EXPLORING THE COUNTRY AT 10 MPH



The Cycling Adventures of Ellen and Jeff DeGange

Erie Canal, Florida C2C, GAP/C&O, OTET, KATY,
Greenbrier River

We met in 2012 with a mutual interest in mountain biking, kayaking, and a general love for the outdoors

We married in 2015 and quickly expanded our cycling activities to include longer distance day rides on gravel and paved trails:

- North Augusta Greenway (5 miles)
- Augusta Canal (6 miles)
- Beaufort Spanish Moss Trail (10 miles)
- Columbia 3-Rivers Greenway (15+ miles)
- Greenville Swamp Rabbit Trail (23 miles)
- Atlanta Silver Comet (95+ miles)





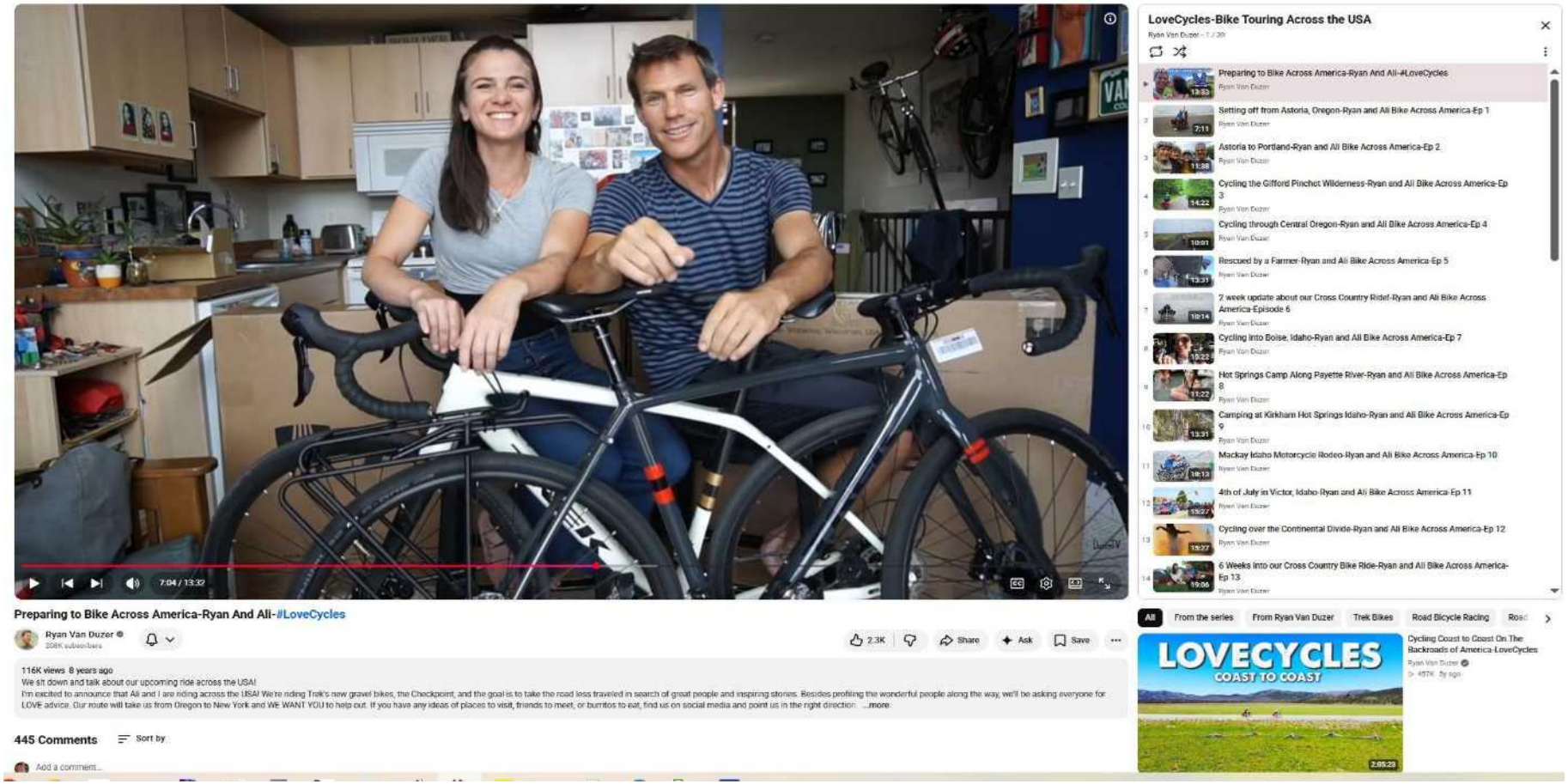






...and then we looked on YouTube...

Ryan Van Duzer - LOVECYCLES



Cycling with his girlfriend Ali from the Oregon Pacific Coast to New York City, over 3000 miles

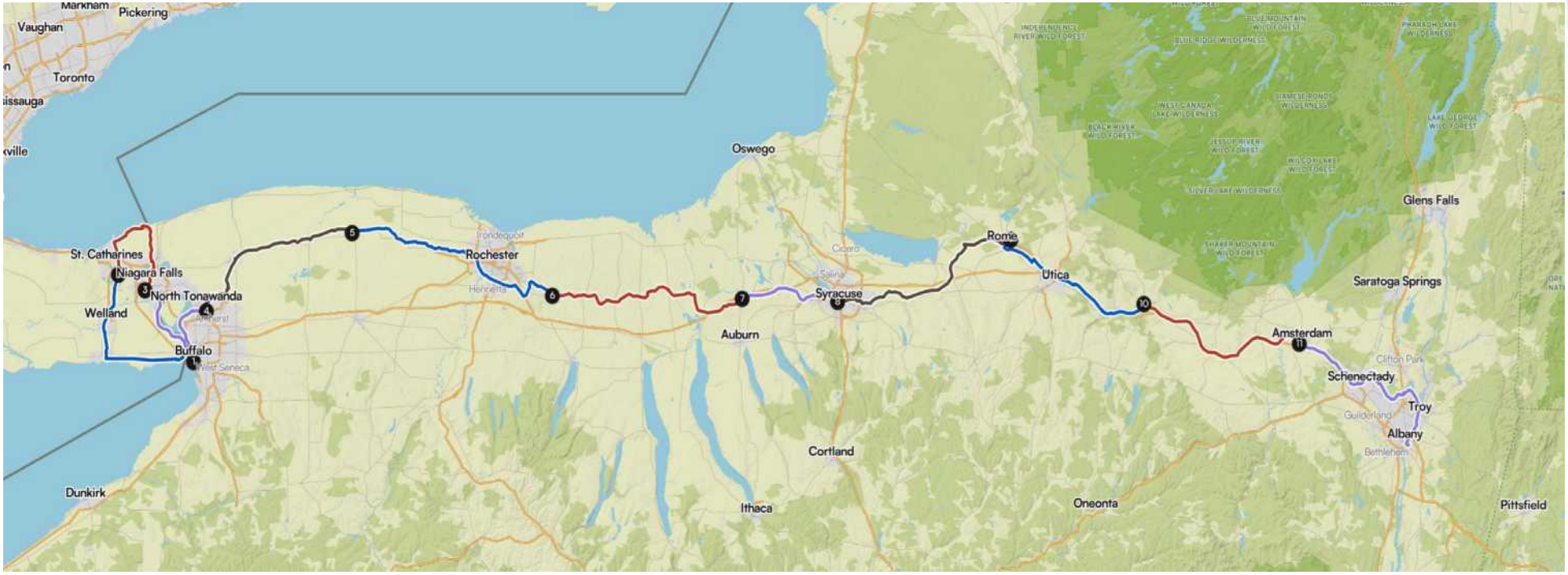
We have to do an overnight trip!

To test our tolerance for a long-distance ride, we planned a 4-day loop between DC and Harpers Ferry which stitched together several trails.



