



Newsletter

September 2026

Please Support DCPL's Legal Advocacy Fund

Advocacy Update



The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

On September 15, 2026, the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees voted to close the main building immediately, citing safety concerns. After the board's vote, President Trump wrote on social media that the main building would close immediately; authorized renovations and repairs would not take place unless higher courts overturn the ruling barring his name from the center.

Given this development, DCPL and its seven co-plaintiffs released the following statement:

"If the current leadership of the Kennedy Center is unwilling or unable to exercise its fiduciary duty to

protect the historic building and the grounds of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the court should consider appointing a receiver or replacing that leadership. The irrevocable loss of this iconic building — whether by intent, neglect, or mismanagement — appears increasingly possible. The court has invited our coalition of eight nationally recognized architectural and preservation organizations to raise additional requests for relief if new facts appear to warrant judicial intervention. We are on the verge of such a moment." [Read the full statement here.](#)

On September 17th, US District Judge Christopher Cooper issued an order in response to an emergency filing by Representative Joyce Beatty—who raised alarms after President Trump publicly suggested the facility could be "ripped down" or demolished. Judge Cooper formally ordered the Kennedy Center's Board of Trustees to provide at least 30 days' advance written notice to both the plaintiffs and the court before making any operational changes, altering existing project scope, or initiating any demolition or new construction at the complex. Although Judge Cooper declined to hold an immediate emergency hearing, he required the board to file a comprehensive status report by September 23rd, supported by a sworn declaration from a Kennedy Center representative, detailing the circumstances surrounding the facility's "temporary closure" and planned emergency repairs.

Donate to the Kennedy Center Legal Advocacy Fund



Image released by the Secretary of the Department of Interior.

East Potomac Park (Golf Links Redesign)

Active litigation is ongoing in federal court, and DCPL expects its attorneys to file an amended complaint this week.



Rendering of the Triumphal Arch.

Triumphal Arch (Memorial Circle)

Plans are moving forward for a 250-foot-tall Neoclassical "Victory Arch" at Memorial Circle on Columbia Island, positioned

The National Park Service has initiated Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which requires the federal government to consider the effect of this proposed redesign on the historically significant park, make every effort to avoid and minimize impacts, and, if it's impossible to avoid, mitigate.

While Section 106 consultation has been initiated, the initial consulting parties meeting was canceled. The court has also been clear that, despite President Trump's announcement that work in East Potomac Park would begin September 1st, there will be consequences if the government moves forward without completing the steps required by law.

About East Potomac Park:
Established by an Act of Congress in 1897, East Potomac Park is designated for the recreation and enjoyment of the people. The golf links were built from 1918 to 1923 and designed by renowned golfer Walter J. Travis. In 1941, the course was the site of efforts to desegregate the city's public golf courses.



Image by The Washington Post.

White House Ballroom (East Wing Modernization)

The physical landscape of the White House complex is undergoing its most significant modifications in a generation. The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPCC) has formally approved the design and planning phases of the East Wing Modernization Project. This project includes a substantial 90,000-square-foot footprint, which features a 22,000-square-foot State Ballroom designed in a classical revival style

Attention has now shifted significantly to congressional oversight due to the rising \$600 million budget. This shift comes as funding transitions from private donors to federal defense and security spending, especially after recent security incidents in April. Additionally, the construction includes plans for an extensive, fortified underground military command center beneath the building.

The lawsuit brought by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to stop construction of the proposed \$400 million White House ballroom is now proceeding in lower federal courts after a major Supreme Court ruling. On August 31, 2026, the Supreme Court voted 5–4 to grant an emergency stay requested by the Trump administration, lifting a lower court preliminary injunction that had temporarily blocked above-ground construction. In its

directly between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery. The National Park Service says it will commemorate the country's 250th Anniversary. NPS is also citing the 1925 congressional authorization to build the Memorial Bridge and two columns as justification for this project. This argument is flawed on several levels, given that the proposed columns were never built and authorizations typically last between one and five years.

This proposed arch would overshadow the 99-foot-tall Lincoln Memorial and disrupt the historic views of Arlington House. DCPL, along with Local preservationists and the public, has strongly opposed the project, and a coalition of Vietnam War veterans has filed a lawsuit to prevent its construction, arguing that it would alter the solemn atmosphere of Arlington Cemetery.

NPS is currently rushing through the required Section 106 process, without regard to avoiding impacts to dozens of historic properties in the area. [Learn more about the Section 106 process and read comments from the consulting parties and public at this link.](#)



Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, courtesy of Library of Congress.

Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool

The National Park Service proceeded with a protective coating without compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). By bypassing standard regulatory processes for what it describes as "national aesthetics and readiness" ahead of the 250th anniversary, the administration has not scheduled any public planning hearings.

The active federal [lawsuit filed by The Cultural Landscape Foundation](#), which seeks to mitigate the adverse effects on the reflecting pool and the broader cultural landscape of The National Mall. Additionally, upcoming congressional appropriations hearings are addressing the project's shifting costs.

The protective coating failed, and to date, preservation groups have not been given access to the site to assess the damage to the Reflecting Pool.

Litigation is ongoing.



The District Cup Polo Match Played in West Potomac Park, DCPL Archives, 2026.

ruling, the Supreme Court determined on procedural grounds that the National Trust likely lacks legal standing to challenge the project in federal court, allowing active construction to resume as full litigation over the project's authorization continues.



Rendering of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building with a painted exterior.

Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB)

The current administration has proposed a major "Exterior Beautification Project" to paint the EEOB's historic gray granite exterior, designed in the French Second Empire style, solid white. Preservationists have strongly opposed this \$7.5 million plan, arguing that painting the granite would irreversibly change both the historical significance and structural integrity of one of Washington, DC's most distinctive landmarks.

The lawsuit filed by Cultural Heritage Partners and the DC Preservation League is still pending and challenges the General Services Administration's authority to delegate to the Executive, thereby avoiding regulatory requirements.

On August 18th, the US District Court ordered that it will allow limited paint testing and warned the government against going any further with this project without Court approval. The Court also reserved decision on whether the President's management of the project is illegal.

[Click here to read more about the lawsuit and the expert opposition to the proposal](#)

Please Support DCPL's Legal Advocacy Fund!

West Potomac Park

In June 2026, the DC Preservation League joined a coalition of advocacy, conservation, and historic preservation organizations, and an individual Washington, DC resident, to save West Potomac Park.

In the complaint, the [National Parks Conservation Association](#) (NPCA), DCPL, [National Mall Coalition](#), [Olmsted Network](#), the [Committee of 100 on the Federal City](#), [The Cultural Landscape Foundation](#), and resident Steve Longenecker are seeking to stop the Trump-Vance administration's unlawful attempt to remake West Potomac Park, national park land that belongs to all Americans. The coalition is represented in the matter by [Democracy Forward Foundation](#).

On September 16th, attorneys for the plaintiffs filed court documents seeking a preliminary injunction in light of a flurry of construction activity at the site, including the ongoing construction of gazebos as “part of the Garden of American Heroes,” as well as concrete poured for walkways that cross the park’s open fields.

[Read the full release from NPCA on the most recent filing](#)

Show Your Support for East Potomac Park with the Hands Off Hains Collection by Summer's Art



Thanks to artist Summer Delehanty, you can now show your support for East Potomac Park and Hains Point next time you are walking, biking, or Metroing around DC! Click below to check out the [Hands Off Hains Collection by Summer's Art](#), which was recently featured in [an Axios article](#) as "DC's newest resistance merch." The Hands Off Hains Collection features two shirts and a poster.

Buy Your T-Shirt Today

Upcoming Event

Crab Feast 12

Saturday, October 3rd | 12:00 - 3:00 pm
In-Person, Washington Canoe Club, 3700 Water Street NW



Join the DC Preservation League and the [Capital Pride Alliance](#) on Saturday, October 3rd, from 12:00 to 3:00 pm for their annual Crab Feast at the historic [Washington Canoe Club](#), one of DC’s most picturesque locations on the banks of the beautiful Potomac River. Over the past year, [the canoe club has been undergoing phase 1 of the rehabilitation project](#) and an update will be provided for Crab Feast attendees.

This event takes place entirely outdoors, with canoes and paddle boards available for adventures on the water.

Tickets: \$85 for ages 14+; \$25 for kids 13 and under. **Includes:** all-you-can eat crabs, shrimp, corn on the cob, hot dogs, and ice cream + beer, wine, soda, and water available.

Limited seating available: Get your tickets now!

Cancellations/Refunds: Requests for refunds will only be considered more than 5 days prior to the event, and transaction fees will be subtracted from the refund total. Cancellations 5 days or less from the event will not be refunded, but the ticket cost can be converted to a tax-deductible donation.

