



FOR RELEASE 11AM THURSDAY APRIL 7:

**CONGRESSWOMAN NORTON, DEPUTY MAYOR BABERS, KICK OFF SPRING AT FLETCHER'S COVE;
ANNOUNCE AWARDS FOR CONSERVATION, CATCHING 1st AMERICAN SHAD**

WASHINGTON, DC – **Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton and DC Deputy Mayor Lucinda M. Babers** joined Friends of Fletcher's Cove (FFC) and outdoor leaders, to open the Spring Season at Fletcher's Cove, where anglers, boaters, bikers, hikers, paddlers, and picnickers converge on the National Park Service property on the Potomac River in DC along with American shad (DC's official fish), striped bass (MD and VA state fish), bald eagles, osprey and many other species in a spectacular spring migration.

FFC gave the Fletcher Award for conservation to Congresswoman Norton for her environmental leadership.

"Fletcher's Cove offers a unique haven for residents of the District of Columbia and the National Capital Region to enjoy fishing, boating, wildlife watching, and many other forms of outdoor recreation," **said Congresswoman Norton**. "I have long been a champion of efforts to restore Fletcher's Cove, writing to encourage the National Park Service to begin emergency dredging of sediment and to consider Fletcher's Cove remediation as a priority project for Great American Outdoor Act funding,"

Fletcher's Cove is slowly filling in due to upstream infrastructure work that occurred in the 1970s. Representatives Norton and Raskin, and Senator Van Hollen have worked with the National Park Service to advocate for remediation to preserve river access and restore natural river flow.

"We are incredibly proud to have spaces like Fletcher's Cove in DC, and we're proud to have an advocate for these outdoor spaces in Congresswoman Norton," **said DC Mayor Muriel Bowser**. "We know that Washingtonians in all eight wards enjoy places like Fletcher's Cove, Rock Creek Park, and Kingman and Heritage Islands, and we're going to keep working with local and federal partners to preserve and conserve these spaces for generations to come."

“With years of fishing here under my belt, I feel confident saying the Potomac River is the nation's premier urban fishery. Fletcher’s Cove has been used by anglers for many generations—a fact I am reminded of when I watch my own sons land American shad each spring from the Cove's iconic red rowboats,” **said Chris Wood, President & CEO of Trout Unlimited and Chair of Friends of Fletcher’s Cove.** “We appreciate Congresswoman Norton stepping up to address the public access issues facing the Cove, along with Representative Raskin, Senator Van Hollen, the National Park Service, and the countless anglers and outdoorspeople who rely on this beautiful resource to experience nature's bounty.”

“As a lifelong explorer of Fletcher's Cove, I applaud the Friends of Fletcher's Cove for their work to protect and restore our precious outdoor recreational access points like the Cove. Fletcher’s is a regional treasure and one of the Potomac’s most beloved natural venues. I’m thrilled to work with Representative Norton and Mayor Bowser to protect it for future generations,” **said Representative Jamie Raskin.**

“Fletcher’s Cove is one of our nation’s most iconic urban fishing spots,” **said American Sportfishing Association President, Glenn Hughes.** “Although there is much more to be done to improve the natural habitat here, it’s great to see the commitment from outdoor and government leaders.”

“The Potomac River is a special treasure of the greater capital region, serving as both a home for fish and wildlife and a robust engine for economic growth. Each of us has a responsibility to be good stewards of this river, and I am proud to work alongside the entire Friends of Fletcher’s Cove family to do just that,” **said Senator Chris Van Hollen.** “The Friends of Fletcher’s Cove are Potomac River champions, and the impact of their work sustaining, maintaining, and improving Fletcher’s Cove is critical to our overall efforts to protect this nationally important river. Because of their diligence and determination, visitors from across my state of Maryland and around the world can enjoy all that the beautiful C&O Canal has to offer. On the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will keep working with my colleagues to secure additional federal resources to restore Fletcher’s Cove and invest in other projects in the C&O Canal National Historical Park to keep this region and our communities vibrant for generations to come. It’s in that spirit that I want to wish everyone a wonderful start of this year’s outdoor recreation season.

“Like Representative Raskin, I grew up at Fletcher’s Cove. Friends of Fletcher’s Cove has two missions, to get more youth out on the water, and to get a science-based, federally funded, time-bound comprehensive plan for remediation to ensure the Cove is here for future generations. We deeply appreciate all the support we’ve received to advance this important cause.” **said Robert Catalanotto, Executive Director of Friends of Fletcher's Cove.**

BACKGROUND:

Fletcher's Cove is part of the nation's "premier urban fishery" and a regional center for outdoor recreation and access to the Potomac River. It is part of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park. [Friends of Fletcher's Cove](#) is a group of dedicated citizens and organizations working to save access to recreation on the Potomac River at Fletcher's Cove.

The Fletcher Award is named for the Fletcher family, who gave their name to the cove and kept it accessible to the public for more than a century. The Cummins Award is named for Jim Cummins, a biologist who led the successful recovery effort for American shad in the Potomac for the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin.

Silt has been accumulating in Fletcher's Cove for years, threatening the longstanding public access to the Potomac. The cause: A man-made berm north of the Cove from a 1960's infrastructure project which has altered the flow of the river around the Cove. As a consequence, the Cove has drastically silted in, inhibiting access to the river. Friends of Fletcher's Cove (FFC) formed in 2014 to advocate for continued access and eventual restoration of the Potomac's natural floodplain. FFC has partnered with Mayor Muriel Bowser and the DC Department of Energy and Environment to test the sediment and fill soil.

American shad live in the Atlantic and swim up almost all East Coast rivers to spawn. The American shad is DC's Official Fish and George Washington was a Potomac shad angler, as was Abner Cloud, whose house remains at Fletcher's. In the 19th Century, American shad was the most important commercial fish on the East Coast, but populations were reduced by dams, overfishing and pollution. Today, the Potomac's shad population has recovered.

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