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Georgetown C&O Canal Restoration Kicks Off

Georgetown canal boat towed away one last time to make way for new boat in 2018

Washington, D.C. (September 19, 2016) -- Georgetown Heritage and the Chesapeake and Ohio National Historical Park (C&O Canal NHP) are beginning a multi-year restoration of the first mile of the C&O Canal in Georgetown. The kickoff event will be held at noon on Wednesday, October 5 at Lock 4 (Thomas Jefferson Street), as Georgetown community members and officials wave goodbye to the old canal boat, *The Georgetown*. The send-off marks the first phase of the restoration project, October 2016 through April 2018, which will include repairs to Locks 3 and 4, the launching of a new historic replica canal boat, and the development of a Comprehensive Master Plan to guide further revitalization of the C&O Canal NHP in Georgetown.

C&O Canal mules will tow *The Georgetown*, which operated as a popular attraction from 1983 to 2011, one last time before it is removed from service. Following the tow-out, National Park Service staff, city officials, and community leaders will share plans to restore, revitalize and reimagine this historic one-mile section of the park.

Restoration of the C&O Canal is a major component of the Georgetown 2028 plan. The Canal Master Plan will address infrastructure needs in the park, including the safety and accessibility of the popular towpath. The public will also be invited to participate in re-imagining the use of several pocket parks and plazas along the one mile section of canal.

“The Canal was, and will be again, the vibrant heart of Georgetown; it’s a special asset for our community and the city,” says Joe Sternlieb, Acting Executive Director of Georgetown Heritage and CEO & President of the Georgetown Business Improvement District (BID). Georgetown Heritage is the new non-profit partner of the C&O Canal NHP in Georgetown that will be raising funds for the project in the coming months.

“We created Georgetown Heritage so that a dedicated group of citizens and businesses could not only preserve this precious resource, but breathe new life into the canal park and unlock its full potential,” Sternlieb adds.

Repairs to Locks 3 and 4 are expected to take 18 months, and will include the complete rebuilding of Lock 3. The area around Lock 3 between 30th and Thomas Jefferson Streets will be closed to all pedestrian and bicycle traffic for the entirety of the project. The canal will be drained from Lock 5, at the Washington, D.C./Maryland line, through Georgetown for the length of the project. Temporary draining will occur the week of September 26 and again from October 6 through the end of the project. Project updates will be available on the park’s website at: <https://www.nps.gov/choh/planyourvisit/georgetownvisitorcenter.htm>

“The lock repairs are necessary for both the safety and preservation of the canal and surrounding properties. When completed, the repairs will allow for a new canal boat to offer visitors the full experience of riding through a lift lock that operates exactly as it did nearly 200 years ago,” says C&O Canal Superintendent Kevin Brandt. “*The Georgetown* was taken out of service in 2011 and we’re eager to reintroduce this unique portal for sharing the history of Georgetown and the Canal.”

The new historic replica canal boat will be purchased through grant funds provided to Georgetown Heritage by the District of Columbia government with plans to reinstate canal boat tours in 2018. In addition to infrastructure updates, the master plan will also recommend new canal interpretation, education and recreation programs. For more information on the canal restoration, visit www.georgetownheritage.org.

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About Georgetown Heritage

Georgetown Heritage is the new nonprofit partner of the C&O Canal in Georgetown, and was created by community leaders to partner with NPS to restore, revitalize, and reimagine the first mile of the canal. NPS, Georgetown Heritage, and the DC Office of Planning are partnering in the development of the C&O Canal Georgetown Comprehensive Master Plan.

About C&O Canal National Historical Park

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park preserves and interprets the historical, natural and recreational resources of the C&O Canal. Almost 5 million visitors a year enjoy the opportunities for recreation and understanding that the Park has to offer. 2016 is also the Centennial of the National Park Service, with celebrations through the year. Visit the Park’s website, www.nps.gov/choh, and the Centennial website, findyourpark.com, for more events celebrating 100 years of the National Park Service. Follow the C&O Canal on Facebook at [chesapeakeandohiocanal](https://www.facebook.com/chesapeakeandohiocanal) and on Twitter [@COcanalNPS](https://twitter.com/COcanalNPS).

About the Georgetown Business Improvement District

The Georgetown Business Improvement District (BID) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the accessibility, attractiveness and overall appeal of Georgetown. Established in 1999 by its property owners and merchants, the Georgetown BID has more than 1,000 members. The sets a standard of excellence in preserving historic charm while meeting contemporary needs. From marketing and special events, to transportation and streetscape, the Georgetown BID contributes to the vitality and quality of life in Georgetown. For more information please visit the BID’s official Georgetown website at georgetowndc.com. Also connect with Georgetown on Twitter/[@georgetowndc](https://twitter.com/georgetowndc), Facebook/[Official GeorgetownDC](https://www.facebook.com/OfficialGeorgetownDC), Instagram/[OfficialGeorgetownDC](https://www.instagram.com/OfficialGeorgetownDC) and YouTube/[GeorgetownDCTV](https://www.youtube.com/user/GeorgetownDCTV).