Online registration note: You do not need an online account with DCPL to buy tickets. Simply X out of the pop up box that appears and proceed to buy tickets.

Questions? Email kelli@dcpreservation.org

[Register Here](#)

DAF Giving Day is October 8, 2026 - Please Support DCPL!



A DAF (Donor Advised Fund) is a charitable savings account used to manage charitable gifts, like a 401k for donations.

When you establish and contribute assets to a DAF, you can receive an immediate tax deduction, and then recommend charitable grants to organizations like DCPL now, or in the future when you are ready. A DAF is a simple, flexible way to manage your charitable giving.

DAF Giving Day is a national day of giving focused on maximizing gifts for non profits like DCPL from donor advised funds. Here’s how you can participate:

1. Consider establishing a DAF if you don’t

already have one: Starting a DAF can be done online and is typically free of cost, though there can be modest administrative fees to manage the account over time. Find verified DAF providers and official DAF Day partners [here](#).

2. Utilize your DAF to support DCPL with a gift on October 8th! You can even select how you would like to designate your gift - to DCPL's General Operating Fund, its Legal Advocacy Fund which supports projects like Hains Point/East Potomac Park, or the Kennedy Center Advocacy Fund.

If you miss DAF Day on October 8th, that's ok! You can donate using your DAF any other day of the year directly on [DCPL's donation page](#). Support is especially needed this year and knowing the community is behind DCPL's efforts is always appreciated!

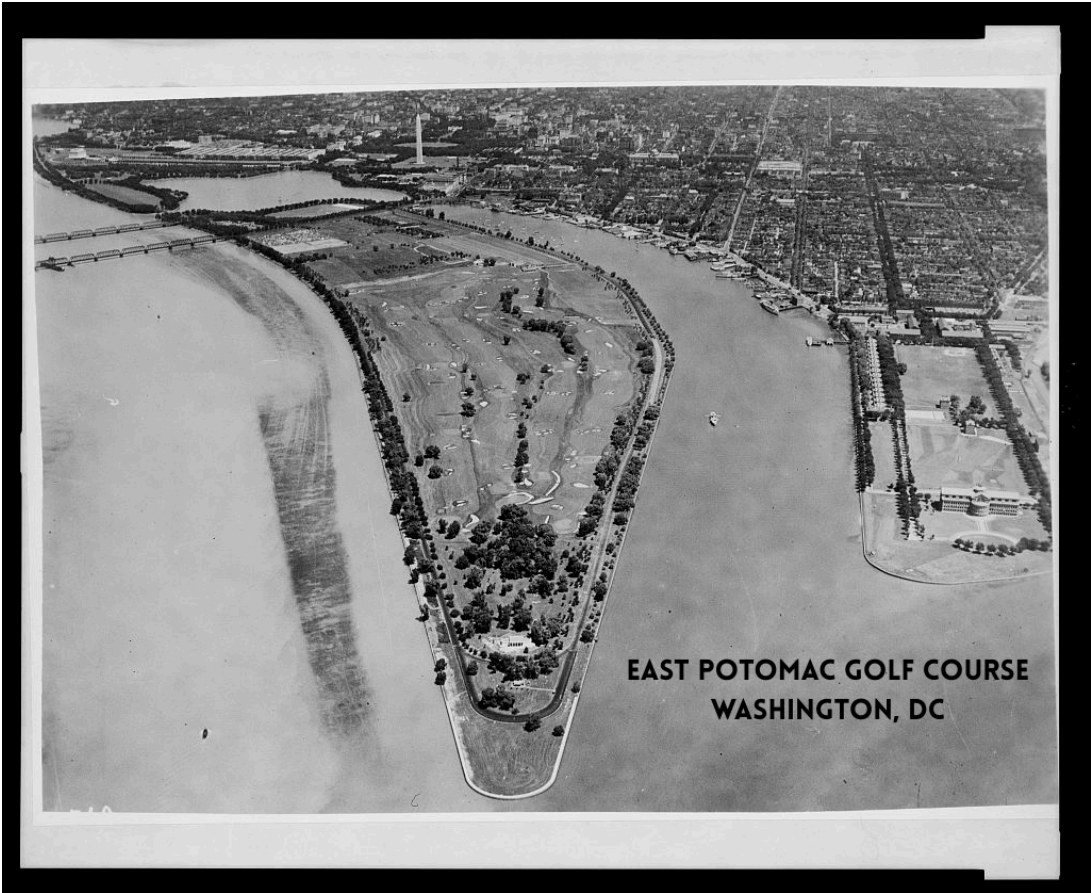
Questions? Email kelli@dcpreservation.org

[Learn About DAF Giving Day](#)

Upcoming Event

Webinar: Walter J. Travis' Reversible Design at East Potomac Golf Course

Wednesday, September 23rd | 12:00 - 1:00 pm
Virtual, Zoom



Join the DC Preservation League for this webinar focused on Walter J. Travis, the architect behind the design for East Potomac Golf Course in Washington, DC. This course was one of the first of eight public courses built in Washington, DC, and is one of three remaining today.

