

Very Dismal Swamp Cruise

So, I feel real foolish admitting that I've always wanted to make the passage south on the ICW in the States through the Dismal Swamp Canal. The canal was created back in Geo. Washington's day, and in fact, it was surveyed by him. In optimum conditions, that is those that would have us not having a drought here on the east coast, it's a wonderful ride through a narrow waterway, overhanging trees, locks on either end to provide access, and southern charm in North Carolina. However, last week, another of the drought weeks, it was very hot, 94°F, and muggy. Not great for a swamp ride. The foolish part; I was the only one that entered that day, the 30 miles of 'very low water', again the drought, and covered as I found out moving along and too late to turn back, covered with pond scum. It was kind of pretty at first as it appeared, then it got thicker, until it was like cream on month old milk. Yes, it smelled too. When I finally got out, had to look for the lock operator because they forgot to tell him that there was a boat in the canal, it was late in the day, and a big surprise not appreciated, I was overheating from sucking the stuff into my raw water intake. Finally making it to Elizabeth City, a town worthy of it's reputation for being a welcome place for cruisers, I overheated entering a slip about to pull the strainer. It was a hot and sticky night, but nonetheless, got underway in small craft advisory to passage East to West on the AlbeMarle Sound 50 miles to my winter home in Edenton NC.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Guf64Gyc0Vc&feature=related>

The tune being played is by the lock-tender who let me in earlier, on a conch shell; in retrospect, it probably was a warning blast!