



# Boathouse Update

Arlington Boathouse Foundation

December 2000

## NPS Boathouse Study Proves to Be Elusive

The National Park Service announced early this year that an Environmental Assessment (EA) would be conducted of all potential rowing boathouse sites along the Arlington shoreline of the Potomac River. This followed an earlier Congressional directive calling for a 1999 study of poten-

*The results of the Environmental Assessment were originally expected last summer.*

tial boathouse sites. The Congressional language had identified at least two locations for study: the Rosslyn shoreline near Theodore Roosevelt Island and one or more sites around the Pentagon

Lagoon. Four sites were subsequently identified by the Park Service to be included in the EA: the Rosslyn shoreline meadow across from Theodore Roosevelt Island, an open spot between the 14<sup>th</sup> street bridges, a place near the mouth of Four Mile Run, and somewhere near the sailing marina on Daingerfield Island (just across the line into Alexandria).

A Public Open House to review the four boathouse site options and discuss them with National Park Service (NPS) staff was held on February 24, 2000.

Comments were accepted at that meeting,

through the NPS web site and by mail. We are aware of many individuals and groups that submitted information to the Park Service on these sites. The Arlington Boathouse Foundation submitted a document about 50 pages in length addressing each of the sites.

The results of the EA were originally expected last summer. In June 2000, Congressmen Davis, Moran and Wolf requested a statement on the status of the Arlington boathouse study. We have been advised that personnel changes within the staff of the George Washington Memorial Parkway have delayed full review of the public comments. The time line for completion of the review remains in question.

The Senate Appropriations Committee Report covering the fiscal year 2001 budget of the Department of the Interior includes language directing the NPS to work with Arlington County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and interested civic groups to prepare a waterfront plan for recreational facilities on the Virginia side of the river. This language may or may not be helpful to our continuing efforts to build a boathouse in Arlington. Members of the Arlington Boathouse Coalition have begun meetings with Congressman James Moran

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Arlington Boathouse  
Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 4610  
Arlington, VA 22204



# A Rowing Facility on the Potomac River in Virginia

*Highlights from The National Park Service Newsletter 1: February 2000*

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes several locations for a potential rowing facility on the Virginia side of the Potomac River. Three of the potential sites are on NPS lands within the George Washington Memorial Parkway... one is on privately owned lands at Potomac Yards.... We expect this report to be completed by the Summer of 2000.

## Need for the Study

In 1998, Congress recognized the importance of increasing recreational access to the Potomac River, particularly for non-motorized boating uses, including rowing. The Congress directed the NPS to "complete a study of sites in Arlington County, including Columbia Island and Theodore Roosevelt Island, to determine the feasibility of constructing a boathouse at either of these locations, and to recommend which site is the preferred alternative."....

It is understood that by Theodore Roosevelt Island, the Congress meant the site near Theodore Roosevelt Island proposed by the Foundation (Arlington Boat-house Foundation), rather than a site on the island itself. The NPS has conducted preliminary investigations for sites at or near Columbia Island, which lies within the District of Columbia. The size and use of the existing Columbia Island Marina prohibits development of an additional boating facility on the lagoon side of the island. Other lands managed by the Pentagon on the lagoon, across from the marina have been reserved for other uses. The presence of the Navy & Merchant Marine Memorial, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove, and the proximity of the roadway to the river prohibit development of a rowing facility along the Potomac shoreline of the island. A site very near the island and within Arlington County, between the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridges, has been suggested to serve as an alternative to a site on the island.

## Potential Sites

**Between the 14<sup>th</sup> St. Bridges:** The site is located between the parallel spans of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridges in Arlington County and consists of mown fields and

shoreline trees. The Mount Vernon Trail runs through it as well. The Gravelly Point parking lot would serve as the primary parking lot and user drop off for the facility. Emergency and service access to the site is from the northbound GW Parkway only. This would be via a new 3/4 mile single-lane road from the Gravelly Point parking lot, paralleling the existing Mount Vernon trail....

**Across from Theodore Roosevelt Island:** ... The site is located across from the island, approximately 40 feet from the roadway. This area consists of riparian woodlands and a mown field, and lies within Arlington County. It is the trailhead for the Potomac Heritage Trail and is in proximity to the Mount Vernon Trail. The river rowing course used by most clubs and schools lies immediately north of the site. The site would be accessed from the northbound lanes of the Parkway (GWMP) or via the pedestrian bridge from Rosslyn....

**Four Mile Run:** The site lies above Four Mile Run on land owned by Commonwealth Atlantic Properties (CAP) in Arlington County.... Although NPS has had preliminary discussions with CAP representatives who are willing to consider the proposal, their current plan does not include a boathouse. The site lies approximately 20 feet above the water level and is flanked by abandoned railroad bridges on both sides.... Four Mile Run has been channelized and the banks reinforced with gabions at this location. The Four Mile Run Trail crosses the site. The boathouse would be accessed through new development to be constructed by CAP....

