

## **C&O Canal, Lock 7**

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, a throughway long ago designed for transporting industry's goods and raw materials between Washington D.C. and Cumberland, M.D., is used for profoundly different uses today. Traveling up the towpath, as you get further from Washington, it almost seems like you are dropping back in time. Not that the industry of old envelops you; what was industrial back then is rural by modern reckoning. By Lock 7, less than 8 miles from Georgetown, little trail traffic is encountered. What one does find are shady trees arching quietly over the canal, with occasional views of the Potomac River. The locks and lock keeper houses aren't the only historical structures in the area. The Clara Barton House and Glen Echo Park, both National Parks, sit side-by-side perched above the canal. Clara Barton was founder of the American Red Cross. Glen Echo Park has a rich history centered around arts and amusement. Also nearby, the Cabin John Bridge, for many decades history's longest stone masonry arch can be seen and traversed on MacArthur Blvd. This bridge, with its one lane for cars, and one lane for cyclists and pedestrians, was designed in 1853 as an aqueduct. It still carries water for "the District, Arlington County, Falls Church and outlying areas" according to the Washington Post (Go With The Flow: Cabin John Bridge; Eugene L. Meyer, 9/22/1998). The MacArthur Blvd. trail, also used by routes described here, passes by these famous landmarks.

### **Getting There**

#### From Maryland

Take the Capital Beltway (I-495), to the Cabin John Parkway headed south toward Washington D.C. The Parkway merges with the Clara Barton Parkway. Continue on it only one-half mile to a small parking lot, immediately off the Clara Barton Parkway on the right.

#### From Washington D.C.

Use MacArthur Blvd. to head north, away from the city. The Lock 7 parking lot cannot be accessed when taking the Clara Barton Parkway heading north. From MacArthur, less than one-quarter mile past the one-lane stone arch bridge, turn left onto an access bridge and ramp. Turn left at the end of the ramp to get on the Clara Barton Parkway headed south. Continue on it just less than one mile to a small parking lot, immediately off Clara Barton Parkway on the right.

#### From Virginia

Take the Capital Beltway (I-495) or George Washington Parkway to the American Legion Bridge over the Potomac. Exit immediately after the bridge onto the, to the Clara Barton Parkway headed south toward Washington D.C. Continue on it 2.3 miles to a small parking lot, immediately off the Clara Barton Parkway, on the right.

## Area Routes

### MacArthur Blvd to Brookmont (4.6 miles, III)

This loop combines the C&O Towpath with the MacArthur Blvd. Trail. The initial half mile is flat on the towpath. A short climb over a bridge and up to MacArthur Blvd. is all the climbing you'll have to do except for the rise back to the parking lot from the canal. The MacArthur Blvd. Trail appears to have been designed mostly for cyclist. It gets little use from cyclists or pedestrians however. It is very close to the road for long stretches, thus making it less appealing to most. After only 1.1 miles, leave it to pass through the quiet town of Brookmont. Brookmont appears to have been an old railroad town. The route uses what was once the track bed. It is unpaved now. Cross another bridge back down to the canal at Lock 5. Return on the flat and shady, crushed gravel towpath to Lock 7 and the parking lot. You can see the river occasionally from the towpath.

### Glen Echo (3.3 or 5.55 miles; II or IV)

Start this loop like the MacArthur Blvd. to Brookmont route, by taking the towpath toward Washington, then climbing the bridge and hill to MacArthur Blvd. Turn left from there on the MacArthur Blvd. Trail. The trail in this section is also often close to the road. The road however is mostly quieter than going in the other direction, and is lined by trees for much of the way. On your left pass Glen Echo Park and the Clara Barton house. In Glen Echo Park, you will find the Glen Echo Gallery and an amusement park. The park dates to 1891 as the site of a National Chatauqua Assembly. As quoted from National Park Service materials, the gathering was:

*“to promote liberal and practical education, especially among the masses of the people to teach the sciences, arts, languages, and literature; to prepare its patrons for their several pursuits and professions in life; and to fit them for the duties which devolve upon them as members of society.”*

Malaria fears prevented the continuation of such gatherings. The park service does offer educational and entertainment programs of dancing, classes and workshops, theater and puppetry for children. The park did operate as an amusement park from the early 1900's until 1968. It has a playgrounds open to children now. See the hand carved Dentzel carousel still in operation four days a week in May through September.

