Wharf Policy
Date Updated: February 1, 2016

“No estate in United America is more pleasantly situated than this—It lyes [sic] in a high, dry & healthy country, 300 miles by water from the Sea—and, as you will see by the plan, on one of the finest Rivers in the world.”
George Washington to Arthur Young, December 12, 1793

Mount Vernon’s proximity to the Potomac River allows millions of guests to enjoy sweeping vistas and beautiful scenery. It also provided George Washington with ready access to natural resources and transportation networks that were vital to the commercial success of his plantation. Each spring, extensive fishing operations netted over one million shad and herring that fed the estate’s enslaved workers with excess sold for profit. As a transportation artery, the river gave Washington the means to ship fish and other goods produced on the plantation for sale in foreign and domestic markets.

I. Wharf hours are 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday, April through October.

II. The estate’s contracted commercial sightseeing vessels have priority for tying up, arriving and departing.

III. All private vessels are welcome on a first come, first served basis.

IV. Boats are only allowed to dock on up-river side of Wharf.
   a. Approaching vessels should navigate to starboard, leaving Wharf Pavilion to Port.
   b. Approaching vessels should hail Wharf Master on Marine VHF Radio Channel 16 for docking instructions.

V. Captain must check and secure any lines the Wharf Master has handled while assisting docking. This includes protective devices such as fenders.

VI. Docking Agreement must be signed and returned to Wharf Master.
   a. Agreement must contain a cellular phone number for emergency contact.

VII. Estate Admission is required for all arriving guests.
   a. Government issued ID to be held by Wharf Master until proof of purchase is shown.
   b. Tickets may be purchased either online from mobile device or at the Mount Vernon Ticket window.

VIII. Rafting only allowed with the permission of the Wharf Master.

IX. The Wharf master can be reached by:
   a. Phone 703.799.6856
   b. Marine VHF Radio Channel 16
   c. wharf@mountvernon.org