

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sen. Cardin writes periodic columns for Maryland publications. The following column is about the new Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. Please contact Susan Sullam, susan_sullam@cardin.senate.gov if you have any questions.

PRECEDENCE: Senator Cardin was sworn in as a member of the U.S. Senate on Jan. 4, 2007. He is a member of five committees: Foreign Relations, Judiciary, Environment and Public Works, Budget and Small Business. His web site is: www.cardin.senate.gov

THE NEW STAR-SPANGLED BANNER TRAIL WILL HELP COMMEMORATE THE WAR OF 1812

By U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin

When we celebrate the bicentennial of the War of 1812 in four years we will have the new *Star-Spangled National Historic Trail* to help us chart the events of the war that is often referred to as our nation's Second War of Independence.

The War of 1812 was a pivotal event in our nation's early history. In 1814, the military campaign in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. turned the direction of the war and remains the only combined naval and land attack in our nation's history.

In 1999, I joined Senator Paul Sarbanes in starting the process to have the route of the British invasion designated a National Historic Trail. After Senator Sarbanes retired, I worked with Congressman John Sarbanes (MD-3rd) to ensure passage of this bill. I am pleased that on May 8 -- after an almost 10 year effort -- President Bush signed the bill into law, making the *Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail* a reality.

In addition to the Star-Spangled Banner Trail, there are 19 other National Historic Trails, including the Lewis and Clark, the Pony Express, Selma to Montgomery and the Trail of Tears. To receive a National Historic Trail designation, a proposed route must meet three criteria: it must be nationally significant, have a documented route through maps or journals and provide recreational opportunities.

Sites along the Star-Spangled Banner Trail would mark some of the most important events of the War of 1812. The trail begins 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, through the Battle of Bladensburg, and then moves on to the British march into Washington, D.C., which was sacked and burned.

From Washington, the Trail follows the British campaign to the Battle of North Point and on to Baltimore, which at the time was considered a much more important city than Washington. The Trail ends at Fort McHenry in Baltimore, site of the defeat of the British and where Francis Scott Key wrote what was to become our National Anthem.

Recently, the Chesapeake Bay Gateways & Watertrails Network awarded the Maryland Office of Tourism Development a \$100,000 grant to develop an access plan for the water portion of the Trail.

As Marylanders, we can all be proud of the role our state has played in our nation's history. The creation of the *Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail* will help all Americans appreciate what it took to preserve our nation and ensure our young democracy.

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6/08