

## **C&O Canal, Edward's Ferry**

Edward's Ferry at Lock 25 is thirty miles out from the beginning of the towpath at Rock Creek Park in downtown Washington. Once a ferry and a factory existed there. Now, it's just a quiet spot for those launching fishing boats or visiting the towpath. Driving out there on River Road from Washington can give you the feeling of driving to the end civilization. The road, busy in downtown Washington, gradually becomes quieter, single lane in a few places, then finally dirt and gravel. Watch out for the many road cyclists on the rural sections. From the parking area, a route in the direction of Washington goes to the McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area (WMA), a flood plane managed by the State of Maryland. Going in the other direction, River Road itself offers an opportunity to make a loop to White's Ferry.

### **Getting There**

Take the Capital Beltway (I-495), to the River Road (Rte. 190) headed west, outside the beltway. After 11.5 miles, turn left at a T-intersection to stay on River Rd. Six-and-a-half miles later, bear right on Mt. Nebo Rd. This becomes W. Offutt Rd. at an intersection with Offutt Rd. on the right. About eight tenths of a mile past the intersection, and three quarters of a mile after a sharp bend in the road to the left, turn left at a T intersection with Edwards Ferry Rd. At the bottom of the hill, One and one-tenth of a mile later, bear left at the intersection with River Rd. and then park after crossing the C&O Canal.

Alternatively from Leesburg in Loudoun County, Virginia, take Route 15 north. Turn right on Whites Ferry Rd. a mile after the intersection of the Route 15 business and the Route 15 bypass routes. Pay the toll (\$3) and cross the river (The ferry gives you a chance to imagine a slower life on the river. View the river plants swaying in the gentle waters. The trip takes only 5 minutes). After crossing the canal, turn right on River Rd., a dirt and gravel road. After 3.7 miles, turn right again to stay on River Rd. at the intersection with Elmer School Rd. Finally go 1.35 miles more, bear right on Edward's Ferry Rd., cross the canal again and park.

### **Area Routes**

#### Sycamore Landing (10.75 miles, IX)

Sycamore Landing Rd. is an alternative way of looping through the McKee-Beshers WMA. From Lock 25, at Edward's Ferry Rd. take the C&O towpath toward Washington. Pass Chisel Branch campground. Water from pumps at all campgrounds on this route should be treated before being used for drinking. The stretch of the towpath used on this route and most of that included on the White's Ferry route is best described as a flat tunnel through a forest. Trees almost continually canopy overhead. Few landmarks breaks it up so if you're into meditative aspects of running or riding, you'll enjoy this. Pass Sycamore Landing Road on the left. You will return on it. Turn left at Horsepen Branch campground onto a dirt trail that leads from the water pump. It in-turn leads to a double-track. Puddles in wet seasons can make it difficult to navigate long after a rainfall. Hunting is also allowed in the WMA during the fall. After passing the large ponds frequented by much waterfowl, turn left on Hunting Quarter Road, another gravel road, but one open to auto traffic. Climb a small hill on Hughes Rd. to River Rd, and briefly use

the shoulder to get to Sycamore Landing Rd. Sycamore Landing Rd. is a gravel road on the edge of the WMA. At the parking area at the end of the road, pass through the gate and turn right on the C&O towpath to return to Edwards Ferry Rd.

#### Whites Ferry (10.0 or 2.35 miles; VIII or I)

This route uses a long dirt and gravel stretch of River Road, and the C&O towpath, to make a loop between Edward's Ferry and White's Ferry. The portion on River Road is mostly across open fields and some turf farms. It has some long gradual hills and contrasts sharply with the flat tree covered towpath. White's Ferry is still operational and a parking lot near the towpath there can be used as an alternate starting point. Drinks and snacks can be purchased at the ferry. An optional short route uses a National Park Service horse trail to connect River Road and the towpath. The footing on the horse trail which crosses park land, can be rough from dried-up horse hoof prints left on muddier days.

#### **Nearby and Connecting Zones**

C&O Canal, Riley's Lock  
W&OD, Leesburg  
Taylorstown, Virginia

#### **What to do Afterward**

##### Food and Drink

picnic

Leo's Place - Poolesville, MD - pizza and sandwiches - (301) 972-7443

White's Ferry - 301 349-5200

##### Entertainment and Edification

White's Ferry - an operational ferry over quiet waters of the Potomac takes people to Leesburg -  
301 349-5200

