

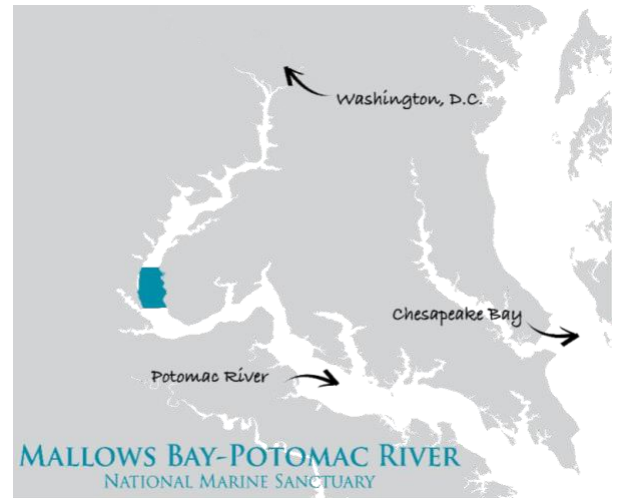


Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary Accomplishments

Fiscal Year 2021

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.



Sanctuary Advisory Council is Underway

The Sanctuary Advisory Council met six times and worked to bring together communities, governments, and Tribes to help guide sanctuary management. Preliminary briefings covered council operations, the sanctuary management plan, including co-management with the state of Maryland and Charles County, and programs already underway that benefit community and economic opportunity. The council also elected its first chair, Eileen Abel, and vice chair, Dan Hamilton. Additionally, it initiated programming to support recreation, heritage tourism, STEM education, and training.

Sanctuary Completes Infrastructure Requirements Study

In an effort to identify infrastructure needed to support sanctuary management and community programs, the sanctuary completed a study which included input from dozens of community stakeholders as well as sanctuary co-managers on topics ranging from safety and security, education and outreach, maritime and cultural heritage interpretation, science and ecology, and recreation and tourism. Initial actions will focus on signs and exhibits at both Malloys Bay Park and Widewater State Park that will enhance visitor experiences.



The Sanctuary Advisory Council will help guide management decisions at the sanctuary. Photo: NOAA



Education facilities will enhance public programming at the sanctuary. Photo: NOAA

Partnership Expands Monitoring to Support Public Safety

Partnering with the Potomac Riverkeeper Network, the sanctuary expanded bacterial monitoring at three locations commonly accessed by the public. The monitoring ensures awareness of bacterial levels and any potential for health concerns for all users who come in contact with open waters. Water samples were taken weekly from April through September, and the results, available through [Swim Guide](#), indicated that sanctuary waters consistently pass the safety standards.



Citizen scientists are able to assist with water quality monitoring in the sanctuary. Photo: NOAA

Looking Ahead

- Mallows Bay-Potomac River and Monitor national marine sanctuaries are now under a single management structure. The sanctuaries retain independent authorities, regulations, and management plans. Staff from both will support actions that leverage partnerships, community engagement, and programming common to both missions.
- Working with Terrain360 and the Sanctuary Advisory Council, the sanctuary will create virtual paddle and walking tours of sanctuary waters, Mallows Bay Park, and Widewater State Park. These web-enabled tours will broaden public appreciation and stewardship and serve as catalysts for visitation, recreation, and tourism.
- As safety protocols allow, the sanctuary looks forward to expanding in-person programs for recreation, heritage tourism, education, science, and other community events, all while connecting diverse and underserved communities to sanctuary resources.



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 15 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.