

Seeking Public Input Regarding The Recreation Along The Chesapeake And Delaware Canal - April 2005

by Delaware Congressman Mike Castle

The Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, stretching 14 miles across our state, is a site of significant history, stunning wildlife, and bridges that stand as architectural marvels. Today it is a retreat for ship watchers, anglers, hunters, and bird watchers and I believe with only minor adjustments, it will serve as a retreat for all Delawareans.

I secured \$150,000 in federal funding to initiate a recreational study of the canal and for the past several months, I have been working with the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Recreation Study Working Group, a group of various state and local agencies and environmental advocates, to make the canal a draw for Delawareans, Marylanders, and the entire Mid-Atlantic region.

Together we are committed to transforming the canal into a multi-purpose recreational, educational, environmental, and historical resource. It is essential to stress that it is our priority to maintain the current activities along the canal, and to preserve the canal's wetlands, wildlife, and natural infrastructure. We are looking to enhance this area perhaps by paving pathways that run through the surrounding landscape for running and jogging, providing parking, and offering bathroom amenities, so the canal is accessible for the recreation that I believe so many Delawareans will enjoy.

We have some ideas and have put together a draft vision, but the vision can only become a reality with public input. Because the people of Delaware and Maryland are going to be the ones using this area, it is so important to get their feedback about what they want to see happen along the canal.

We will be hosting two open houses -- one in Delaware City, DE and one in Chesapeake City, MD--where the public is welcome to voice their opinions on how they would like to see recreational opportunities on the canal enhanced. We welcome you to come to share your ideas and concepts and to ask questions. Your input is critical to the success of this plan and will be incorporated into the final report, for which a draft will be completed before the end of this calendar year.

In addition, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), who continues to play a critical role in the study, has launched a website to offer both an overview of the project and take public comment from our community members who cannot attend the meetings. The ACOE website is <http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Projects/CD/>. Look for the online public comment survey to be available after April 14, 2005.

OPEN HOUSES:

Monday, April 25, 4 to 8 pm

Gunning Bedford Middle School

801 Cox Neck Road

Delaware City, Delaware

Tuesday, April 26, 4 to 8 p.m.

Bohemia Manor High School

Rt. 213, 2755 Augustine Herman Highway

Chesapeake city, Maryland

I look forward to hearing your input on how to best enhance recreation along the canal.