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Public input sought on proposed C&D recreation trail

By ALAN J. McCOMBS, The News Journal

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Preliminary designs for a recreation trail along the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal have been released, and public comment is being sought until Feb. 15



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

on 15 miles of walkways that would run from Delaware City to Chesapeake City, Md., on the north side of the canal.

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is coordinating the project, has worked with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Maryland's Department of Natural Resources and various municipalities along the route. The draft, which is considered a 30 percent complete version of the project's final design, calls for \$10 million worth of work along the north side.

DNREC identified the area as a potential site for a trail in the 1990s. Development didn't begin until Rep. Mike Castle, R-Del., gathered \$150,000 in federal money with funds from the state and the corps in 2004 to study a recreation area.

The current proposal calls for a 16-mile-long trail that would connect various greenways, historic sites and parks. Parking lots would be placed every three to four miles, said Mark Eberle of the corps and the trail's project manager.

The trail would include an asphalt path for pedestrians and bicyclists and another path made of stone dust that could also be used by equestrians. Current plans don't call for any trash receptacles but do call for restrooms.

Officials hope groundbreaking for the northern part could occur in 2009. But only \$3 million has been pledged by federal, state and municipal sources, leaving a \$7 million shortfall.

The cost of completing a trail on both sides of the canal remains unknown; however, Castle said that once demand becomes clear for the northern half, it may impact development on the southern half. "You want to see what the utilization is," he said. "If you only see [that] one side is needed, so be it."

Comments can be sent to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 100 Penn Square East, Philadelphia, PA 19107-3390 or e-mailed to USACE spokesman Khaalid Walls at khaalid.h.walls@usace.army.mil.

Contact Alan J. McCombs at 324-2866 or amccombs@delawareonline.com.



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What a beautiful area! I sure hope they come through with the money! Defintely the nicest water t of the area is beautiful and quiet also. What a

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