

Proposed Mallows Bay – Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary



Map of proposed boundaries

Sanctuary Designation Process

The process for designating a new national marine sanctuary has four steps:

Scoping: NOAA announces its intent to designate a new national marine sanctuary and asks the public for input on potential boundaries, resources that could be protected, issues NOAA should consider and any information that should be included in the resource analysis.

Sanctuary Proposal: NOAA prepares draft designation documents including a draft management plan, draft environmental impact statement that analyzes a range of alternatives, proposed regulations and proposed boundaries. NOAA may also form an advisory council to help inform the proposal and focus stakeholder participation.

Public Review: The public, agency partners, tribes and other stakeholders provide input on the draft documents. NOAA considers all input and determines appropriate changes.

Sanctuary Designation: NOAA makes a final decision and prepares final documents. Before the designation becomes effective, the Governor reviews the documents. Congress also has the opportunity to review the documents.

Mallows Bay – Potomac River

For the first time since 2000, NOAA has announced its intent to designate new sanctuaries under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. NOAA is asking for the public's input on protecting Mallows Bay – Potomac River, a maritime heritage resource area in Maryland.

Mallows Bay – Potomac River is a 14 square mile area of the tidal Potomac River adjacent to Charles County. It was nominated as a national marine sanctuary through the Sanctuary Nomination Process with broad community support.

The area encompasses historic shipwrecks of national significance that merit the additional management authority of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Nearly 200 known vessels span from the Revolutionary War through the present, and include the remains of the largest "Ghost Fleet" of World War I wooden steamships built for the U.S. Emergency Fleet, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Photo: Don Shomette

Mallows Bay in the Potomac River is home to an extraordinary collection of shipwrecks from the Revolutionary War through the present.

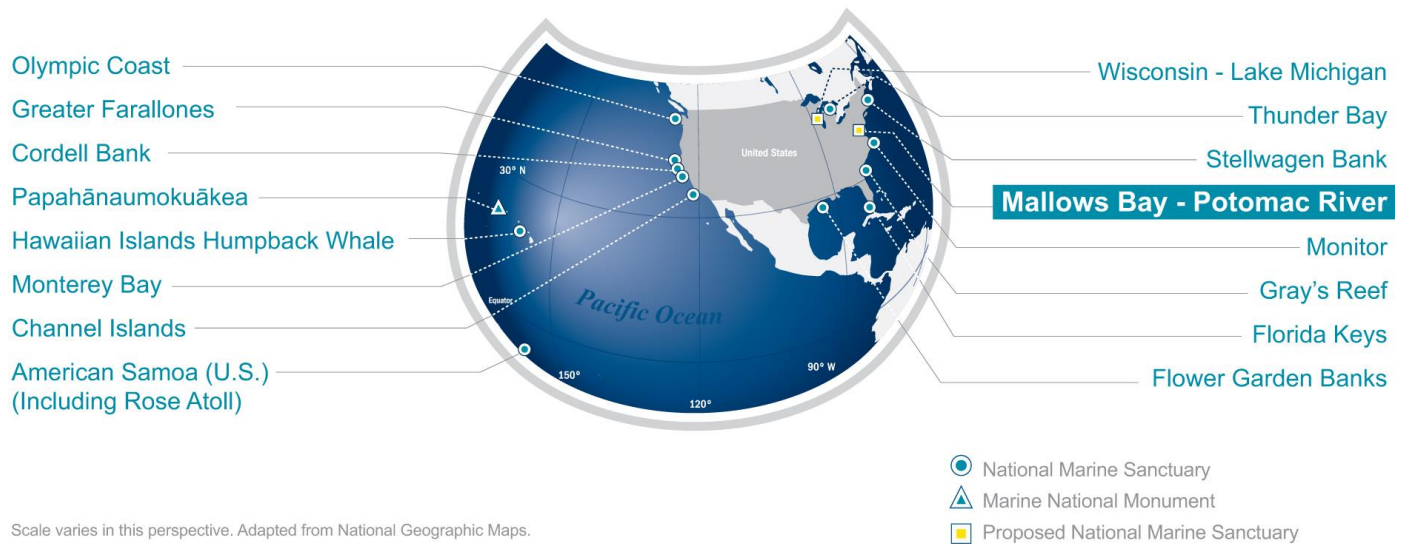
Mallows Bay is a largely undeveloped landscape and waterscape identified as one of the most ecologically valuable in Maryland, as the ship remains provide important habitat for fish and wildlife, including rare, threatened and endangered species.

About the nomination

In September 2014, the state of Maryland submitted a nomination to be added to NOAA's inventory of places to be considered as national marine sanctuaries. The nomination focused on protecting and interpreting the nationally significant collection of shipwrecks, fostering partnerships with education and research partners, and increasing opportunities for tourism and economic development.

It was endorsed by a diverse coalition of organizations and individuals at local, state, regional and national levels. This included elected officials, Native Americans, historical societies, businesses, museums, and environmental, recreational, conservation, fishing, tourism and educational groups.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



Olympic Coast
 Greater Farallones
 Cordell Bank
 Papahānaumokuākea
 Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale
 Monterey Bay
 Channel Islands
 American Samoa (U.S.)
 (Including Rose Atoll)

Wisconsin - Lake Michigan
 Thunder Bay
 Stellwagen Bank
Mallows Bay - Potomac River
 Monitor
 Gray's Reef
 Florida Keys
 Flower Garden Banks

NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary System

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 170,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The network includes a system of 13 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.

Through the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, NOAA can identify, designate and protect areas of the marine and Great Lakes environment that have special national significance.

Through the community-based Sanctuary Nomination Process, Americans can nominate nationally significant marine and Great Lakes areas as potential new national marine sanctuaries. Nominations that successfully complete the process are added to an inventory of areas NOAA may consider for designation.

For more information contact

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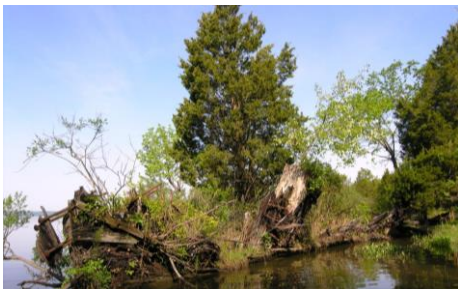


Photo: Don Shomette

Ship hulls have provided structure for ecologically important habitats.



Photo: Don Shomette

A vessel at low tide reveals the frame of its hull.



Photo: Don Shomette

The most recognizable ship of the ghost fleet, *Benzonia*, rests atop another vessel, the *Caribou*.

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-bay/>