

Defenders Letter to *The Current Newspapers*

The letter below from Sally Strain, Coordinator of the Defenders of Potomac River Parkland, was published in *The Current Newspapers* on May 8, 2013, under the headline ““Low-density” option would protect C&O”. (The April 24 article referenced in the letter is available through the *Current* website: <http://www.currentnewspapers.com/>).

I am writing in response to your April 24 article about the National Park Service’s “Feasibility Study to Implement a Non-motorized Boathouse Zone along the Georgetown Waterfront.”

Defenders of Potomac River Parkland, a coalition of 24 conservation, recreation and historic preservation groups, is pleased to endorse the "low density" scenario described in the study because it is the only one that protects the wooded C&O Canal National Historical Park while providing new boating facilities outside the park on degraded land in need of redevelopment.

This scenario enhances existing facilities within the C&O Canal National Historical Park; includes provisions outside the park for high school and collegiate rowing programs as well as for recreational paddlers and single rowing sculls; acknowledges sensitive natural, historic and cultural resources; addresses safety issues along the narrow, congested trailhead of the Capital Crescent Trail/DC Water sewer access area; and protects the "viewshed" within the park/Potomac Gorge, including the scenic views from Key Bridge, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the C&O Canal towpath, the Potomac Heritage Trail and the American Discovery Trail.

The "medium" and "high-density" scenarios, on the other hand, include major new construction inside the C&O Canal National Historical Park. Such structures would adversely impact the park’s resources; pose safety and access issues along the trailhead of the Capital Crescent Trail in the park; possibly conflict with an important DC Water sewer project at the gateway to the park; and modify the area’s "viewshed."

The low-density scenario is a "win" for the C&O Canal National Historical Park and a "win" for boaters, hikers, bicyclists and all who care about our capital area's environment.

Sally Strain, Coordinator
Defenders of Potomac River Parkland