Historic Leesburg, Virginia

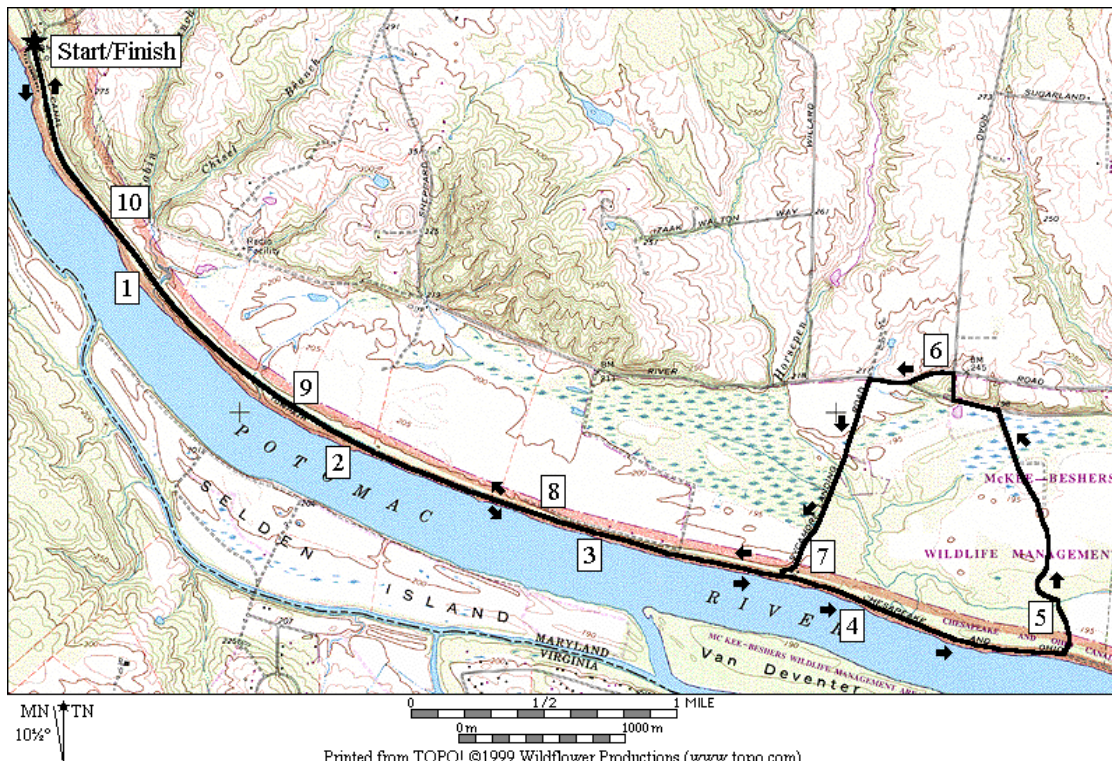
## Sycamore Landing

Distance: 10.75 miles

Rating: IX; flat dirt roads and towpath

### 10.75 Mile Route

- |    |      |  |  |
|----|------|--|--|
| R  | 0.0  | from Edward's Ferry Rd at Lock 25  | (unmarked gravel road)                                 |
|    | 0.35 | Chisel Branch campground   |  |
|    | 0.85 | mile marker 30   | R 5.85 Hughes Rd (unmarked)                            |
|    | 1.9  | mile marker 29   | L 5.95 River Rd (use shoulder)                         |
|    | 2.9  | mile marker 28   | L 6.25 Sycamore Landing Rd (gravel)                    |
|    | 3.7  | parking for Sycamore Landing on L  | R 7.1 through gate at end of road and onto C&O towpath |
|    | 3.9  | mile mark 27   | 7.85 mile mark 28                                      |
|    | 4.1  | bridge over creek  | 8.85 mile mark 29                                      |
|    |      |  | 9.9 mile mark 30                                       |
| L  | 4.8  | trail X on L at Horsepen Branch camp; trail is near water pump           | 10.4 Chisel Branch campground                          |
| BL | 5.15 | onto double-track dirt road (unmarked); go straight at all intersections | 10.75 Edward's Ferry Rd at Lock 25                     |
| L  | 5.7  | Hunting Quarter Rd at T after gate                                       |  |



## White's Ferry

Distance: 10.0 or 2.35 miles

Rating: VIII or I; gravel roads across fields w/gradual hills, dirt flat and shady towpath

### 10.0 Mile Route

- |     |   |   |      |  |
|-----|---|---|------|--|
| 0.0 | from Edwards Ferry Rd at Lock 25<br>follow the road away from the river | L   | 5.1  | C&O Canal towpath; iron trestle and<br>stone bridges (alternate parking) |
|     |   |   | 5.6  | mile marker 35   |
| L   | 0.1   | River Rd  | 6.2  | campground (treat water pump water<br>before drinking)                   |
|     | 0.8   | gas pipeline crossing clearing  | 6.55 | mile marker 34   |
| <*  |   |   | 7.05 | bridge   |
|     | 0.9   | trail X and gate on L (NPS horse<br>trail)                                  | 7.5  | mile marker 33   |
|     | 1.15  | bridge over Broad Run creek   | 7.9  | power lines  |
|     |   |   | 8.85 | mile marker 32 (long mile)   |
| L   | 1.45  | at T to stay on River Rd; Elmer<br>School Rd on R                           | 8.9  | bridge over Broad Run trunk and<br>canal stonework                       |
|     | 1.95  | pipe bridge for stream  | 8.95 | trail X on L horse trail   |
|     | 2.35  | power lines   | >*   |  |
|     | 3.05  | turf farm main entrance   | 9.25 | gas pipeline; view across river to<br>golf course                        |
|     | 4.0   | pipe bridge between fields  | 9.85 | mile marker 31   |
|     | 4.9   | trail X on R  | 10.0 | Edward's Ferry Rd at Lock 25   |
| L   | 5.1   | White's Ferry Rd (snacks and drinks<br>at Whites Ferry at river, 0.1 ahead) |      |  |