At the end of the 132 mile loop we were hooked!

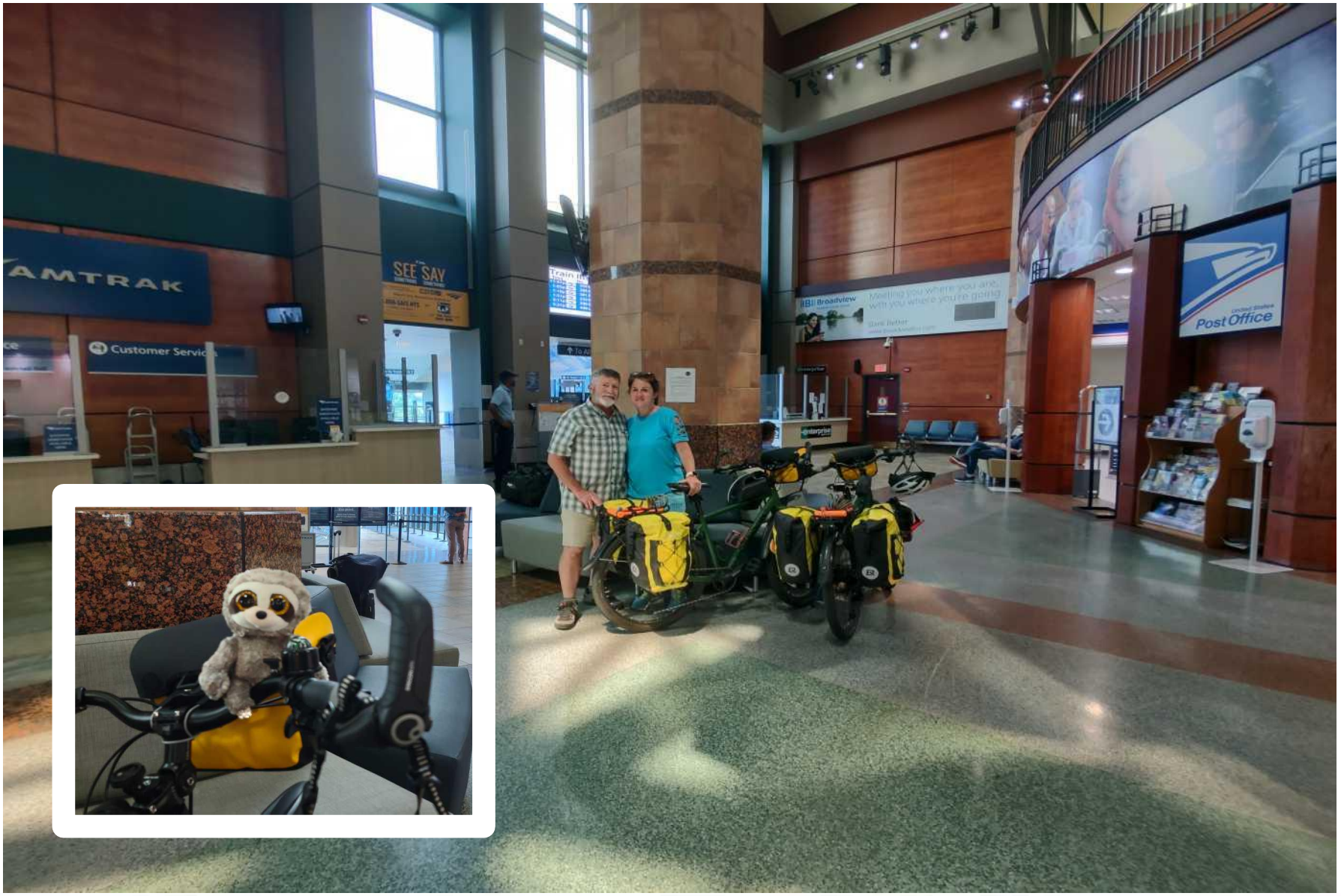
After retiring in June 2023 we set our sites on the 365 mile Erie Canal Trail in New York



… and decided to add an 85 mile loop in Canada to visit Niagara Falls!

August/September 2023

We drove to Albany NY and took AMTRAK to Buffalo with our new mascot, Dally!



The scenic Salisbury Viaduct, best seen when not wet!




Eastern Continental Divide
Leaving the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
Entering the Gulf of Mexico Watershed
WESTERN MARYLAND
FAST FREIGHT LINE


YOU ARE HERE



Big Savage Tunnel
3291 feet

The longest of the
four GAP tunnels

Starting the downhill run to Cumberland and the C&O



The Mason/Dixon Line

America's most famous boundary.

The line began as a dispute between the Penn and Calvert families over three generations. Astronomer, Charles Mason, and surveyor, Jeremiah Dixon, ended the dispute when they created the official boundary that now bears their names.

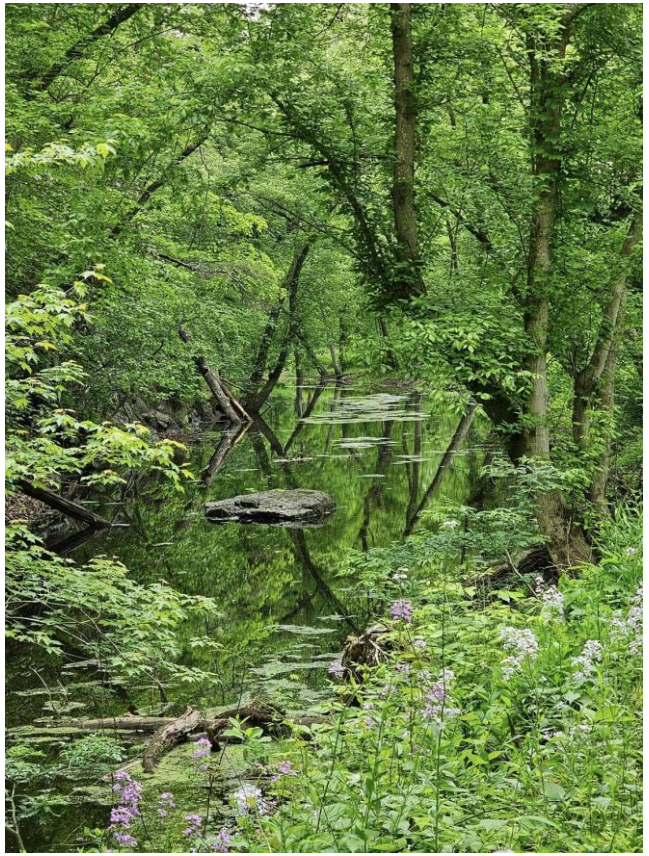




Cumberland, Maryland

Where the Great Allegheny Passage ends and the C&O Canal Trail begins.

