

## **UNIQUE OR SPECIAL VALUES OF MALLOWS BAY WHICH QUALIFY IT TO BE DESIGNATED A NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY**

The National Marine Sanctuaries Act authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to designate and protect areas of the marine environment of national significance due to their special historical, archaeological, cultural, ecological, conservation, recreational, scientific, educational, or aesthetic qualities as national marine sanctuaries. MalloWS Bay on the Potomac River has all these qualities and values.

### **MALLOWS BAY HISTORICAL VALUES:**

- Contains the largest and most varied assemblage of historic shipwrecks in the US over three centuries of American history, from the Revolutionary War to the present, totaling more than 185 archaeologically and/or historically documented vessels.
- Location of the largest extant collection -- more than 90 -- wooden and composite steamship remains and 7 of the 8 design types -- built for the World War I U.S. Emergency Fleet [USEF] between 1917 and 1919. They represented part of a massive national wartime program that made the United States, for the first time in history, the greatest shipbuilding nation in the world, constructed in 41 shipyards in 17 States;
- Played a critical role in the establishment of the U.S. Merchant Marine.
- Site of a land-sea skirmish between Royal Navy forces, the Virginia State Navy, and Maryland Militia during the American Revolution;
- Site of Pre-Civil War steamboat landings and Civil War camp sites and batteries, the remains of the Confederate blockade-runner *T.W. Riley*, sunk off nearby Wades Bay; the 1859 Cooke's Ferry, a transfer point for Confederate smuggling during the Civil War,
- Site of the first Langley heavier than air flight tests;
- Served as President Calvin Coolidge's favorite duck hunting and fishing grounds;

### **MALLOWS BAY ARCHEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL VALUES:**

- Archaeological artifacts have been found indicating the presence of some of the oldest Native American cultures in this region dating 12,000 years ago and ranging to the time of first contact and European settlement.
- The archaeological and cultural remains of several regimes of the Potomac fisheries industry from ca. 1840-1922 including pound net assemblage sites, domestic structures, net tarring facilities, sturgeon fishery sites and a caviar processing plant.
- Shipwrecks of numerous historic vessels involved in Potomac River fisheries operations during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries including bugeyes, brogans, centerboard schooners, sharpies, crab scrapes, turtle scrapes, and sturgeon boats;
- Site and industrial remains of the largest pre-World War II shipbreaking operation in the United States; including a giant marine burning basin for ship reduction erected by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, four marine railway systems, several steam donkey engine-powered California cable "yarding" operation, adopted from Pacific Coast

logging systems, for the mass removal of scrap metal from the water's edge to a truck loading strip on the ridge of the adjacent shoreline.

- The location and remains of the last Kiptopeake car ferry, *Accomac*, which was made obsolete by the interstate highway system and replaced in service by the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel;

### **MALLOWS BAY ECOLOGICAL AND CONSERVATION VALUES:**

- Mallows Bay is located in an area identified as one of the most ecologically significant and undeveloped landscapes remaining in Tidewater Maryland. It ranks in the highest tier of Blue Infrastructure in the State.
- Two unnamed tributaries that drain to Mallows Bay are designated Tier II waters by MDE. Fish and aquatic invertebrate communities are of high biological integrity – reflecting minimally-disturbed, intact stream ecosystems. Mallows Bay supports populations of two rare fish species in Maryland, the Longnose Gar (*Lepisosteus osteus*) and Warmouth (*Lepomis gulosus*).
- Mallows Bay offers important spawning and nursery habitat for Striped Bass, and harbors large beds of submerged aquatic vegetation that serve as important feeding and nursery grounds for a variety of aquatic organisms.
- Forested lands surrounding Mallows Bay are designated as Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS) habitat. These lands also include Sensitive Species Project Review Areas (SSPRA)
- The bay provides wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl, and the shoreline provides nesting habitat for Bald Eagles and Osprey.
- The presence of so many shipwrecks and the construction of the ship-breaking burning basin and canal has created a unique environment at Mallows that includes:
  - Mini-ecosystems aboard many vessels of the embayment, some with thriving populations of beaver, river otter, deer and myriad other forms of fauna and flora.
  - Decreased erosion rates and increased accretion rates with the confines of the embayment, resulting in wetland, woodland and aquatic habitat evolution above and below the waters;

### **MALLOWS BAY RECREATIONAL VALUES:**

Mallows Bay offers outstanding outdoor recreational and nature tourism opportunities including fishing, small craft boating and wildlife viewing.

- It is contiguous to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and the Lower Potomac Water Trail;
- A boat ramp and special kayak launching area constructed by Charles County in cooperation with the Maryland DNR makes access to Mallows Bay, the Potomac River and the largest ship graveyard in the United States easy.

- Charles County manages a day-use park at Mallows Bay, which has wildlife viewing areas and a fishing and hiking trail.
- It is widely regarded as one of the best bass fishing areas in the United States and is the site of numerous fishing tournaments.
- It is surrounded by State Parkland, wildlife management areas and lands protected by the Bureau of Land Management. These lands also support waterfowl and game hunting.

**MALLOWS BAY EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC VALUES:**

- The natural, cultural and historic resources of Mallows, including the Native American presence; the area's role in the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and World War I and II; the vast "ghost" fleet of Mallows; the ship-breaking operation; the role in creation of the U.S. Merchant Marine; the historic Potomac River fisheries activities; outlined above offer tremendous educational and research opportunities covering centuries of American history. Consequently the Mallows Bay area has been identified as having great heritage tourism potential.
- While many of the archeological and historical resources in the area have been documented, more remain to be discovered.
- The unique environment and mini-ecosystems created by the presence of so many sunken vessels offer outstanding opportunities for scientific research.

**MALLOWS BAY ESTHETIC VALUES:**

Mallows Bay is a place of scenic beauty located in a largely undeveloped section of the tidal Potomac River, in a landscape and waterscape comprised of large forested tracts of land, wetlands, tidal rivers, and unspoiled coastline, providing habitat for numerous animal and plant species.