

Community Q&A

POTOMAC RIVER



Access, Parking, and Roads

(Pennyfield/Lock 22)

Parking along Pennyfield Road (gravel road) and boat ramp parking area

- The gravel road will be used for the temporary bypass piping system, reducing parking availability.

Boat ramp access

- The intent is to keep the boat ramp open with limited parking.
- Closure updates (if any) will be posted on Montgomery County parks and DC Water's websites.

Parking closures timing

- Work will primarily occur during the week.
- Efforts will be made to keep some parking available, though spaces will be limited.

Road conditions (potholes)

- Road conditions will be assessed before construction and restored afterward in coordination with Montgomery Park and National Park Service.

Construction Impacts and Operations

(Pennyfield/Lock 22)

Canal water levels

- No impacts; canal levels are controlled by NPS and will remain unchanged and open for kayaking.

Water quality and runoff

- Sewage will be pumped and fully contained within pipes. The pipes will be placed above ground, around the site.

Trail closures

- Portions of the Muddy Branch Greenway Trail will be closed through September 2026 due to necessary utility repairs to the Potomac interceptor located adjacent to the trail. Trail closures include:
 - The trailhead at Blockhouse Point Park where it intersects with the Muddy Branch Greenway Trail
 - The South Old River Road Trail at the intersection of the Canyon Trail
 - The Mountain Bike Trail Southwestern to Pennyfield Lock Road.
 - The Muddy Branch Greenway-River Road Trail including the parking area off River Road.

Pedestrian access over pipes

- Temporary bridges are unlikely due to safety concerns around active construction and pump operations.

Bridge access (Lock 22/Pennyfield)

- The bridge connecting to the C&O Trail will remain open. Limited pedestrian access will be maintained around the staging areas.

Pumping, Capacity, and Infrastructure

(Pennyfield/Lock 22)

Pump capacity and reliability

- Adequate pumping capacity is planned, with redundancy to allow for maintenance and minimize risk of interruption.
- The public is reminded to avoid flushing wipes, grease and other non-flushable items, which can contribute to sewer blockages and increase stress on the wastewater and pumping system.

Interceptor location

- The reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) crosses beneath Muddy Branch and is encased in 12-inches in concrete at the crossing. Flow within this section of the Potomac Interceptor is ultimately treated at the Blue Plains Water Resource Recovery Facility.
- Muddy Branch Creek and Pennyfield Lock is located about 2.1 miles upstream of the WSSC drinking water intake.

Design life of pipe

- Once rehabilitated, the new slipped lined pipe will have over a 50-year design life.

Community Coordination

(Pennyfield/Lock 22)

Outreach to affected groups

- Camps and recreation providers (Calleva, Valley Mill, Potomac Paddlesports) have been contacted.
- Additional groups (e.g., MORE, the Mid Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts) have been notified.

Community engagement

- Continued updates and communication are planned and will be announced through DC Waters various communication tools and visit DC Water's website: www.dewater.com/about-dc-water/media/potomac-interceptor-collapse.