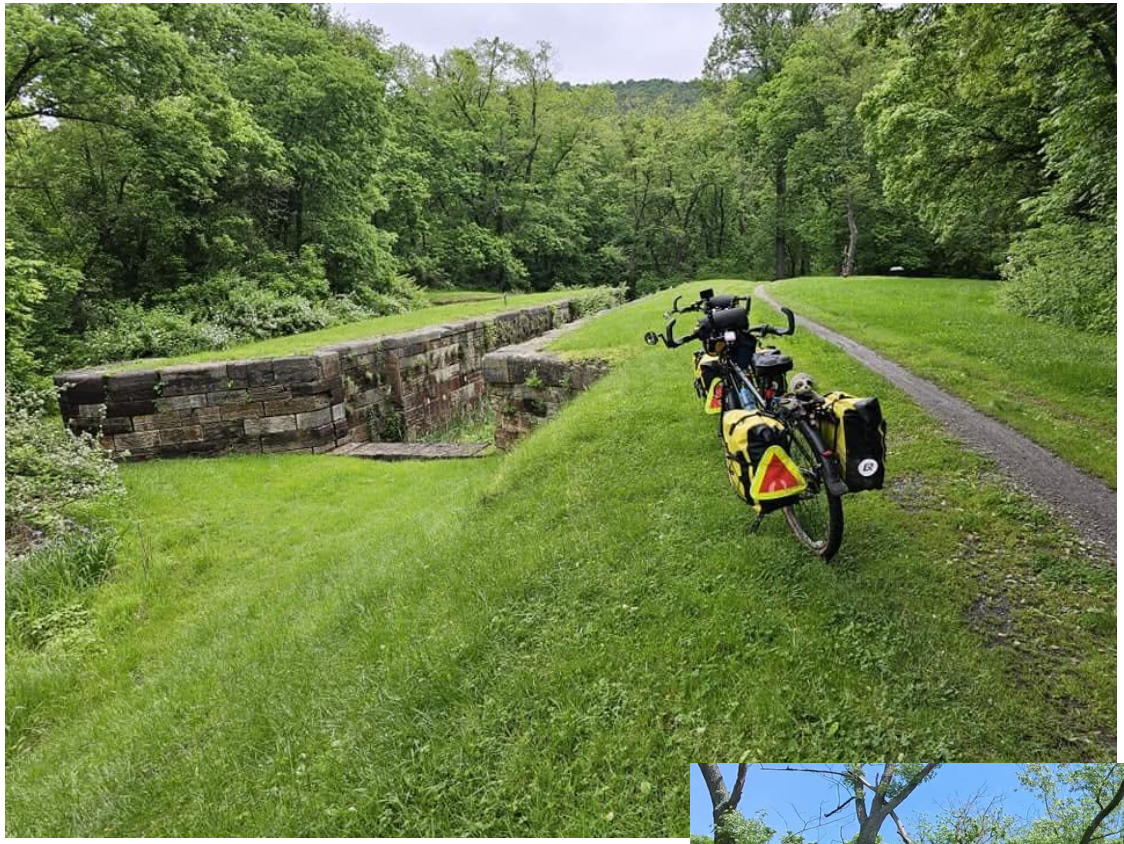




C & O Towpath

Once a thriving 184.5-mile mode of transportation for goods between Georgetown in Washington D.C., to Cumberland, Maryland.
Now an overgrown canal with towpath used for recreation.





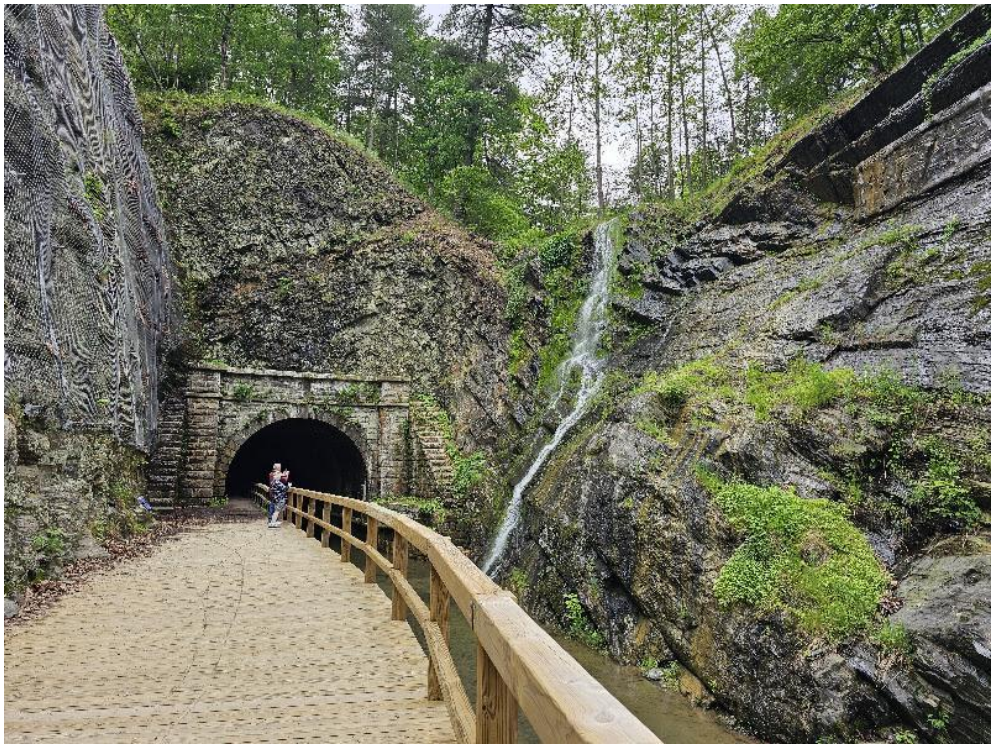


A Canal Aqueduct on the C&O
where the canal passes over another body of water



Paw Paw Tunnel

This is a historic 3118-foot-long canal built to bypass six winding miles of the Potomac River.





Restaurants close to trail thrive on cyclist tourism. We also enjoyed meeting people on the trail and often found them at the restaurants to continue a conversation.







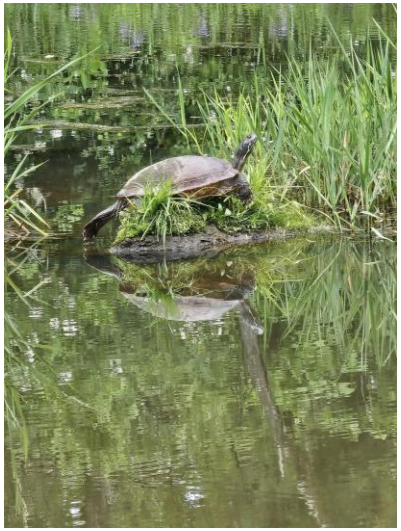
Big Slackwater area

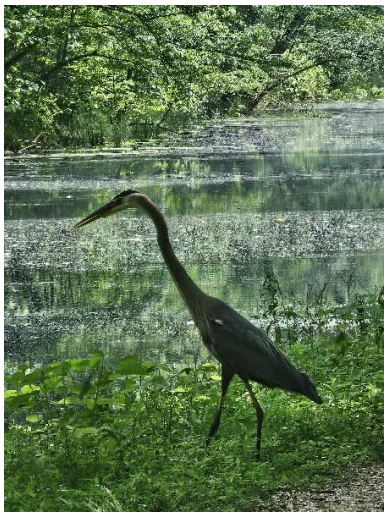




Canal boats heading upstream left the relative security of the canal for three miles of open waters on the Potomac River.

All kinds of fauna!

