

The Chesapeake Paddler



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Mallows Bay is newest marine sanctuary

After a five-year effort Mallows Bay has joined the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Marine Sanctuary network. Supporters, including CPA members, community groups and government officials celebrated the designation at a dedication ceremony in November 2019.

Long a popular destination for kayakers, Mallows Bay is famous for its "Ghost Fleet" which includes more than 100 wooden steamships built for the U.S. Emergency Fleet during World War I, as well as many other wrecks from Revolutionary times through the 1900s.

The hulls of the wrecks stay largely submerged during high tide and emerge during low tide, giving rise to term "Ghost Fleet."



A paddler explores the historic shipwrecks of Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary. (Photo credit: Matt McIntosh/NOAA)



Boundaries of the new Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary. (Credit: NOAA)

Today, what remains supports diverse ecosystems that are teeming with marine life, attracting kayakers, recreational fishermen and ecotourists to the area.

The effort to protect Mallows Bay involved many community groups, including the CPA Steering Committee and CPA members, legislators and NOAA. The State of Maryland, Charles County and NOAA will manage the national marine sanctuary.

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa.

For more information about the new sanctuary and the history of the Ghost Fleet, visit:

<https://wamu.atavist.com/the-ghost-fleet> and

<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac> ♦