Guest presenter Rob Wolf, President of the [Walter J. Travis Society](#), will share insights about Travis as a golfer, writer, and architect. He'll also detail the historical significance of the golf course, which is currently at risk of a “presidential makeover.”

DCPL Executive Director Rebecca Miller will also join the discussion to update attendees on the status of recent litigation to protect the historic course and keep it accessible to the public.

The event is free and open to the public.

[Register Here](#)

Upcoming Event

Webinar: DC's Roller Skate History

Wednesday, September 30th | 12:00 - 1:00 pm
Virtual, Zoom



*An illustration of a fashionable
roller skating rink in Washington
DC, 1880, courtesy of the Library of
Congress.*

Join the DC Preservation League for a webinar tracing the full arc of Washington, DC's roller skating history, from the city's earliest indoor rinks in the late 1800s, through the segregated skating venues that defined the sport for decades, to the vibrant parallel skating culture Black Washingtonians built and sustained across generations. The presentation begins with the Anacostia Park Skating Pavilion, marking its 50th year this summer as a current cornerstone of DC skate culture, facing new pressures from nearby development and long-term neglect.

Presented by native Washingtonian, roller skate historian, and [National African American Roller Skating Archive \(NAARSA\)](#) curator Tasha Klusmann, this session draws on decades of archival research, oral histories, and firsthand experience as a performance skater to show what roller skating has meant to DC residents for over a century, and what's been lost since the city's last dedicated indoor rink closed in the late 1980s.

This is more than a history talk. It's a call to action: DC deserves a city-built, world-class indoor roller rink, open to all residents regardless of income, that preserves this history while building something new for the generations to come.

The event is free and open to the public.

[Register Here](#)

New Tour at DC Historic Sites

Historic Farms and Estates of Washington County



View of Brooks Mansion, constructed circa 1840, in Brookland, 1975. Image from National Register Nomination Form.

This new tour at [DC Historic Sites](#) explores the historic farms and estates located within former Washington County — an area outside of the original City of Washington and Georgetown (i.e.,

generally north of Boundary Street, now Florida Avenue, and east of the Anacostia River). Washington County, Washington City, and Georgetown were consolidated in 1871, and comprise the entirety of modern DC. Today, through these historic landmarks, remnants of a previously pastoral way of life can still be found within the boundaries of the District.

This tour, which is based on the book [*Lost Farms and Estates of Washington, D.C.*](#) by Kim Prothro Williams, includes historic farmhouses, estates, mills, barns, and springhouses, as well as archaeological sites. Over time, as the city expanded north and east, these rural farms and estates were surrounded by new residential subdivisions, and most of the rural landscape was lost. However, these extant buildings and structures are a reminder of DC’s lost agricultural landscape.

These historic sites are no longer country homes, estates, and farms surrounded by fields of crops, wooded forests, and rolling hills. Instead, these sites have been incorporated into the modern layout and built environment of the city, and sometimes you have to look closely within a neighborhood to notice these landmarks. Many of these landmarks have new uses, such as The Highlands and Woodley Mansion, which have been incorporated into private school campuses, and Ingleside, which serves as a nursing home.

Click below to learn more about the nearly 30 historic sites on this digital tour!

Click Here for the Digital Tour

Community Event

"Saying Their Names" at Walter Pierce Park

Saturday, September 26th | 11:00 am
In-Person, Walter Pierce Park, 2630 Adams Mill Road NW



More Information

Thank you to DCPL’s Sponsors!



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES



Anonymous • Fay Armstrong • Consigli Construction Co., Inc.
Gould Property Company • Grunley Construction Company
Frank Leone & Denise Vogt • Monarc Contruction, Inc.
Quinn Evans • SmithGroup

Connect with us on social media and make sure you never miss the latest:



© DC Preservation League

DC Preservation League | 1328 Florida Avenue NW 2nd Floor | Washington, DC 20009 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!