

# Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park

Proposed Offshore Submerged Channel Intake for  
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission  
Potomac Water Filtration Plant

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Project Description

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) is proposing to construct an offshore submerged channel intake for water supply at the Potomac Water Filtration Plant (WFP). Some components of the Potomac WFP are located within the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (C&O Canal NHP) and therefore WSSC will be seeking a construction Special Use Permit from the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS is initiating an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate WSSC's proposal and to identify and evaluate the impacts to Park resources prior to the issuance of a construction Special Use Permit.

The Potomac WFP is located in Montgomery County, Maryland near mile marker 17 of the Park's towpath. The proposed project would include the construction of an intake for water supply in the Potomac River channel; a tunnel or trench conduit system to connect the new intake to the existing onshore water filtration plant; and a new boat ramp to provide access to the new intake for maintenance and emergency rescue activities. In addition, a land exchange between the NPS and WSSC would occur for lands affected by the project. An EA is being prepared to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed project to the natural, cultural, and human environment, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



## Purpose and Need For Action

The Potomac WFP treats and distributes water to more than one million people throughout Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The purpose of the new submerged channel intake is to provide a consistently higher quality raw water source for the WFP than can be achieved using the existing onshore intake. The local tributary inflows, approximately 0.25 miles upstream of the Potomac WFP intake on the north bank of the Potomac River, have been identified as having a significant negative impact on raw water quality and treatment plant operation during local storm events. Storm flows from the largely urbanized portion of Rockville and surrounding areas drain into the local tributary (Watts Branch), and these localized high flows cause rapid negative changes in raw water quality including increases in suspended solids, fecal coliforms, and decreases in pH and alkalinity. These changes in water quality increase the challenge and cost for the plant to maintain its excellent finished water quality. The construction of an additional intake would also provide redundancy which would improve reliability as the existing intake occasionally is subject to blockage from debris and ice.

An offshore intake would, therefore, benefit public health by improving the consistency and quality of the raw water source for the Potomac WFP as well as the reliability of the WFP. It would also decrease costs for treatment and residuals handling from the plant by decreasing the solids loading to the WFP.

## Impact Topics

Potential impacts to natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources associated with the submerged channel intake have been identified and are listed below. Decisions regarding the anticipated impacts are subject to change as the planning process continues.

- Air Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Noise
- Water Resources
- Wetlands
- Wildlife and Aquatic Life
- Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species
- Cultural Resources
- Socioeconomics
- Visitor Use and Experience
- Park Operations



United States Department of the Interior  
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park  
1850 Dual Highway, Suite 100  
Hagerstown, MD 21740

FIRST CLASS MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
PERMIT NO. G-83

Official Business  
Penalty for Private Use \$300



## Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park

District of Columbia, Maryland, and West Virginia

July 2013

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



### Scoping for the Proposed Offshore Submerged Channel Intake Open for Public Comment

The National Park Service (NPS) announces a 30-day public comment period to solicit public comments for the proposed offshore submerged channel intake. During this scoping period, the public is invited to identify any issues or concerns they may have with the proposed project so that NPS can appropriately consider them in the EA. Public comment will be accepted through August 18, 2013. You may provide comments in any of the following ways:

- Attend the public open house meeting on August 1, 2013;
- Comment online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>; or
- Mail comments to:  
Simon Baidoo, Project Manager,  
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission,  
14501 Sweitzer Lane  
Laurel, Maryland 20707.

#### Public Meeting

Thursday, August 1, 2013  
6:00 - 8:00 pm  
Potomac Elementary School  
10311 River Road  
Potomac, Maryland, 20854

The meeting will consist of an open house format to provide you with opportunities to discuss your interests and concerns with NPS staff.

Please be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be publically available at any time. Although you may request in your comment that we withhold your personal information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Once the EA is developed, it will be made available for a 30 day public review period.