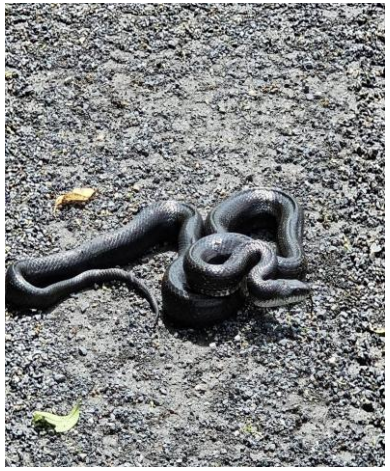










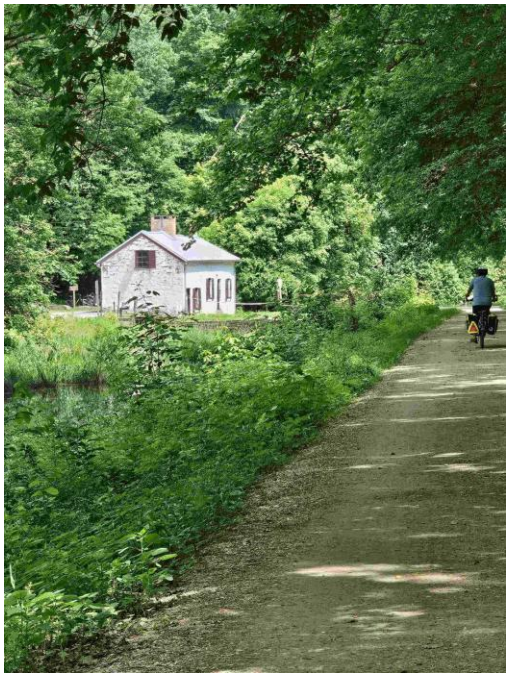






Lockhouses along the canal





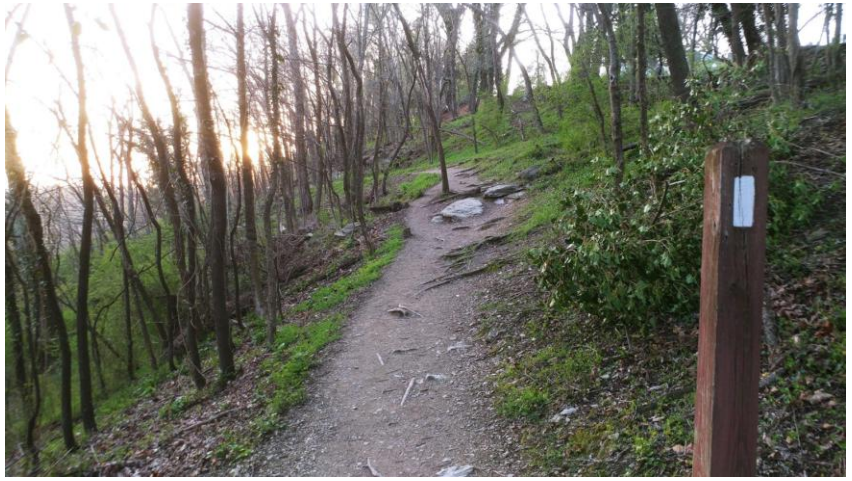


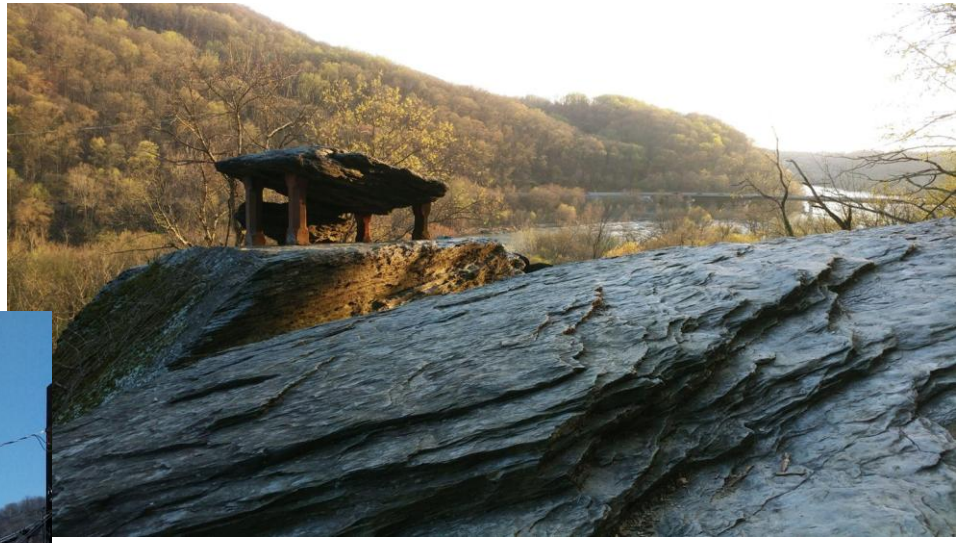


Harpers Ferry, WV







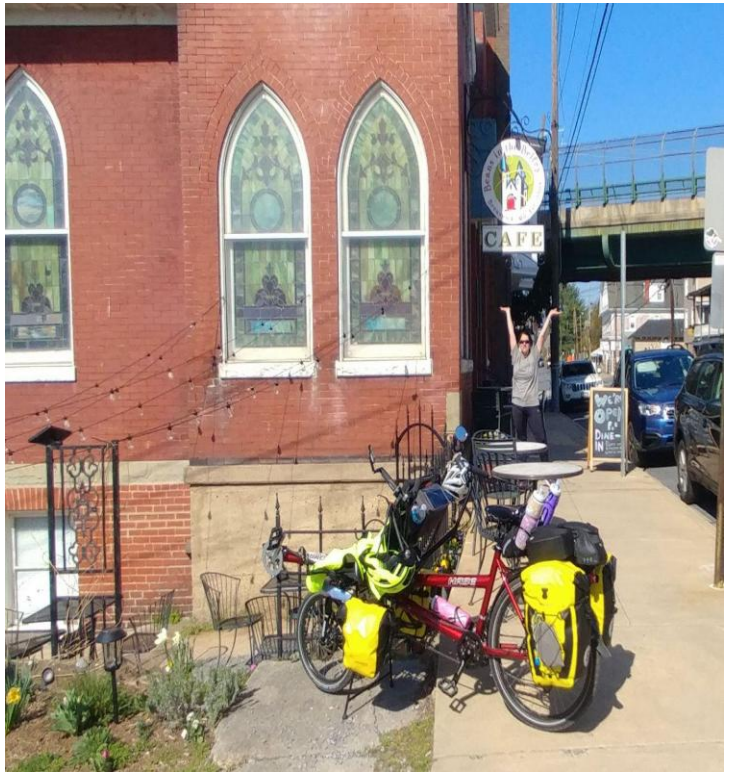



High St

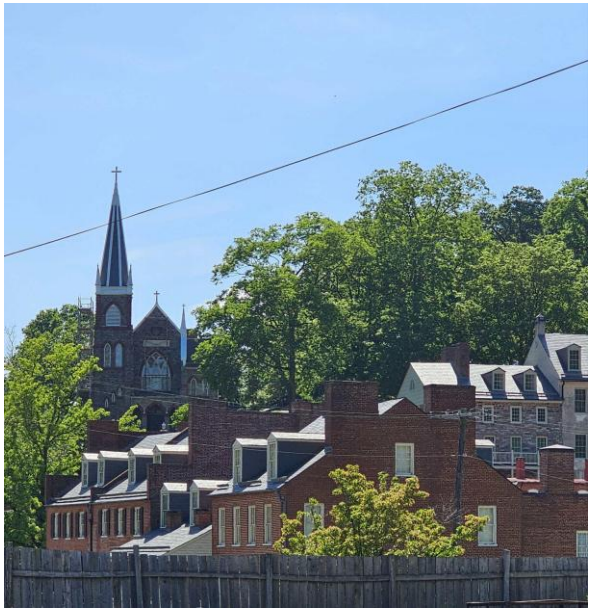


Brunswick, MD









Great Falls Park - an example of why the Potomac River was not a good choice for transportation of goods!



Getting close to the end of our trip - Washington DC!



C&O Mile 0, time to start planning the next one!





