



CONTACT: Susan Sullam, 410-962-4436
or 410-960-2440 (cell)
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***TEAM MARYLAND, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
CELEBRATE NEW STAR-SPANGLED BANNER TRAIL
AT FT. MCHENRY CEREMONY***

BALTIMORE – U.S. Senator **Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD) joined with U.S. **Congressmen John Sarbanes** (MD-3rd), **Steny Hoyer** (MD-5th), **Dutch Ruppersberger** (MD-2nd), **Baltimore County Executive James T. Smith** and officials from the National Park Service today to celebrate the creation of *The Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail* at Ft. McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine. The bill creating the Trail passed Congress and was signed into law on May 8 by President Bush.

The National Historic Trail system commemorates major routes of historic travel and events that have shaped American history. The creation of the *Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail* comes in time for the bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812 in 2012.

The Trail will begin with the June 1814 battle between the British Navy and the American Chesapeake Flotilla in St. Leonard's Creek in Calvert County, follows the British landing at Benedict on the Patuxent River, the Battle of Bladensburg, and then moves on to the British march into Washington, D.C., which was sacked and burned. From Washington, it follows the British campaign to the Battle of North Point and on to Baltimore, ending at Fort McHenry, site of the defeat of the British and where Francis Scott Key composed The Star-Spangled Banner, our **National Anthem**.

“As we prepare for the bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812, the Star-Spangled Banner Trail will ensure that Americans have a much better appreciation of America's past and of Maryland's important contributions to it,” said Senator Cardin, who first introduced legislation in Congress to create the Trail in 2003. “I am extremely pleased that the nation will now have the opportunity to learn about the unique role Maryland and our region have played in our nation's history.”

“I am proud to be from a city with such a rich heritage and culture as Baltimore. The Star-Spangled Banner Trail will be a living memorial to those who gave their lives to protect our young nation, and a testament to the immense challenges our men and women faced in preserving our liberty,” said Senator Barbara A. Mikulski. “The creation of the Star-Spangled Banner Trail is a federal investment in preserving Maryland's national treasures and historical integrity. Today, I join my colleagues to celebrate our team work in making the designation of this land a reality.”

“I want to thank our Maryland delegation for securing federal recognition and financial assistance for Maryland's national treasures,” said Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley. “The creation of the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail will help us focus national attention and investment on the history-altering contributions made by the diverse citizens of Maryland during the War of 1812, and our important role in shaping the nation.”

“Many refer to the War of 1812 as the ‘second war of independence,’” said Congressman Sarbanes. “The way our nation responded to this challenge proved that our new government would hold and set the stage for the spread of democracy to other parts of the world. As we approach the bicentennial celebration, this new trail will help teach more Americans about seminal moments in our Nation’s history such as the heroic defense of Fort McHenry, where our National Anthem was composed and the British met their ultimate defeat.”

“The designation of this route as a National Historic Trail will serve as a reminder of the important role Maryland played during America’s fight for freedom in the War of 1812,” stated Congressman Steny Hoyer. “From St. Leonard’s Creek in Calvert County and Benedict in Charles County to the trail’s end at Fort McHenry, this route tells the story of America’s ‘second war for independence’ and the hard-fought battles waged in our state. Through this trail, that important history will be preserved for generations to come.”

“Maryland played a critical role in the growth of our nation. The Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail is a wonderful way to inspire people of all ages to learn more about Maryland’s rich history,” said Congressman C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger.

“Our ancestors in the Baltimore region played pivotal roles in what is often referred to as the Second War of Independence, and Ft. McHenry is symbolic of their sacrifice and determination,” said County Executive Jim Smith. “Senator Cardin and the Maryland Delegation deserve our thanks for their efforts over the past five years to establish the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail,” he said.

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