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National Park Service opens Phase I of Georgetown Waterfront Park; Largest National Park Built in Washington, D.C. during the last 30 Years

Washington, D.C. – The National Park Service (NPS) will open Phase I of the Georgetown Waterfront Park from Wisconsin Avenue to 34th Street with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Saturday, October 4 beginning at 11:00 a.m.

The ribbon cutting ceremony celebrates the completion of Phase I, the first of two construction phases of the Georgetown Waterfront Park. With the removal of a large parking lot and railroad tracks, Phase I has transformed approximately 3 acres of what had once been a heavily concentrated industrial site along the river's edge into a beautiful multi- use urban park.

When fully complete, Georgetown Waterfront Park will become the largest national park created in the Nation's Capital in 30 years since Constitution Gardens was completed on the National Mall in 1976. The new park's design was chosen to beautify the area, and to help honor the central importance of the Potomac River to greater Washington. Rock Creek Park staff will manage and administer the day- to- day functions at Georgetown Waterfront Park.

“We are delighted the Georgetown Waterfront Park was selected to be among the first parks chosen as part of the Administration's Centennial Initiative,” said Mary Bomar, Director, National Park Service. “This public- private effort and recognition will ensure this park moves to completion in a timely manner so that all may soon enjoy the entire park and the Potomac River in the heart of the city.”

Designed by world- renowned landscape architects Wallace Roberts & Todd of Philadelphia, the park contains a promenade along the shoreline punctuated with three overlooks with views of the Potomac River from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to Key Bridge, a separate bike trail that connects Rock Creek Park with the Capital Crescent Trail, a labyrinth containing intertwined pathways for contemplation, open lawns and informal gardens, an environmentally bio- engineered river edge that preserves native plants and enhances water quality, lights for evening enjoyment, and benches to relax and enjoy the setting.

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Phase 2, the final phase of the park which will be completed in 2010, will extend from Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. to 31st Street, N.W. and will include the park's central plaza. The plaza will include many of the park's most distinctive features, including a fountain, a pergola laced with flowering vines to shade park benches, and river stairs with seating designed for visitors enjoying the Potomac. Phase 1 and 2 together will complete 225 miles of parkland along the Potomac River's shoreline, stretching from Mount Vernon, Virginia north to Cumberland, Maryland.

To allow construction of Phase 2 to begin later this fall, the National Park Service awarded a \$4.5 million matching Centennial Initiative grant for completing the construction of the Georgetown Waterfront Park. The grant is a dollar- for- dollar federal match of funds that the National Park Foundation and the Friends of Georgetown Waterfront Park have raised from private donors and the District of Columbia government to complete the park.

“We are grateful to the District of Columbia for the initial funds made available and to many private citizens, organizations and business leaders that have made generous contributions to this effort,” said Adrienne Coleman, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, and the park that will administer and manage the Georgetown Waterfront Park. “We look forward to completion of Phase 2.”

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