RIDE SUMMARY

What we liked:

- The AMTRAK ride between DC and Pittsburgh
- No cars
- Historical displays along the route
- Small towns along the route with friendly people and great restaurants
- The TUNNELS!
- The flora and fauna on both trails

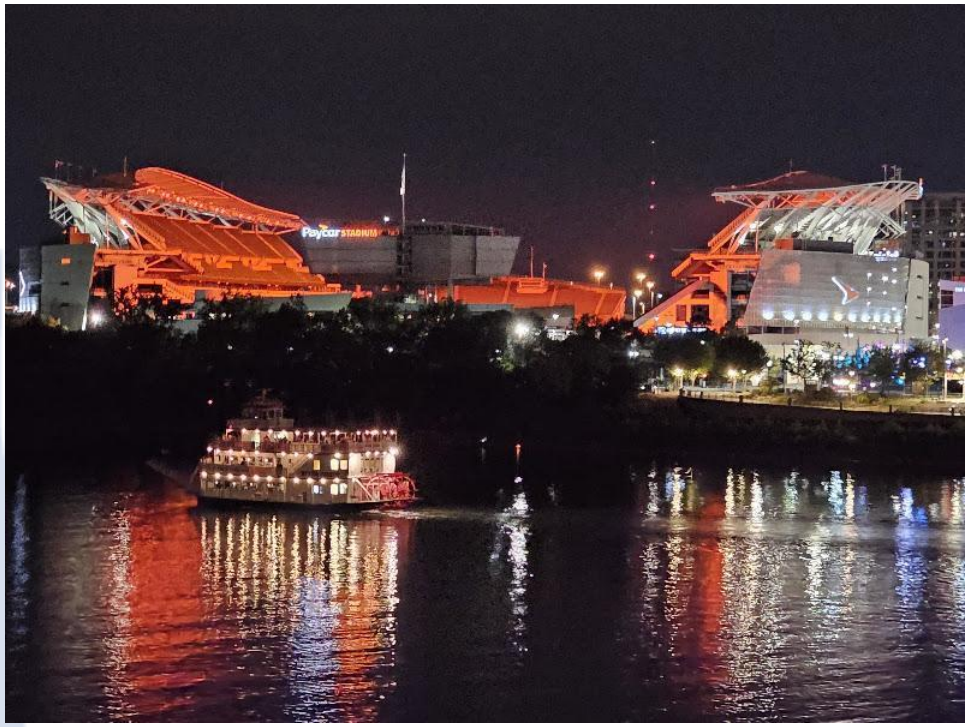
What we didn't like:

- Nothing

The Ohio to Erie Trail (OTET)



9 days, 365 miles – September 2024



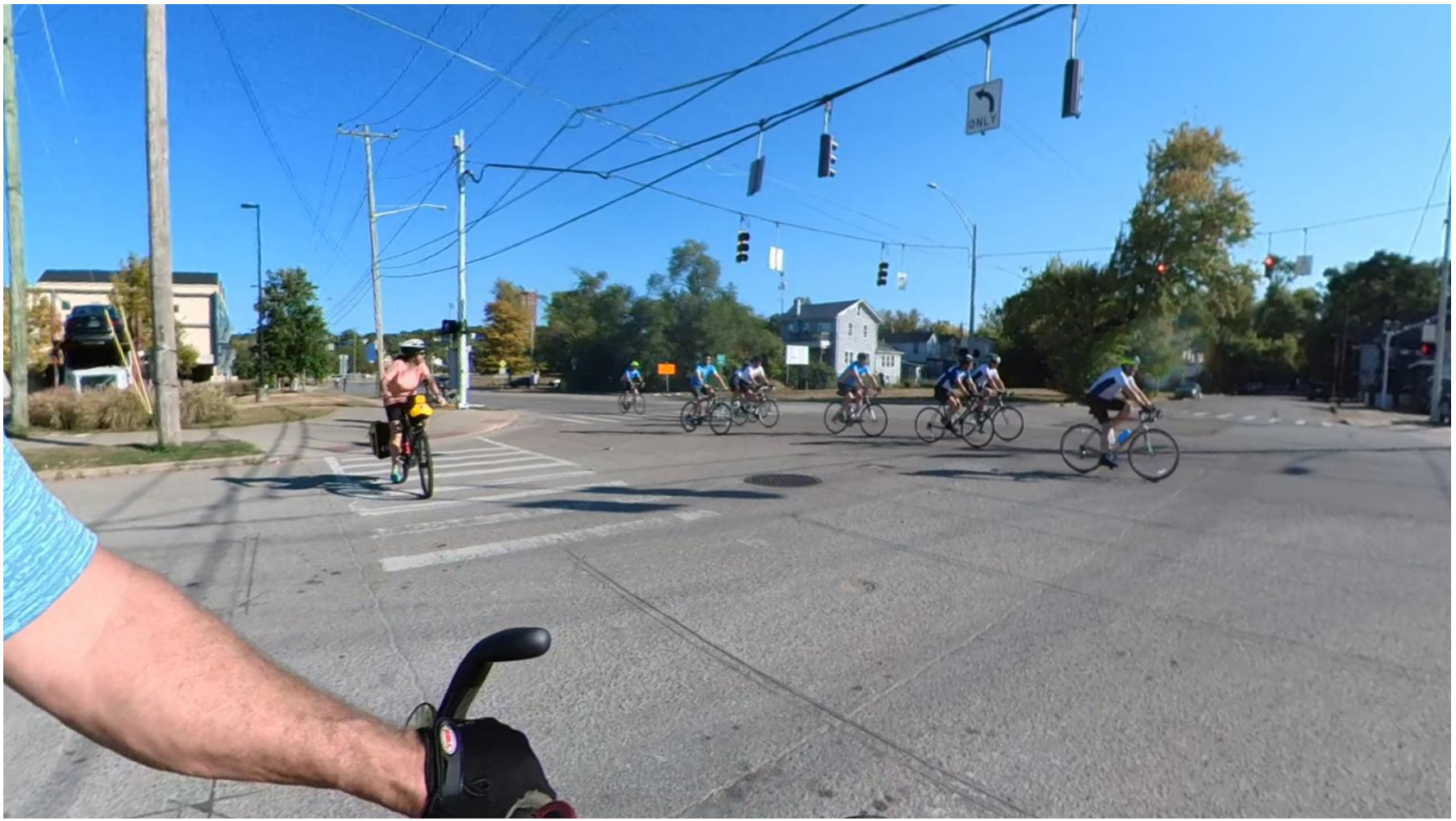
We drove to Cincinnati and spent the night before heading out on the trail the next morning



Tradition is to dip your tires in the Ohio River



Our first day happened to coincide with a large charity bike ride on the OTET



We also found a city festival including weiner dog races in Loveland





Ramsey’s Trailside in Loveland served an awesome lunch



At Xenia we detoured to Dayton to spend a day at the Museum of the USAF







Farm country on our way to Columbus







Entering Columbus, glad to see the skyline



The trail south of the city was quite sketchy

We stopped at the Rastin Observation Tower on our way into Mt. Vernon





At our Mount Vernon motel we met members of the “Drag and Drive” community



Beautiful Architecture



Stone Arch at Howard, OH



Former railway built in 1920s to go over the Mohican River

A group of out-of-state cyclists that also came out to check the trail



Hotel Millersburg and local craft show





Definitely in Amish Country now!

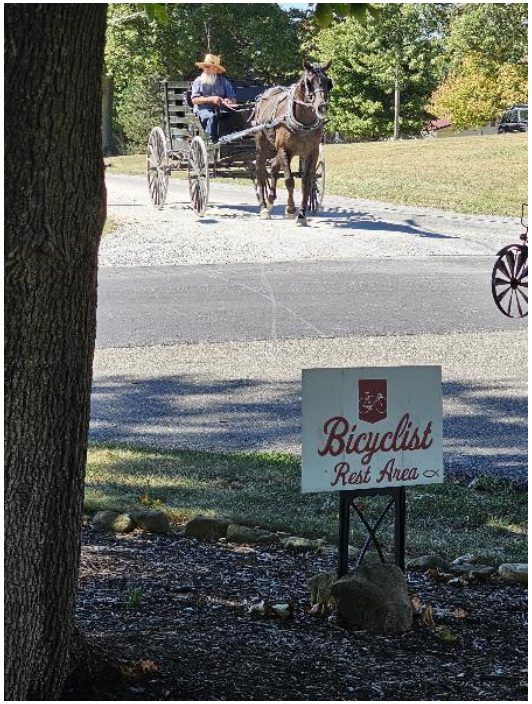


Fredericksburg - a cute village in Amish Country





Beautiful Amish countryside with some mighty tough hills!



