

Comment submitted on January 19, 2012:

On behalf of the C&O Canal Association, I welcome the Feasibility Study to implement a non-motorized boathouse zone along the Georgetown waterfront. It is certainly useful and timely for the National Park Service to identify and consider ways to improve boating access to the Potomac River, a very worthwhile goal.

NPS' announcement states that the study "will look at potential scenarios related to the waterfront that are consistent with the necessary and appropriate uses for this zone." One scenario that is definitely not among those appropriate uses is the construction of an intrusive private boathouse on a site within the C&O Canal National Historical Park. I hope that this will be recognized from the outset.

The C&O Canal NHP is a unique treasure that combines natural beauty and historical importance. The canal park belongs to everyone, and no part of it should be surrendered for private use. To do that would run counter to the legislation that created the park and to established NPS policy.

The Association, with over one thousand members, is an independent citizens association concerned with the conservation of the natural and historical environment of the C&O Canal and the Potomac River Basin. The Association supports the National Park Service in its efforts to preserve and promote the 184-mile towpath and the open spaces within the C&O Canal NHP. The Association looks forward to the feasibility study as a step toward enhancing boating opportunities while preserving the integrity of the C&O Canal NHP.

Rachel Stewart, President
C&O Canal Association