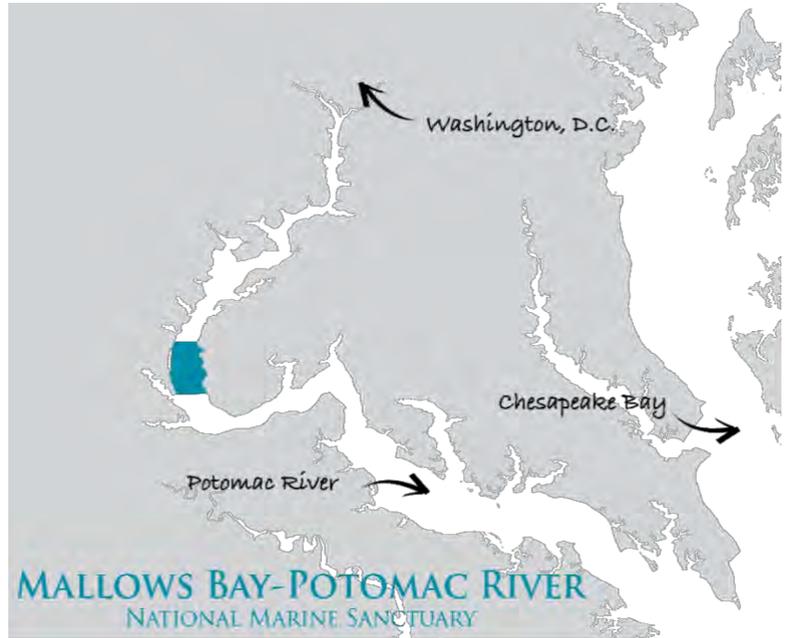


Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary Accomplishments

Fiscal Year 2020

Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 2019, the first new national marine sanctuary in nearly 20 years. Jointly managed by the state of Maryland and Charles County, Maryland, the sanctuary protects and interprets the remnants of more than 100 World War I-era wooden steamships – known as the "Ghost Fleet" – and other maritime resources and cultural heritage dating back nearly 12,000 years. The sanctuary also supports recreational access, educational programs, and economic opportunity.

Visit sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac for more information.



Community celebrates sanctuary designation

More than 400 community members joined NOAA, the state of Maryland, and Charles County, Maryland at Malloys Bay Park to commemorate sanctuary designation. The event featured remarks from Maryland Governor Larry Hogan and Senator Chris Van Hollen, as well as Acting NOAA Administrator Dr. Neil Jacobs. Mario Harley, Vice Chair of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, offered a spiritual blessing. A newly installed flag pole and interpretative sign were dedicated. The program also offered short kayak tours, nature walks, and oral histories about the sanctuary.



Piscataway Conoy Tribe Vice Chair, Mario Harley, shared an ancestral blessing during the sanctuary designation.
Photo: Matt McIntosh/NOAA

New volunteer monitoring supports public safety

The Potomac Riverkeeper Network partnered with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation to expand bacterial monitoring of the sanctuary. All users who come in contact with open waters should be aware of bacterial levels and the potential for health concerns. Samples are taken weekly from April-September, and results, available through theswimguide.org, indicate that waters in the sanctuary pass these safety standards. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, only the Potomac Riverkeeper Network staff conducted monitoring in 2020, but anticipate engaging volunteer citizen scientists in spring 2021.



The sanctuary serves as a living laboratory for students to learn about water quality and living resources.
Photo: Matt McIntosh/NOAA

Establishing the sanctuary's first advisory council

During the summer of 2020, NOAA invited community members to apply for membership on the new sanctuary advisory council. The council will provide advice to NOAA that supports the management plan, including maritime and cultural resource protection and interpretation as well as recreation, tourism, economic opportunity, education, and science. Members will serve as liaisons to a broad coalition of community organizations to facilitate communication and engagement. The first advisory council meeting was held in December 2020.



Commercial and recreational users enjoy the sanctuary from the Mallows Bay Park boat ramp. Photo: Matt McIntosh/NOAA

Maryland Ocean Guardian Schools making a difference

In year six as an Ocean Guardian School, North Point High School students continued to reduce single use plastics on campus by adding more hydration stations and reusable flatware kits. Additionally, they launched new programs to reduce electricity use at the school and initiated a "no idle" campaign for parent and student drivers. In year five, J.C. Parks Elementary initiated a program to replace single use sandwich bags with student-made reusable beeswax wraps. The students also engaged in a county-wide reusable bag campaign by creating the campaign pledge, designing artwork for the bags, and creating public safety awareness campaigns.



Reusable flatware is one way North Point HS, an Ocean Guardian School, is helping to reduce single use plastics. Photo: Sammy Orlando/NOAA

Looking Ahead

- The sanctuary will contract for an infrastructure requirements study to support sanctuary operations and programs. The study will include input from community and stakeholder groups. The result, expected in early 2021, will identify potential projects for consideration by sanctuary co-managers, the advisory council, community, and partners.
- As conditions allow, the sanctuary looks forward to re-engaging in-person programs for recreation, heritage tourism, education, science, and other community events.
- As conditions allow, East Carolina University will conduct a graduate field school to help document heritage resources using a variety of scientific methods and technologies. This activity was postponed due to COVID-19 in summer 2020.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.

● National Marine Sanctuary
▲ Marine National Monument
■ Proposed National Marine Sanctuary

The National Marine Sanctuary System is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. The network includes a system of 14 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.