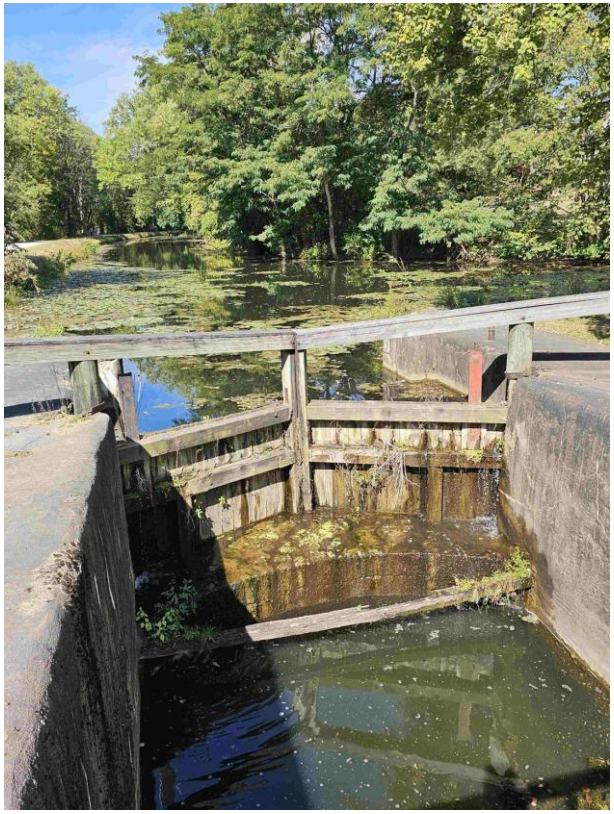


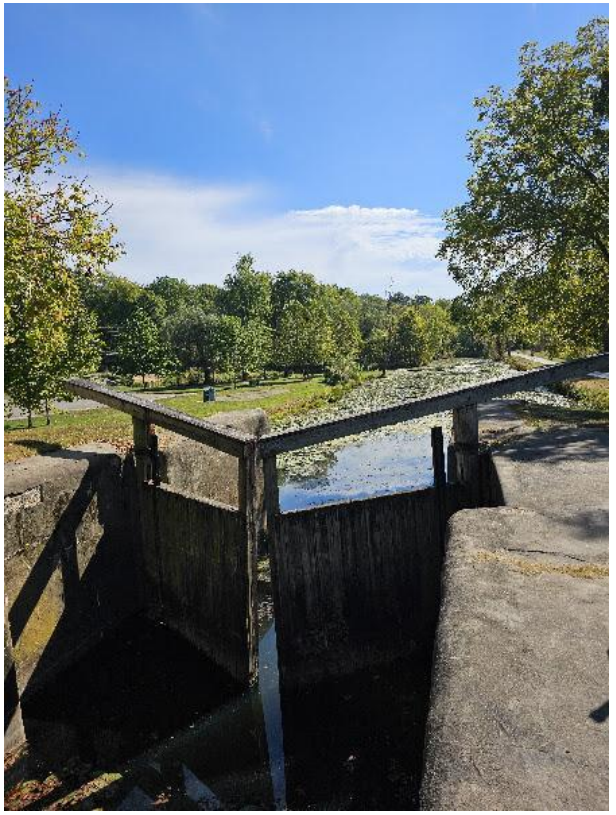




Remnants of the Ohio and Erie Canal









Might as well check out a beaver marsh right near the trail…



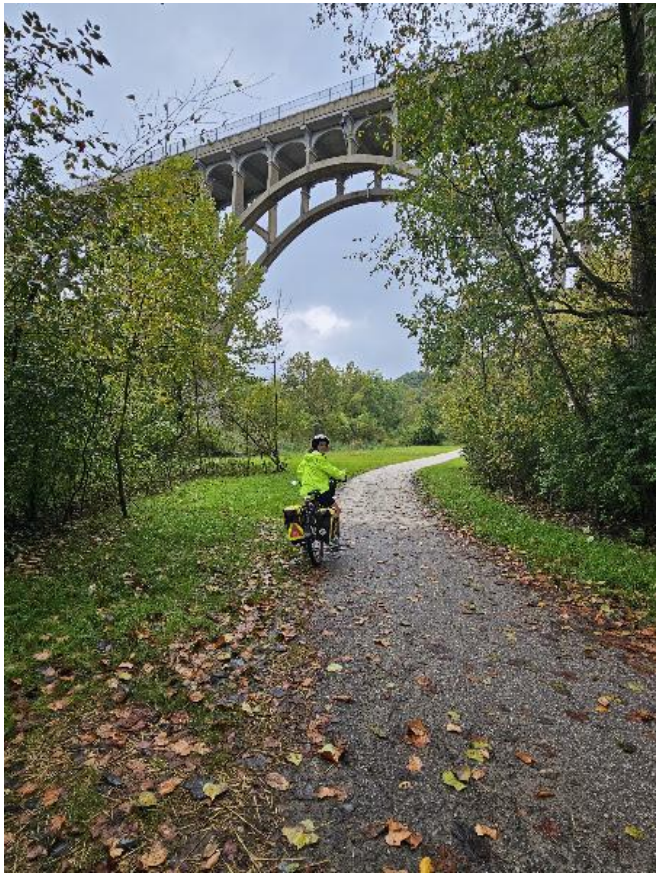
….. and stop for refreshments at the local farmers market right off the trail

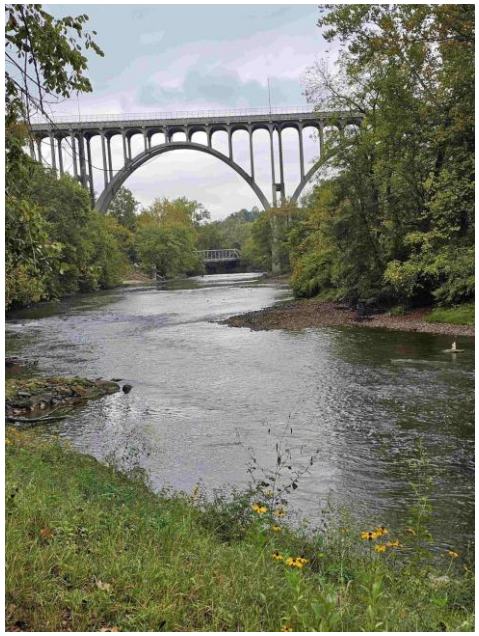






Cuyahoga Valley National Park









Heading to Cleveland through the industrial sector



Molten iron “bottle” car

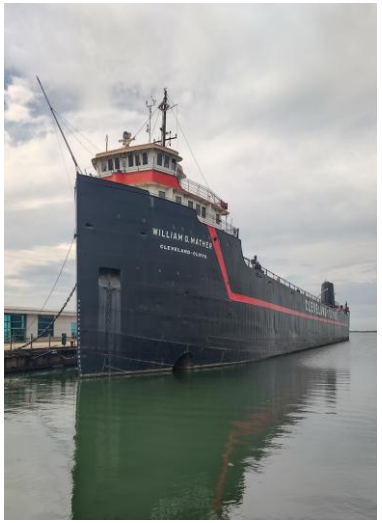
Winding our way toward Lake Erie



Lake Erie - Tire dippin’ time!