**Daingerfield Island:** This site is adjacent to the Washington Sailing Marina on the Potomac River and lies within the City of Alexandria. The site consists of a riparian forest. The site can be accessed from both directions on the GW Parkway.... Coordination of rowing and sailing traffic would be negotiated with the sailing marina management and current users. 🏠

## Foundation Meets with Moran

Arlington County Board Member Jay Fisette arranged a meeting between the Arlington Boathouse Foundation and Congressman Jim Moran on November 17, 2000 to discuss progress on the boathouse. Foundation Directors Carole Robinson and Rob Swennes attended the meeting as well as Erik Meyers, Chairman of the County Boathouse Task Force. It was a good opportunity to clarify the Foundation's concerns over water conditions at the various sites and to hear about Mr. Moran's ongoing efforts and challenges with Congressional action. Mr. Moran said he will continue to work with Congressmen Tom Davis and Frank Wolf in trying to move forward on a bipartisan basis.

Please contact Rob or Carole if you would like more information on how we expect to get the boathouse alternative study completed. Rob can be reached at 703-532-6101 (or by email at robertswennes@hotmail.com). Carole can be contacted at 703-525-4583 (or by email at RobinsonCE@aol.com). 🏠

## An Arlington Community Boathouse will provide:

- a home for the rowing programs of the three Arlington public high schools, other area schools, and community rowing and paddling organizations.
- storage for individual shells, canoes & kayaks.
- opportunities for area citizens and visitors to enjoy non-motorized boating through recreational and instructional programs, and canoe and shell rentals.
- important educational opportunities for the preservation and protection of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay.

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**With your help, the dream of an Arlington boathouse will become a reality.**

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization or business \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (indicate day or evening) \_\_\_\_\_

- Add my name to your mailing list for *Boathouse Update*.
- Please send me a bumper sticker (I contributed \$25 or more).
- I would like to write grant proposals.
- I would like to assist with fund-raising.
- I would like to provide annual audit.
- I would like to assist with outreach activities.
- Please call me about other ways I can help this effort.

To obtain additional bumper stickers or newsletters for meetings, please contact Carole Robinson at 703-525-4583 or email to: robinsonce@aol.com

*Make check payable to the Arlington Boathouse Foundation, Inc. and mail it to P.O. Box 4610, Arlington, VA 22204*

*The Arlington Boathouse Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.*

**Tel:** 703-525-4583    **Fax:** 703-243-6172    **Web site:** [www.arlingtonboathouse.org](http://www.arlingtonboathouse.org)

# NPS Boathouse Study

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and other supporters in Congress to move the site selection process forward to a conclusion.

If you have not done so recently, remind your Northern Virginia Congressman and local elected officials of the importance of a boathouse on the Arlington shoreline for the healthy development of rowing in our community. High school, college and community rowing opportunities have been painfully constricted for many years. It is time for a resolution of this problem.

We will contact supporters by mail, phone or email as soon as any needed action beyond this level becomes clear. 🏠

## The Senate Interior Appropriations Committee Report Language on the Interior 2001 Budget:

*[Note: this language follows report language directing that certain repairs and improvements be made to Thompson's Boathouse and along the Georgetown waterfront.]*

“The Service should also work with the State of Virginia, Arlington County, and interested civic groups to develop a waterfront plan for the Virginia side of the Potomac River including Roosevelt Island which shall include recreational facilities for families, schools, and disadvantaged children to complement the recreational facilities that are being upgraded in the District of Columbia. The Service should report back to the Committee with its recommendations including cost estimates by April 1, 2000 [sic].”

**PLEASE THANK** your local Virginia Congressman for his continued support of the Arlington boathouse effort —

The Honorable Thomas M. Davis III  
Tel: 202-225-1492  
Fax: 202-2253071  
Cannon HOB #224  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James P. Moran, Jr.  
Tel: 202-225-4376  
Fax: 202-225-0017  
Rayburn HOB #2239  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf  
Tel: 202-225-5136  
Fax: 202-225-3071  
Cannon HOB #241  
Washington, DC 20515

### WHO WE ARE

The **Arlington Boathouse Coalition** is a local citizen group comprised of alumni of the Arlington high school rowing programs, their parents and neighbors, and other local citizens, rowers and non-rowers, who support the idea of Arlington access to the Potomac River.

The **Arlington Boathouse Foundation**, registered with the State Corporation Commission in 1991, is the legal entity that has been established to receive and disburse money in support of an Arlington Community Boathouse. The current Directors are Carl Anderson, Edward Holland, John McDermott, Conchita Mitchell, Nancy Butt Packard, Carole Robinson, Allyson Rowell, Robert Swennes, and Charles Veatch.

*If you received more than one copy of this newsletter, please share it with a neighbor.*

ENCLOSED: Boathouse Update

Arlington Boathouse Foundation  
P.O. Box 4610  
Arlington, VA 22204

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