

Deep Creek Lake, version 4.0

The current version of Deep Creek Lake isn't the first, second or even third time a dam has been planned or built on or around Deep Creek. Almost as soon as permanent settlers lived around it, Deep Creek and the area around it have been of interest to those who wanted to capture and use its waters for a variety of purposes. One proposed plan to dam Deep Creek and two actual dams (one on Deep Creek and one on Cherry Creek) have been found in our research.

In 1824, James Shriver, a leading civil engineer and proponent of expansion of the C&O Canal, published the rather verbosely titled "An account of surveys and examinations, with remarks and documents: relative to the projected Chesapeake and Ohio and Ohio and Lake Erie Canals ". In it, he lays out a speculative route for the continuation of the C&O Canal to connect the Potomac and Cheat Rivers by cutting through western Allegany (now Garrett) County. To provide adequate draft for the barges and flood water for the locks, he proposes damming Deep Creek around the site of the current US Route 219 bridge. The plan also called for a tunnel under Backbone Mountain to connect this new waterway with the Potomac around Westernport. His cost estimate for the entire project to connect Cumberland to Pittsburgh was \$5,566,564.

The massive cost and burgeoning railroad industry prevented the development of the C&O Canal past Cumberland, but the rigorous work that Shriver did to plan his route remains an excellent resource of historical data on the area, including a detailed map of the region through which the planned canal would traverse. The text of his report describes some intriguing details of the area including trees of up to 12 feet in girth and a rock formation the locals had named "the Devil's Castle". In the detail of his map below, the green shaded area shows the proposed lake from damming Deep Creek around the current 219 bridge and captures the current shoreline of the southern end of the lake remarkably well.

You can view and download the fully digitized map

here: <https://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/u2084891#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xywh=1767%2C7005%2C8195%2C4728>

and read the scanned publication

here: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015091128796%3Bview%3D1up%3Bseq%3D11>

Two more actual dams were built on Deep Creek and Cherry Creek in the late 1800's as aquaculture projects. The first was on Cherry Creek around 1883 and was the project of Gus W. Delawder, Commissioner of Fisheries for Western Maryland at the time. He named the new body of water Lake Cleveland in honor of President Cleveland who visited it and spent the day fishing there. The second dam was overseen by R. T. Browning, the grandson of the famous Garrett County frontiersman and hunter Meshach Browning and was completed in 1893, at the site of present Glendale Bridge. This body of water was named Lake Brown after Maryland Governor Frank Brown (1892 -1896). Local historian Champ Zumbrun has written a great, more detailed

article on the history of these lakes that can be found here: <http://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/md-conservation-history/Cottage-in-the-Wilderness.aspx>

Although we have not been able to track down any maps of the exact extent of Lake Cleveland, the detail of a 1901 topographical map from the USGS shows Lake Brown quite clearly, with the dam almost exactly where the current Glendale Bridge is today.

From navigation to aquaculture to hydroelectric power to recreation, the waters of Deep Creek have served us well over the years. Your POA continues to work to see that we'll continue to enjoy these waters for the next 100 years as well.