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Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary Nomination

Located on the Potomac River just 30 miles from our nation's capital, Mallows Bay is renowned for its diverse collection of historic shipwrecks, recreational opportunities and scenic beauty. Through a community-based effort, this Maryland treasure in Charles County may become the first national marine sanctuary in the state of Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and the first new designation in more than two decades.



Mallows Bay is located along the tidal Lower Potomac River off the Nanjemoy Peninsula of Charles County, Maryland.

Protecting the "Ghost Fleet" of Mallows Bay

Mallows Bay is situated south of Washington, D.C., along the tidal Lower Potomac River off the Nanjemoy Peninsula of Charles County, Maryland. This shallow embayment, and the waters immediately adjacent, boasts one of the largest assemblages of shipwrecks in the Western Hemisphere, known as the "Ghost Fleet" of Mallows Bay. This diverse collection of historic shipwrecks totals nearly 200 known vessels dating back to the Revolutionary War and World War I.

In addition to the "Ghost Fleet," archaeological artifacts discovered around Mallows Bay date back 12,000 years, indicating the presence of some of the region's earliest Native American cultures.

The area is contiguous to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and the Lower Potomac Water Trail, which offers many educational and recreational opportunities.

Thriving populations of bald eagles, heron, beaver, river otter, deer, turtles and numerous aquatic species call this area home. Striped bass, white perch, channel catfish, blue crab, and others make this area particularly popular for recreational fishing. In fact, Mallows Bay is widely regarded as one of the best bass fishing areas in the country.

Designating this section of the Potomac River as a National Marine Sanctuary offers exciting opportunities to educate the public about our nation's cultural and maritime history, the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River and to promote conservation and research, as well as enhance recreational fishing, boating and tourism in Maryland.

"We believe that this designation will serve as a tremendous opportunity to promote Maryland's world-class recreational fishing, boating and tourism, and advance our efforts to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay watershed while educating the public about our nation's maritime and cultural history."

Mark Belton
Natural Resources Secretary





Daryl Byrd



Mitch Zeissler



Chris O'Haver



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Status of the Nomination

On June 13, 2014, for the first time in over twenty years, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) **invited communities** across the nation to nominate nationally significant marine areas for consideration as new national marine sanctuaries. For years, Maryland, Charles County and local communities and organizations have recognized the unique quality of Mallows Bay not only as a special destination and ecosystem, but also as a place of national significance. On September 16, 2014, Maryland **submitted a nomination** to NOAA recommending consideration of Mallows Bay.

On October 5, 2015, after an initial review period, NOAA released a **Notice of Intent** to initiate a **full public procedure** and Environmental Impact Statement concerning the designation of Mallows Bay as a new National Marine Sanctuary. This process is designed to take into account input from various local, regional and national interests and organizations by encouraging open discussion about the National Marine Sanctuary process and what the designation could mean for Mallows Bay, Charles County and Maryland.

How to Support the Nomination

To learn more about the nomination and designation process, and to voice your support, questions, or concerns, we encourage you to attend one of the following public meetings.

- **Nov. 4, 2015 6:30-9 p.m.** at the Charles County Government Building, 200 Baltimore Street, La Plata, MD
- **Nov. 10, 2015 6:30-9 p.m.** at the Annapolis Maritime Museum, 723 2nd St, Annapolis, MD

You can also submit comments online at regulations.gov (docket number NOAA-NOS-2015-0111) through January 15, 2016.

What is a National Marine Sanctuary?

The **National Marine Sanctuary System** was established in 1972 to recognize and promote the conservation, recreational, ecological, historical, research and/or aesthetic values of special areas in our marine environment. Since its creation, the National Marine Sanctuary System has worked to protect a wide range of diverse sites, from shipwrecks to coral reefs and tiny atolls. Through visitor centers and collaborations with aquariums and museums, these sanctuaries serve as focal points for local engagement and economic development in communities across America. If Mallows Bay is designated, the area would be added to the existing network of 14 sites across the nation.

For more information, visit:
dnr.maryland.gov/mallowsbay

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