

The ENVIRONMENT and The ANACOSTIA RIVER

Frequently Asked Questions



THE ANACOSTIA WATERFRONT
www.theanacostiawaterfront.com

How large is the Anacostia River Watershed?

The Anacostia River Watershed covers portions of the District of Columbia, as well as Prince George's and Montgomery counties in Maryland. The watershed is approximately 176 square miles (456 sq. km.) in area and roughly 25% of its land area lies in the District. With over 30,000 acres of forested lands, the Anacostia watershed is an enormous natural resource with significant regional habitat for migratory species. One entity - the federal government - owns 70 percent of the shoreline, so the potential for managing the Anacostia as a healthy, productive resource is strong.

Why is the health of the river endangered?

The water quality of the District portion of the Anacostia River is very poor, due partly to excessive trash. Each year 20,000 tons of trash enters the Anacostia River, damaging the river and wildlife habitat, clogging stormwater drains and denying residents recreational use of this urban waterway.

How does the District's sewer system impact the Anacostia River?

When it rains heavily in areas served by a combined sewer system, the stormwater and wastewater flow through the same pipe. Some of the pipes aren't big enough to handle the flows of very large rainstorms. So the overflow — a mixture of sewage and stormwater runoff — is discharged in local waterways, like the Anacostia River. The result is called a combined sewer overflow, or CSO. Such discharges hurt the water quality of local waterways.

Is there a plan to restore the Anacostia River?

Yes. Led by the District Department of the Environment (DDOE), the District's goal is to restore the Anacostia to a fishable and swimmable river by the year 2032.

What is "Anacostia 2032: Plan for a Fishable and Swimmable Anacostia River" ?

Anacostia 2032 is a roadmap that outlines five stages of phased improvements that will restore wildlife habitat and water quality. The plan will achieve: (1) a visually presentable river; (2) a boatable river; (3) a river that supports stable fish and wildlife populations; (4) a swimmable river; and (5) Aa river that supports fish that are safe to eat.



Roughly 25 percent of the Anacostia River Watershed lies in the District of Columbia.



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Why is stormwater management important to reviving the Anacostia River?

Untreated stormwater runoff can do great harm to waterways. Stormwater runoff is rainwater that flows off impervious surfaces such as rooftops, driveways, roads, sidewalks, and sometimes even lawns. Stormwater runoff travels from these surfaces to local streams, picking up pollutants such as oil and grease from roadways and driveways as it goes. Nutrients from lawn fertilizers and bacteria from pet waste are also picked up by stormwater and carried to local waterways, like the Anacostia River. Stormwater also increases the frequency of combined sewer overflows.



A cleaner, healthier Anacostia River will provide area residents with more recreational use of this valuable resource.

How important is restoring the Anacostia River for developing the waterfront on both sides of the river?

The restoration of the Anacostia River and its tributaries and improved stormwater management are central to sustainable development on the Anacostia Waterfront. Restoring the Anacostia River therefore goes beyond simply reducing pollutants or meeting environmental standards. It requires restoring the river to a state where it can be actively used and enjoyed by residents and visitors.



Long-range restoration of the Anacostia will support a swimmable and fishable river by the year 2032.

South Capitol Street Corridor, the 11th Street Bridges Replacement, and the Anacostia Riverwalk, as well as other major projects throughout the District. These practices include the use of Low Impact Development (LID), which improves water quality by allowing water to naturally infiltrate and/or be filtered prior to discharge into the stormwater sewer system.

What's being done on the Anacostia Waterfront to protect the environment?

To improve the health of our waterways, the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) is implementing a \$2.2 billion long-term plan to reduce combined sewage and stormwater runoff in local waterways. DDOE is working to improve the water quality of the Anacostia through several initiatives such as the *River Smart Home* program and the "catch basin trash screen" pilot program.

DDOT is integrating state-of-the-art stormwater management practices in the design and construction plans for Anacostia Waterfront projects such as the