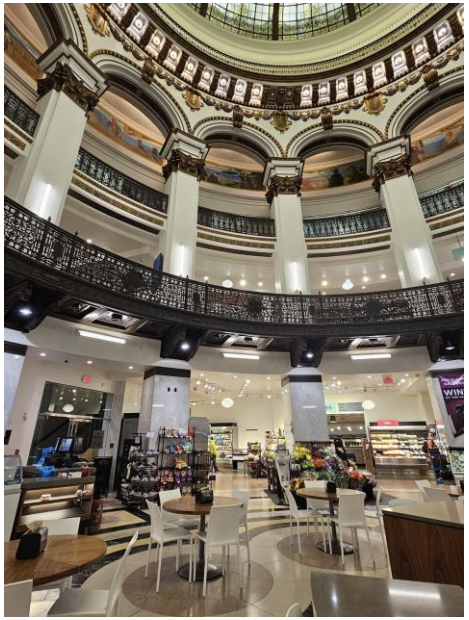



Cleveland






LONG LIVE ROCK




224
U.S.S. COD

RIDE SUMMARY

What we liked:

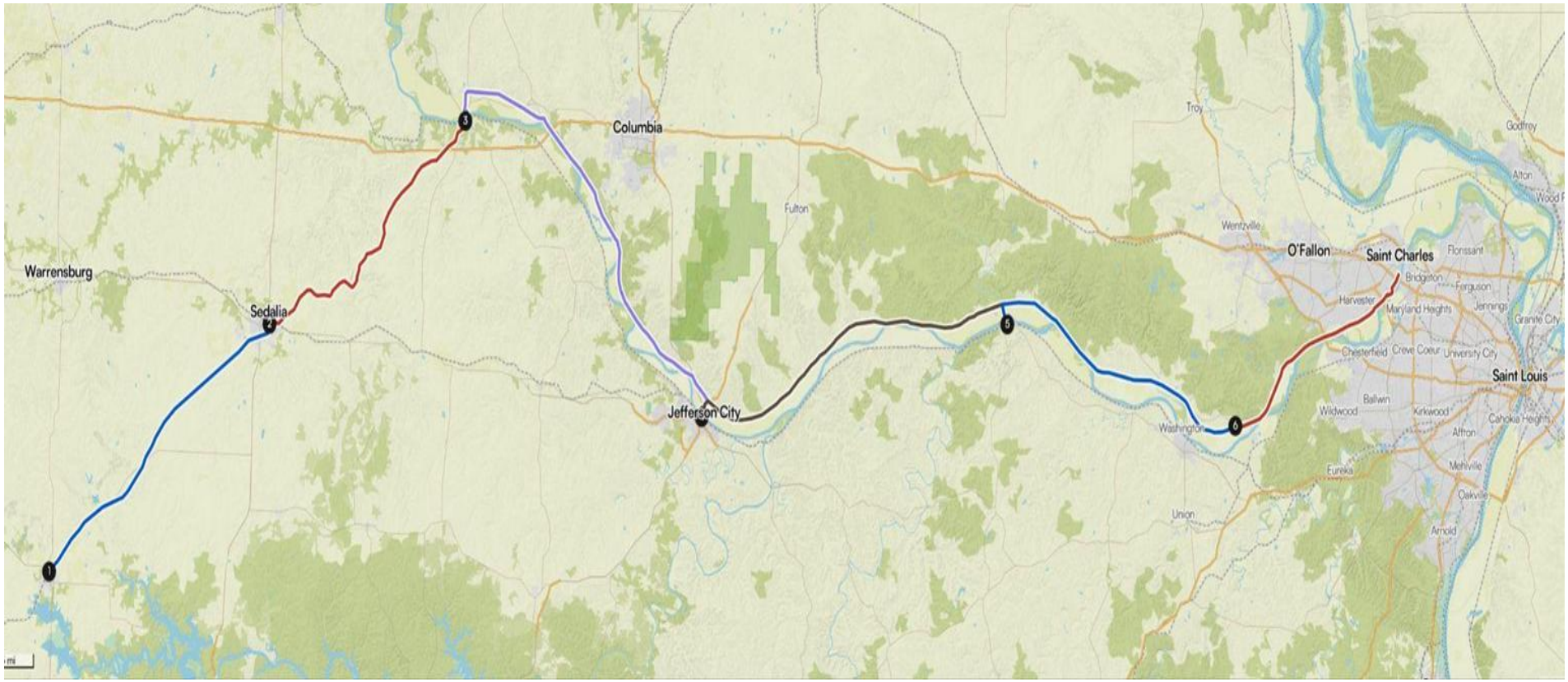
- The night time views of Cincinnati
- Historical displays along the route
- Small towns along the route with friendly people and great restaurants
- Amish country
- Cuyahoga Valley National Park

What we didn't like:

- Sketchy trail sections in Columbus
- Poor signage in Cleveland

The KATY Trail

"KATY" stands for the Missouri–Kansas–Texas Railroad, commonly abbreviated as the MKT, shortened to KT



The longest continuous Rail-Trail in the US
6 days, 238 miles – October 2025

Shaky start at the Best Western in St. Charles…
Rescued from a stuck elevator by firefighters





For the first time we hired a shuttle to take us to the trailhead in Clinton MO. The 5 couples on the bus quickly became friends



First stop, Hotel Bothwell in Sedalia



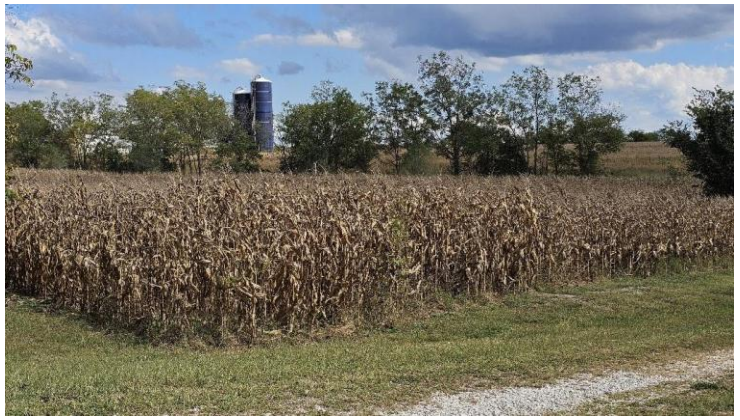


Sedalia Train Depot and B2 bombers!