Next to Glen Echo is the Clara Barton House. Even the ground between Glen Echo and the Clara Barton House is interesting. Interpretive signs describe how floods change a creek gorge there. Clara Barton chose her house and home to the American Red Cross in 1892. In an act perhaps showing her early recognition of a business practice more in vogue for the 1990's, she moved her home and organization headquarters from downtown D.C. to the suburbs. The house was used as a warehouse for disaster relief supplies. Clara Barton died in the house in 1912.

After passing these historic places, the shorter route returns to the canal towpath by turning left on a trail just before crossing the Cabin John Bridge. The trail is gravel and steep at one point. The longer route crosses the bridge on the MacArthur Blvd. bicycle trail. The bridge, a stone masonry arch 205 ft. long, spans Cabin John Creek. It's a 105 foot drop down to the creek.

The long route returns to the canal first by using roads to go under the Clara Barton Parkway, then using a trail which leads to Lock 8. The return on the towpath to Lock 7 for both the short and extended route is flat. Only a slight climb is left from Lock 7 to the parking area.

### **Nearby and Connecting Zones**

Bethesda  
C&O Canal, Carderock Recreational Area  
Cabin John Regional Park

### **What to do Afterward**

#### Food and Drink

Glen Echo Pizza & Subs - 301 263-0414  
Sushi Kanpai - 301 229-2526  
Bethesda Food CO-OP - 301 320-2530

#### Entertainment and Edification

Glen Echo - 301 492-6229 or 301 492-6282  
Clara Barton House - 301 492-6245  
Glen Echo Amusement Park