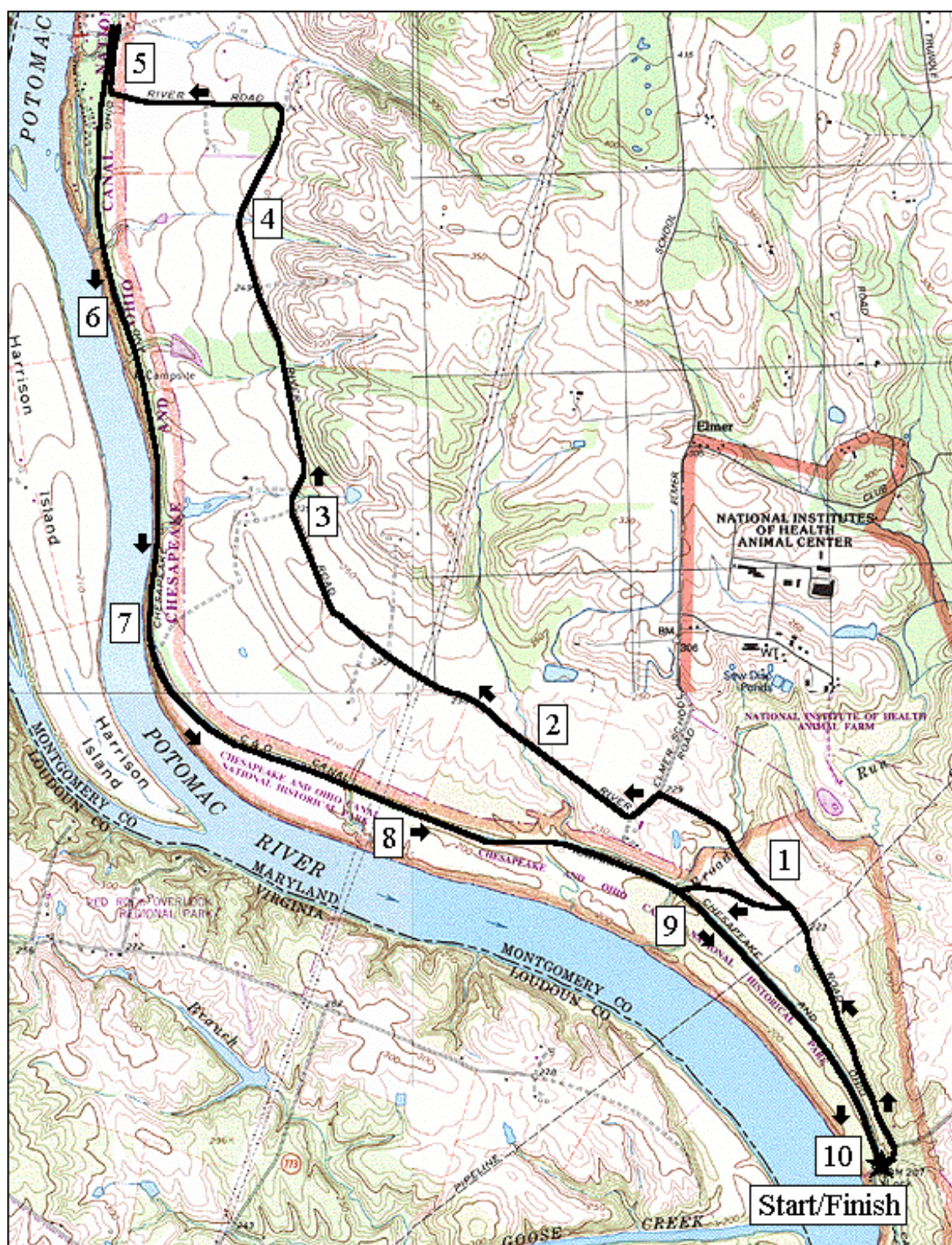
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### \*2.35 Mile Route

- |   |     |   |   |      |  |
|---|-----|---|---|------|--|
| L | 0.9 | gate and trail X on L (dirt NPS horse<br>trail) | L | 1.25 | C&O canal towpath (pickup cues at<br>mile 9.25 on 10.0 mile route) |
|---|-----|---|---|------|--|



# White's Ferry



MN TN  
10 1/2°

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