

## Estuary Center Building Hours:

Monday—Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm  
Saturday 10am - 4:30pm, Sunday 12 - 4:30pm  
Grounds are open dawn to dusk

[www.otterpointcreek.org](http://www.otterpointcreek.org)

Email: [aclec@harfordcountymd.gov](mailto:aclec@harfordcountymd.gov)  
410-612-1688 or 410-879-2000 x1688



Harford County Parks & Recreation—Bob Cassilly, Harford County Executive

## PADDLE TRAIL

### Anita C. Leight Estuary Center

700 Otter Point Road, Abingdon, MD 21009  
410-612-1688

[www.otterpointcreek.org](http://www.otterpointcreek.org)

### Self-Guided Paddle Trail at the Estuary Center 3.6 Miles



**Difficulty:** Easy, unless windy conditions

**Time:** 2-3 Hours

**Tips:** Canoe/kayak near high tide is best. Some points are difficult to reach in low tide. Otter Point Creek may be difficult on windy days. Wildlife viewing is best in the morning.

#### **Personal Safety Checklist:**

1. Lifejacket (PFD)
2. Phone
3. Map/Compass

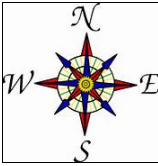
4. Tell a friend your plans

#### **Public Launch (7 days) at:**

1. Smith Park on Route 40
2. Otter Point boat ramp







## Anita C. Leight Estuary Center

Dedicated to the support of research, education and the conservation goals of the Otter Point Creek Component of the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve - Maryland. Our mission is to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of the estuarine ecosystem.

## Estuary Center Paddle Trail Markers

### #0: Estuary Center

N 29o 26.958' W 076o 16.167'

Established in 1996, the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center is operated by Harford County Parks and Recreation. We offer many programs throughout the year. Please enjoy our Paddle Trail!

### #1 Pontoon Boat Pier

N 39o 27.046' W. 076o 16.472'

From here we launch our pontoon boat, the Water Strider, used for education and research. The water quality monitoring equipment is used for scientific studies on the health of the estuary. You can access this information on the web at Eyes on the Bay.

### #2 Smith Park East

N 39o 27.014' W 076o 16.614'

Smith Park is owned and operated by the state. You will often find fishermen lining the water along the shore.

### #3 Smith Park West

N 39o 26.910' W 076o 16.777'

At high tide, this can be used as a launch point for paddling Otter Point Creek and the Paddle Trail.

### #4 Old Piling

N 39o 26.690' W 076o 16.765'

Throughout the year many wetland birds call the estuary home. They eat underwater plants and small animals. Cormorants, great blue herons, and mallards are three of the most common species that can often be seen resting here.

### #5 Wood Duck Box

N 39o 26.541' W 076o 16.914'

The Izaak Walton League of America maintains about 70 wood duck nest boxes within the 350 acre Bosely Conservancy, part of the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. In many years, over 300 chicks are hatched. Follow channel ahead and to the right to marker #6.

### #6 Opposite Snake Island

N 39o 26.410' W 076o 16.948'

The large group of trees on your left and slightly behind you is on Snake Island. Beavers have girdled many of the large trees, and bald eagles and ospreys often rest on the dead tree limbs.

### #7 Observation Blind

N 39o 26.362' W 076o 16.954'

You are in the midst of one of the largest remaining freshwater tidal marshes within the upper Chesapeake Bay, a natural resource treasure that has been designated part of the Maryland Natural Areas program. Paddle Trail continues to the right.

### #8 Channel Intersection

N 39o 26.302' W 76o 17.180'

Turn left and you will see a small channel to the right. If you follow the channel, it opens up into one of two lagoons in the Conservancy. Originally designed to temporarily hold municipal waste, they are now sanctuaries for many types of wildlife. Upon exiting lagoon, turn right to continue following Paddle Trail.

### #9 Leaves of Three

N 39o 26.230' W 076o 17.179'

Through this area, there are many branches overhanging the channel. Some are poison ivy, others are box elder, in the maple tree family. If its leaves of three come from a tree, it is box elder.

### #10 Lagoon 2

N 39o 26.169' W 076o 17.152'

Take small channel to right to enter lagoon. Otters have been spotted in this location. Upon exiting lagoon, take channel to the right.

### #11 Four-Way Channel Split

N 39o 26.075' W 076o 17.103'

Look carefully for signs of beaver in this area. There are trees that have been eaten, “slides” where they enter and leave the water, and scent mounds—small mud towers, often topped by muddy leaves. To continue following Paddle Trail, take the left-most channel.

### #12 Cattail Corner

N 39o 26.039' W 076o 16.869'

Notice the field of cattails cut by beaver channels to your right. There are two types of cattails found in the marsh, common and narrow-leaf. Both are excellent sources of food and nesting materials for marsh inhabitants.

### #13 Sweet Flag Marsh

N 39o 26.358' W 076o 16.585'

A plant commonly mistaken for cattail is sweet flag. It can be identified by yellow green, pencil-like “flag” flower stalks which poke out from the side of the tall leaves. Leaves have a distinct midline vein and a lemony-sweet odor.

### #14 Eagle Cove

N 39o 26.453' W 076o 16.542'

The cove to the right is a wonderful location to observe eagles and osprey. At low tide it is very shallow and the fish are easy prey, even when submerged aquatic vegetation is dense. Continue across the mouth of the cove to marker #15.

### #15 Eagle Point

N 39o 26.636' W 076o 16.460'

Naturalists have a saying that “sedges have edges and rushes are round”. Using that saying, you can determine the wetland plant lining the shoreline here is a sedge—the main stalk is three sided. End of trail—return to launch point. We hope you enjoyed the ACLEC Paddle Trail!

The Department of Parks and Recreation encourages participation by people with disabilities. This document is available in alternative format upon request. For disability related accommodations, contact Therapeutic Recreation Specialist at 410-638-4899/voice, (TTY users call Maryland Relay) at least two weeks prior to event.