



Urban Rivers Restoration Pilot Fact Sheet Anacostia River Watershed Restoration, Washington D.C. and Maryland

BACKGROUND—Since the last century, industry and other human activities along the Anacostia River resulted in elevated levels of PCBs, pesticides, and heavy metals in river sediments. Additionally, the lower reach of the river is subject to raw sewage discharges from combined sewer overflows during rainfalls exceeding one-half inch. The Anacostia River Watershed area has a population of approximately 867,408 people, and the contamination poses health threats to both human health and wildlife. Fish consumption was banned in the 1990s for pregnant women and for children.

ACTIVITIES, AUTHORITY, AND FUNDING—Activities along the Anacostia River Watershed are being undertaken by more than 25 public agencies and non-profit organizations. In addition to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), they include the Anacostia Watershed Toxics Alliance, Anacostia Watershed Restoration Committee, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Park Service, U.S. Navy, the General Services Administration, and others. The Urban Rivers Restoration Pilot is designed to strengthen these existing partnerships and to enable integration of EPA and USACE efforts into larger watershed-based restoration strategies. The pilot and the efforts of all the groups active

in the area are focusing on six areas for improvement: 1) reduction of pollution loads, 2) restoration of ecological integrity, 3) improvement of fish passage, 4) increase in wetland acreage, 5) expansion of forest coverage, and 6) increase in public and private participation and stewardship. The ultimate shared goal is to restore the Anacostia River, an American Heritage River within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, to a healthy state.

The EPA received funding under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) in FY02 to initiate a “Low-Impact Development” effort, which allowed for detainment of the initial quarter inch of rainfall, significantly reducing the toxics loading into the river. In FY03, USACE activities continued on four projects authorized under Section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, as amended. These include the Heritage Island Marsh Restoration, Lower Kingman Islands Restoration, Fort Dupont/Fort Chaplin Stream Restoration, and Pope Branch Stream Restoration. USACE also continued three projects authorized under Section 206 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996, as amended, in FY03. These included the Watts Branch Stream Restoration, Northwest Branch Restoration, and Paint Branch Fish Passage and Stream Restoration Activities. Currently, USACE is continuing

work on its Anacostia and Tributaries Phase I Project.

EPA has provided funds to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) to educate and involve citizen stakeholders in the cleanup and restoration of the Anacostia River. CBF has hosted a forum for citizens to discuss the challenges facing the Anacostia and the efforts underway to meet these challenges. Three additional forums are being planned for citizens living in an economically disadvantaged area east of the Anacostia River. In addition, CBF is developing a training curriculum to give citizens the knowledge, tools, and skills necessary to teach others about the Anacostia and a series of on-water tours to enhance awareness of the Anacostia's environmental and economic impacts among local business organizations, civic associations and governmental officials. CBF has also opened an Anacostia River Public Information Center.

CONTACTS:

EPA—Terri A. White, 215-814-5523

USACE—Steven Pugh, 410-962-3639

Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee—David Paglin, 301-681-7443

