

## RESTORING URBAN RIVERS

Many urban rivers in the United States suffer from the effects of the industrial age, which has left behind contaminated sediments, degraded water quality, and lost habitat and recreational opportunities. These degraded rivers, long the lifeblood of our urban centers, are the sources of pollution that adversely affect human health, as well as the ecological value of aquatic resources and limit recreational and other economic uses.

In July 2002, in response to this environmental problem, EPA (Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response and Office of Water) and the U.S. Army (Corps of Engineers) entered into a memorandum of understanding to facilitate cooperation between the two agencies to address these critical water quality issues and to address economic revitalization and public use and enjoyment of urban rivers. EPA and the Corps have designated the following eight demonstration pilots for the purpose of coordinating the planning and execution of urban river cleanup and restoration.

[www.epa.gov/oswer/landrevitalization/urbanrivers/](http://www.epa.gov/oswer/landrevitalization/urbanrivers/)

### ANACOSTIA RIVER, WASHINGTON D.C. AND MARYLAND

The Anacostia River is an American Heritage River within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. River sediments contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, and heavy metals from industrial and other activities in the watershed. In addition, raw sewage from combined sewer overflows discharges to the lower reach of the river during heavy rainfall. The pilot project will strengthen existing partnerships among more than 25 public agencies and private non-profit organizations and enable integration of EPA



and Corps efforts into broader, watershed-based restoration and brownfields revitalization strategies. It will focus on reducing pollution loads, restoring ecological integrity, improving fish passage, increasing wetland acreage, and expanding forest coverage.

Points of Contact:

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### BLACKSTONE-WOONASQUATUCKET RIVERS, RHODE ISLAND AND MASSACHUSETTS

The Blackstone and Woonasquatucket Rivers, both designated as American Heritage Rivers, are contaminated from over 200 years of industrial activities. The

pilot will promote collaboration among EPA, Corps, state departments of the environment, chambers of commerce, tourism councils, and private non-profit groups within the watershed. The pilot aims to advance pollution prevention, water quality improvements, and restoration of wildlife habitat, and promote reuse through brownfields cleanup and improved river access.



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### ELIZABETH RIVER, VIRGINIA

The Elizabeth River is contaminated from industrial activities that discharged pollutants directly into the river and from storm water runoff. The pilot project will coordinate the efforts of the EPA, Corps, Commonwealth of Virginia, U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and community groups. These efforts will concentrate on the reduction of toxic materials and nutrients originating from storm water runoff, pollution prevention, removal of contaminated sediments, and restoration of wildlife habitat.

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### TRES RIOS, ARIZONA

The Tres Rios area is a flood-prone community located near the Salt and Gila Rivers west of the Phoenix metropolitan area. The Tres Rios pilot will expand the existing partnership between the Corps and the City of Phoenix to include other federal, state, and local agencies along with community organizations. The pilot will restore native riparian habitat, improve water quality, reduce future flood damage, mitigate damage to cultural resources, and provide educational and recreational opportunities. Pilot partners also hope to characterize and possibly mitigate or clean up a closed landfill located within project boundaries.

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### LOWER PASSAIC RIVER, NEW JERSEY

The Lower Passaic River extends 17 miles through urban northern New Jersey. The river flows into the Hudson-Raritan Estuary, which has some of the highest levels of PCBs and dioxins in sediments in the United States. The pilot project will develop an appropriate remediation and restoration plan through a cooperative effort among state and federal agencies and other public and private authorities. This effort will eventually lead to restoration of habitats, increases in recreational opportunities, the lifting of fish consumption bans, contaminant concentration reductions in dredged materials, and overall economic development for the region.

Points of Contact:

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## GOWANUS CREEK CANAL AND BAY, NEW YORK

The Gowanus Creek Canal was constructed in 1881 to accommodate industrial uses and commercial shippers along the Brooklyn waterfront. This activity deposited a significant amount of hazardous material at the bottom of the canal. The pilot project will showcase partnerships between the EPA, Corps, local agencies, and the business and non-profit communities by addressing contaminated sediments, pollution prevention, water quality, restoration of water flow to enhance aquatic habitat, the creation of wetlands and upland buffers, and public recreational uses.

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## FOURCHE CREEK, ARKANSAS

The Fourche Creek basin manages runoff from the Little Rock, Arkansas, metropolitan area, flowing from west to east into the Arkansas River. The watershed's ability to manage this runoff, reduce non-point source pollution, and support aquatic species has been impaired by overall city growth and encroaching urban sprawl. This project will promote collaboration among local, state, and federal agencies, non-profit groups, and the watershed business community to reduce non-point source pollution, restore wetland functions, reduce flooding, and educate the public on ecosystem restoration and sustainable growth.

### Points of Contact:

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## CITY CREEK, UTAH

Two miles of City Creek were encased below North Temple Street in Salt Lake City in 1910. This area now lies between a 650-acre EPA Brownfields Showcase Redevelopment project known as "The Gateway" to the east and the Jordan River to the west. This pilot will relocate an existing railroad right of way so that the creek may be restored and water quality improved. Trails will connect the Gateway Development to a regional trail system, with access points that will promote recreational use and ecological education. These tasks will be accomplished through the cooperative efforts of the EPA, Corps, Salt Lake City, local, state, and private organizations.



### Points of Contact:

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