

Private development threatens national park!

C&O canal, bike trail at risk

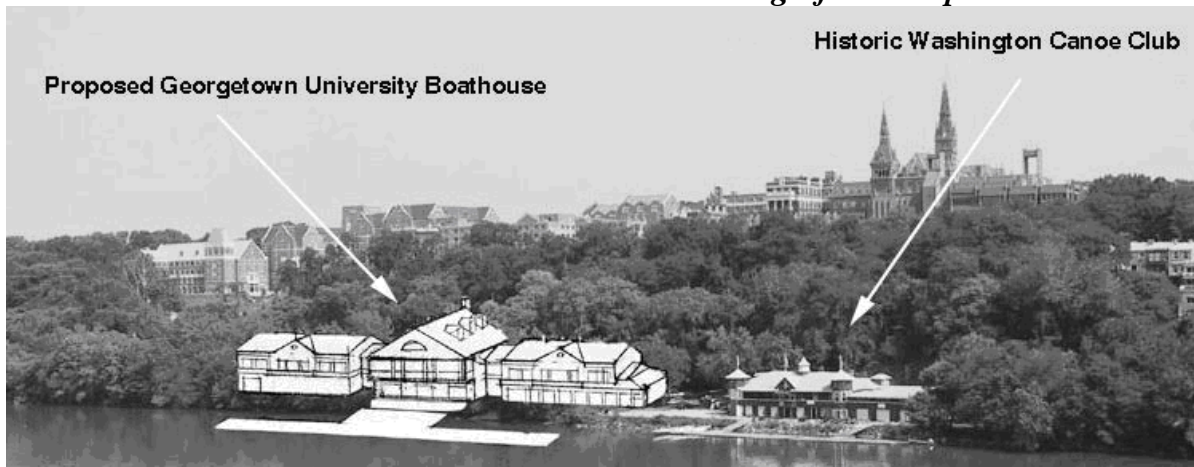
**** Public comments invited until June 15 ****

The C&O Canal National Historical Park is threatened with private development. If you value the park, it needs your help!

The National Park Service invites public comments until June 15 on the proposal to transfer national parkland on the Potomac River (upstream of the Key Bridge, next to the Capital Crescent Trail) to Georgetown University for an exclusive private boathouse.

This plan sets an alarming precedent for private development in national parks and loss of urban green space. The building would extend almost the length of a football field, destroying trees and wildlife habitat and threatening the fragile riverbank and canal with erosion and flood damage. A massive 75 ft. long private dock would block the route of shoreline boaters. Sixty ft. long boat trailers would tangle with hikers, bikers and other trail users.

Yet the National Park Service concludes there would be *no significant impacts!*



(Note – The NPS “preferred alternative” boathouse design would be slightly lower in height than the original one shown above, but with the same massive footprint.)

How you can HELP: Voice your opposition by submitting comments before June 15 on the Environmental Assessment (EA), which claims the project will have only minor impacts.

Link to the EA and website for submitting comments from here: www.savethecanal.org

Or go directly to the EA at this National Park Service website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?projectId=15645&documentID=14911>

In your comments, demand that the Park Service:

- Preserve national parkland for public use, not trade it for private development.
- Keep this private boathouse outside of C&O Canal National Historical Park.
- Prepare a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/comprehensive study of the entire waterfront area to carefully examine alternative locations, uses and sizes for boathouses.

How you can get BACKGROUND: See the independent website www.savethecanal.org for information, sample letters, and suggested comments on the impacts of the proposal.

How you can get email UPDATES: Contact Defenders of Potomac River Parkland, c/o Sally Strain at seawalk@starpower.net. Defenders is a coalition of 21 citizen organizations, listed below.

What are the ISSUES:

- Contrary to the National Park Service (NPS) mission, public parkland would be traded to a private entity for their exclusive use.
- NPS refused to adequately consider alternative locations outside the park in the EA, despite demands from the public last year to determine the "scope" of the EA. Those citizens proposed more accessible, less environmentally sensitive locations downstream on K Street, on previously developed waterfront, and on the Anacostia River.
- It took public outcry and a lawsuit to force NPS to prepare the EA--even though it is required by law! NPS continues to refuse to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, which is required if the impacts are "significant."
- The Defenders believe there are many significant impacts, and therefore NPS must prepare a full EIS that considers alternative locations.

Why we need YOU: If a proposal generates public controversy, NPS should prepare an EIS. Thousands of comments are needed to force the Park Service to acknowledge the proposal's shortcomings and to consider alternative locations. Please voice your opinions and save C&O national park for public use!



Say No to GU Boathouse
www.savethecanal.org

The **Defenders of Potomac River Parkland** support preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement and building new private boathouses outside of the C&O national park. The Defenders are individuals and these organizations:

American Canoe Association
 American Hiking Society
 American Whitewater Association
 Audubon Naturalist Society
 Canoe Cruisers Association
 Citizens Committee to Save Laurel Lakes
 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 of DC
 Montgomery Sycamore Island Club
 National Parks Conservation Association
 Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
 Potomac Conservancy
 Potomac Heritage Trail Association
 Potomac Pedalers Touring Club
 Rails to Trails Conservancy
 Sierra Club, DC Chapter
 Washington Canoe Club