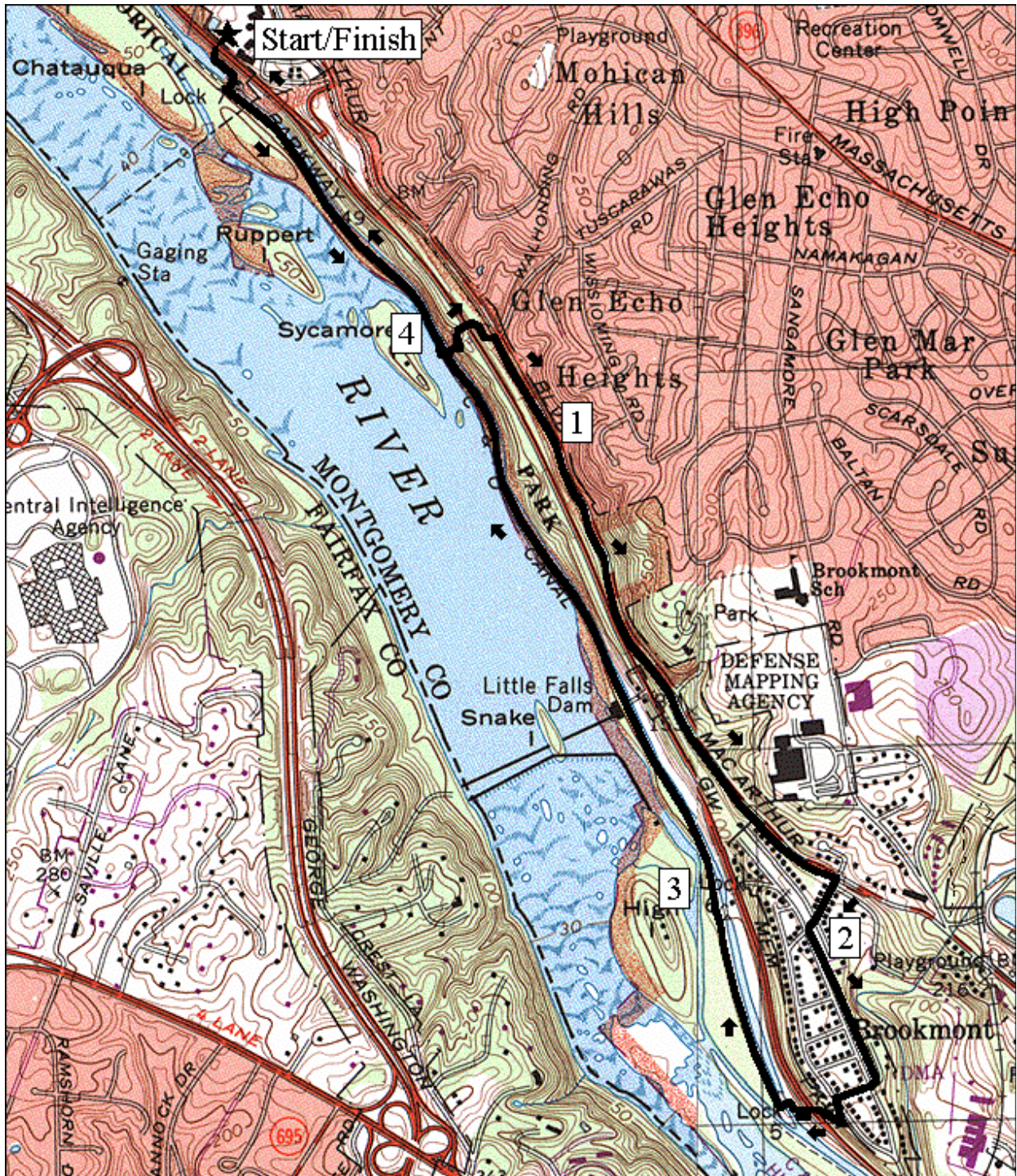
## **MacArthur Boulevard to Brookmont**

Distance: 4.6 miles

Rating: III; crushed stone towpath, paved and unpaved trails

- 0.0 downhill on the trail from the Lock 7 parking lot on the Clara Barton Pkwy
- L 0.05 C&O towpath
- R 0.65 stairs for metal bridge to go over the canal, the spiral bridge and the Clara Barton Pkwy
- R 0.8 MacArthur Blvd Trail
- CR 1.9 Maryland Ave.
- L 2.0 RR grade in the median of Broad St
- R 2.3 61<sup>st</sup> St
- L 2.35 Ridge Rd
- R 2.4 trail head to C&O towpath
- 2.5 spiral bridge
- R 2.55 C&O towpath at Lock 5 (restroom)
- 2.95 Lock 6
- 3.15 trail X on L to intake of 3 mile long skirting canal
- 3.3 underpass pumping station aqueduct
- 3.95 stairs for metal bridge on L
- R 4.55 wooden bridge over Lock 7 toward parking
- 4.6 Lock 7 parking