FARM COUNTRY GALORE













After Boonville, the KATY follows the Missouri River



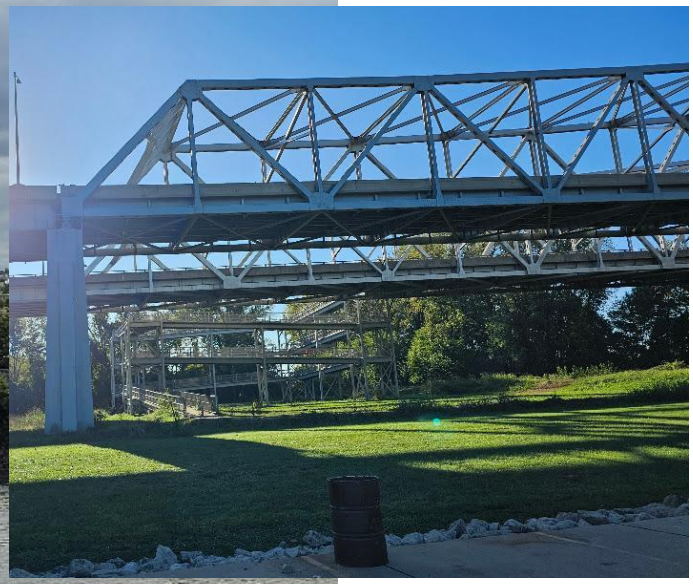


Meriwether Cafe and Bike Shop in Rocheport

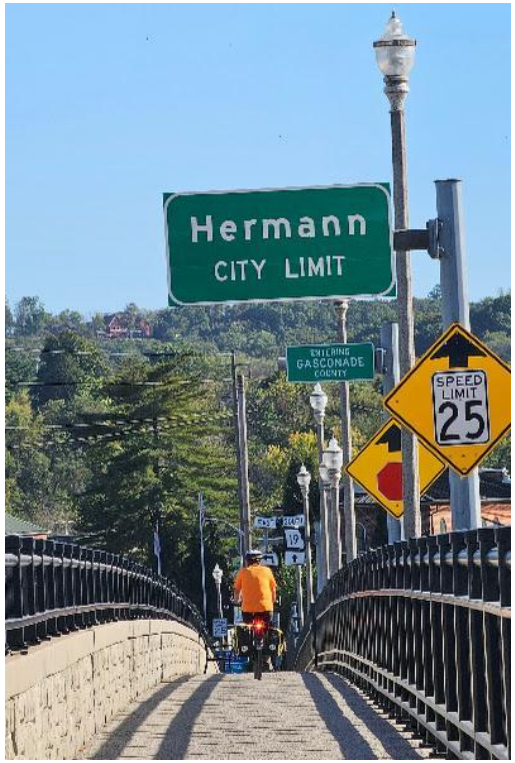


Jefferson City



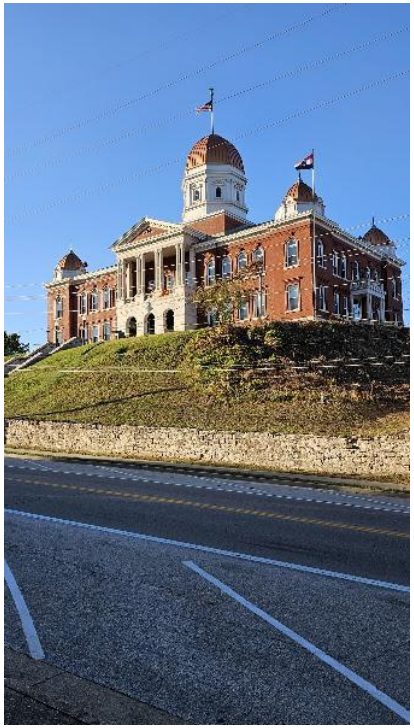


HERMANN



A viticultural area containing seven wineries that produce about one-third of the state's wine





Good use of old buildings along the trail!



Welcome Center



Bed & Breakfast





Ice Cream Stop

. . . and why not make good use of an old caboose!









Trail art and historical displays

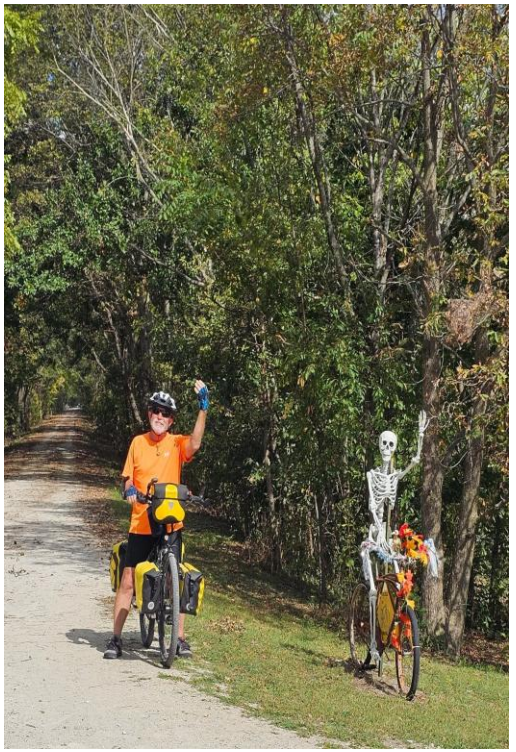






Some residents that live along the trail, have their own sense of creative art!









We had a great time socializing! This trail attracts a lot of people that enjoy leisure cycling.









RIDE SUMMARY

What we liked:

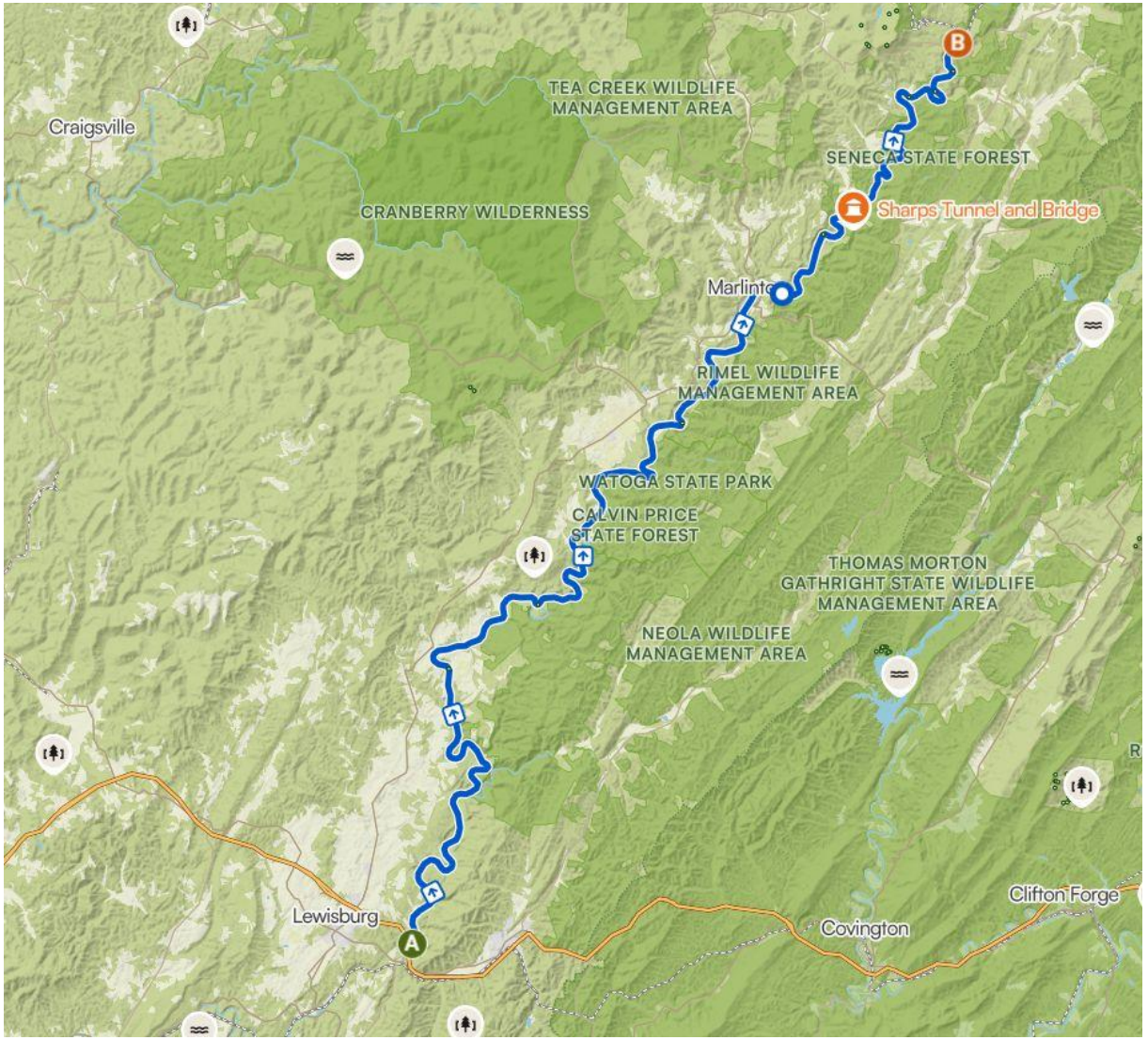
- Leisure, flat cycling
- Lots of people our age, some that we still keep in touch with
- Historical displays about the Lewis & Clark expedition along the route
- Wineries along the way

What we didn't like:

- Not as adventurous
- Not as much variety in scenery

The Greenbrier River Trail, West Virginia

3 days, 78 miles (one way) – June 2025



We rode south to north, from Caldwell WV to the Cass Scenic Railroad



Our only option for night 1 was camping





Lots of railroad history along the trail

















Night 2 we stayed at the Old Clark Inn in Marlinton





Note to self, add chainsaw to the packing list!



Arrived in Cass to watch the trains!





…and ride the trains!







RIDE SUMMARY

What we liked:

- Beautiful views of the Greenbrier River
- Flora and fauna
- Marlinton WV
- Gracious hosts at the Old Clark Inn
- Cass Scenic Railroad (and train ride to Bald Knob!)

What we didn't like:

- Trail hazards (downed trees), but it happens