Cove

A fourth wave of floodwater has receded and Fletcher's Cove is again renting boats on the Potomac. As the nation prepares to honor its fallen service men and women, springtime passes into summer and the landscape around the boathouse becomes tropical. The power of the river will be evident to those who traverse our tunnel and driveway. Huge tree trunks and debris from the high water line the roadway, but access to our lot is clear, with a bit of caution due.

If you are a dedicated shad fisherman, give it at least one last shot before the water warms to Amazon-like temps. Just this morning, Mike Bailey found American shad willing to hit his darts on the current edge. At this time of year, come prepared to switch gears as you may want to try for stripers or bass after giving the late season shad a go.

One of the great things about fishing at Fletcher's Cove is the variety of species you might reel in. From pan fish to behemoth blue cats, one never knows what lurks within casting distance. Make your summer fishing

about relaxation, a break from the ordinary, and how can you lose? In this flood ravaged season, the folks at Fletcher's would really like to see your smile.

We are [renting canoes, kayaks and bikes](#), and the [tackle shack](#) is fully stocked, including lots of cold water and sunscreen.

Hope to see you soon.

Report from Fletcher's Cove - May 9, 2011

Mama said there'd be springs like this... there'd be springs like this, my mama said! That refrain keeps playing in my head as we approach mid-May. Springs like this DO come along at Fletcher's Cove every so often. I tell the young-uns that there was an April way back in the '80's when



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[Check out Dan's article on Fletcher's Cove in the March issue of The Buzz](#)
(pages 11-12)



"Jeff Marquis with a fat Potomac hickory shad"
(photo by Mike Bailey)

Fletcher's did not rent a single boat the entire month of April. This April of 2011, we came close to matching that record. The Potomac was simply too roiled-up, the currents too strong, the flow too unrelentingly high to rent out our fleet of fishing skiffs. The count was up to three weeks plus of no rentals to the frustrated fishermen.

I am happy to report... ALL THAT HAS CHANGED. The Potomac flowing past Fletcher's Cove today resembles the graceful river, strong but well mannered, we all love to see. The clarity is perfect for fishing, and fish there are indeed. Dick Tehaan, Gordon Leisch and Paula (the dock lady) caught many jumbo white perch today. It is the tail end of the run, so if this interests you, act quickly to get in on the action. Both American and hickory shad are hitting darts in the eddies and seams just out from Fletcher's. We still have darts and flies in stock for your late-run shad angling. David Policansky was out this morning and on his last cast while fly rodding for shad, he hooked and boated a good sized American. Several other anglers also told me today that they were catching many hickory shad from the shore. With warmer waters later this month, hickories will wane and Americans will rise as the predominant species. There are rarely as many American shad as hickory, but what is lost in sheer numbers is compensated for with power and excitement. If you have never battled a stout American (or white) shad, you have a profound angling experience ahead of you: They don't call shad "the poor man's tarpon" for nothing!

Striped bass season begins on May 16th. Stripers, (or rockfish, as they are know around the Chesapeake region) are considered a premier game fishing species. They migrate up the river to Fletcher's to prey on the multitude of herring and small white perch populating the waters. As the summer progresses, "schoolie" fish from 12 to 24 inches show up in the oxygenated flow around Chain Bridge, downriver to Walker's Point just south of Fletcher's. Those fish can be taken on streamer flies, poppers and baits such as bloodworms, minnows or, for the angler wishing to use bait suitable for human consumption, soft-shell crabs.

During the three week period of flooding at Fletcher's, snakehead fever infected some of the locals. Snakeheads in large numbers were spotted prowling in the shallow headwaters of every creek and outfall at and above Fletcher's Cove. On Friday, the 29th of April, at least a dozen snakeheads from four to nine pounds were pulled from the muddy water of The Cove. Alex Binsted has been anointed "King Snakehead, the First" for his fish stalking prowess. He received the golden snakehead plaque, handmade by Ray Fletcher from driftwood washed in by the flooding. An impromptu snakehead fry on May 5th accentuated just how delicious these fish are.

In the angler's world, snakeheads are nothing if not controversial. Indicative of a generational gap of acceptance for invasive species among fishermen, Mike Alper produced a hand-crafted sign proclaiming "save the snakeheads." Can a sit-in or protest rally for these vilified fish be far behind?

Fletcher's is now [renting kayaks and canoes](#) on both the river and C & O Canal, as well as [bikes](#) for the towpath and Capital Crescent Trail. We have [bait, tackle and the necessary D.C. fishing permit](#). The picnic area is open and adorned with an interesting array of driftwood and flotsam from all the flooding. The woods and sky around the boathouse are alive with wildlife. Hawks, kingfishers, eagles, Baltimore orioles, hummingbirds, swallows and great blue herons are just a few of the birds that make Fletcher's a bird watchers destination point. Skinks, snakes, deer, fox, ground hogs and turtles of many types peek out from the shadows. Come witness for yourself the beauty of a river-bottom, flood-plain landscape.

Dan



"Dick Tehaan holds a freshly captured snakehead" (photo by Dan Ward)



"Daniel Mai shows off a chunky, colorful, 31 inch snakehead" (photographer unknown)



"Mike Alper kicks-off 'save the snakeheads' campaign" (photo by Dan Ward)