# MacArthur Boulevard to Brookmont



MN \* TN  
10 1/2°

0 1/2 1 MILE  
0 1000 FEET 0 500m 1000m

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## Glen Echo

Distance: 3.3 or 5.55 miles

Rating: II or IV; crushed gravel on the towpath; paved trails

### 3.3 Mile Route

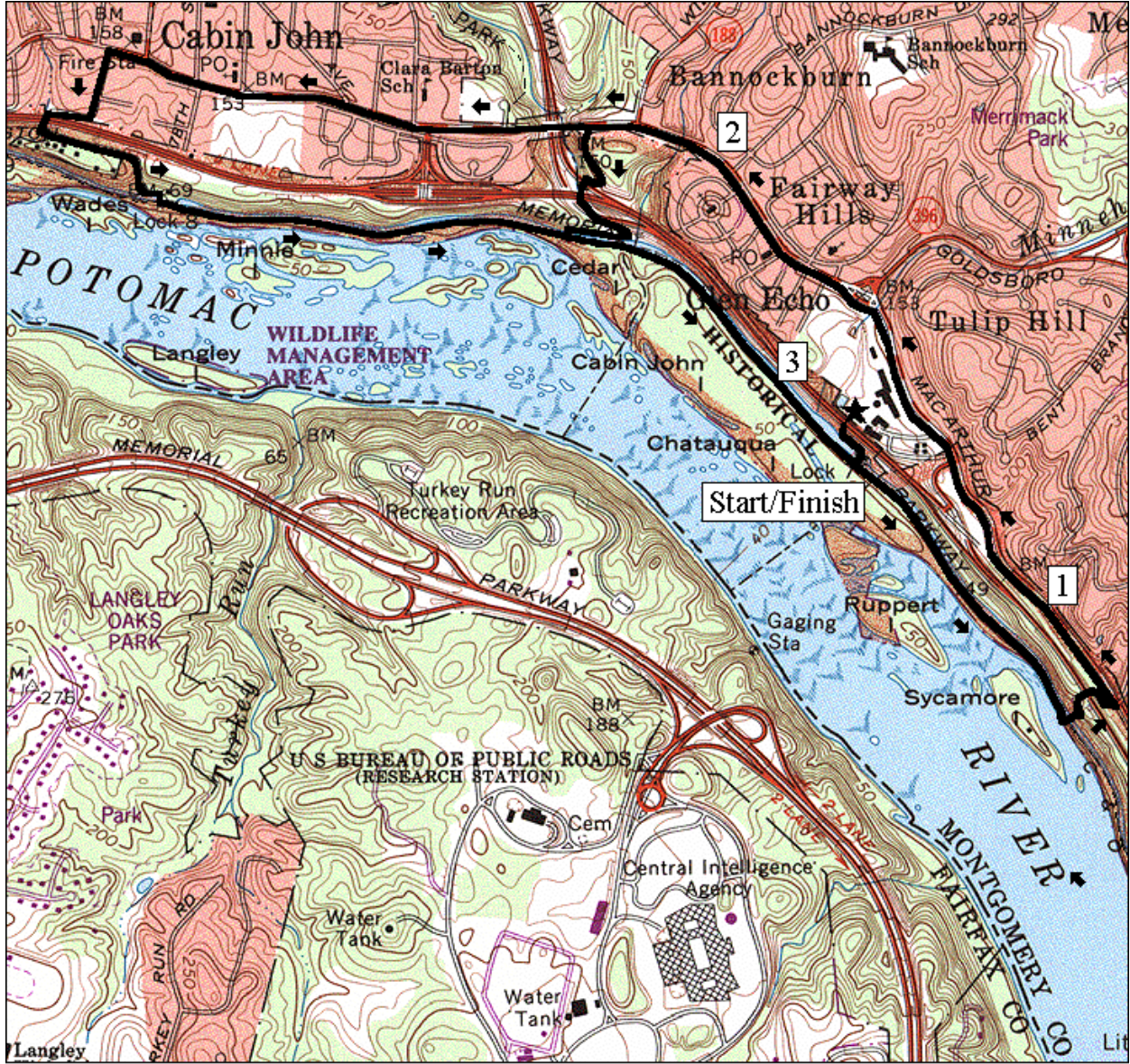
0.0	downhill from the Lock 7 parking lot on the Clara Barton Pkwy	L	2.25	trail X on L to canal towpath; just before the stone arch bridge; (!) short steep downhill w/loose gravel
L 0.05	C&O towpath		2.4	underpass parkway interchange
R 0.65	stairs for the metal bridge over the canal, the spiral bridge and the Clara Barton Pkwy	L	2.6	C&O Towpath at wooden bridge over the canal
		>*		
L 0.8	MacArthur Blvd trail	L	3.25	wooden bridge over Lock 7
1.35	Oberlin Ave & ramp to Clara Barton Pkwy		3.3	parking for Lock 7
1.75	Clara Barton Historic Site			
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### \*5.55 Mile Route

2.25	trail X on L to canal towpath; just before Cabin John Bridge	BL	3.25	after underpass of Clara Barton Pkwy
2.35	end of Cabin John Bridge			
2.4	Cabin John Trail head to Cabin John Park on R	S	3.45	trail head to the canal at the end of Riverside Dr.
2.5	ramp to Clara Barton Pkwy on L		3.5	trail X on L to Lock 8 parking
3.0	Seven Locks Rd on R			
L 3.05	79 <sup>th</sup> St	L	3.55	C&O Towpath at wooden bridge over Lock 8 (pickup cues at mile 3.25 on 3.3 mile route)
R 3.2	onto Riverside Dr at end of 79 <sup>th</sup> St			

# Glen Echo



MN  $\uparrow$  TN  
10°

0 1/2 1 MILE  
0 1000 FEET 0 500m 1000m

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