

July 11, 2009

Mr. Dan Wenk
Acting Director, National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Wenk:

Re: Elegant solution for Valley Forge National Historical Park, and opportunity for C&O Canal National Historical Park

Congratulations to the National Park Service (NPS) for its leadership role in resolving the controversy over the proposed location of the American Revolution Center. As a result, NPS has protected the historic landscape of a national historical park from development, and chosen an appropriate urban location for a new museum.

We encourage you to apply these same leadership skills to the controversial proposal to build a private Georgetown University boathouse on land within the C&O Canal National Historical Park (NHP). Our alliance of twenty-five organizations does not object to the idea of the University's building a new boathouse, but we do oppose the desire to place the facility within the C&O Canal National Historical Park (NHP).

One of the sites under consideration by NPS for a private Georgetown University boathouse (the "EA preferred" site) is a narrow, wooded section of Potomac River tidal floodplain located within the C&O Canal NHP, at the entrance to the Capital Crescent Trail, a busy non-motorized public trail. We believe the NPS should not approve a massive new private boathouse at such a location. Instead, an alternative site outside of the C&O Canal would have technical, environmental, practical, social and economic advantages for everyone, while protecting the park from private development. In addition, a more accessible location outside of the NHP might make it possible for a new boathouse to be shared with other boating communities, not just used by one group of athletes from one private university.

We urge you to apply the well-conceived Valley Forge NHP solution to the C&O Canal NHP. Please let us know how we can be of assistance to you in resolving this long-standing -- and unnecessary -- threat to this cherished national historical parkland.

Sincerely,

Sally C. Strain, DC Coordinator, Defenders of Potomac River Parkland, www.savethecanal.org

Member organizations of Defenders of Potomac River Parkland are: American Canoe Association; American Hiking Society; American Whitewater Association; Appalachian Mountain Club; Audubon Naturalist Society; Canoe Cruisers Association; Citizens Committee to Save Laurel Lakes; Clean Water Action; C&O Canal Association; Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail; Dupont Circle Conservancy; East Coast Greenway Alliance; Friends of the Earth; League of Women Voters; National Parks Conservation Association; Potomac Appalachian Trail Club; Potomac Conservancy; Potomac Heritage Trail Association; Potomac Pedalers Touring Club; Quantico Orienteering Club; Rails to Trails Conservancy; Sierra Club, DC Chapter; Washington

Area Roadskaters; Washington Canoe Club; Western Lands Project.