

URBANWATERS

FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

Restoring Urban Waters, Revitalizing Communities

Anacostia Watershed (Washington, DC/Maryland)



Ambassador

Erin Garnaas-Holmes
(Anacostia Waterfront Trust)
(202) 223-4560
egh@anacostiatruster.org

Co-Leads

Catherine King (EPA)
(215) 814-2657
king.catherine@epa.gov

Tammy Stidham (NPS)
(202) 619-7474
tammy_stidham@nps.gov

Overall Assessment of the Partnership since the Beginning

The Anacostia River has been part of the Urban Waters Partnership since 2011 when the first pilot locations were selected. The watershed's relatively small size (176 square miles), as well as its location, surrounded by federal government owned-land, is an area that has seen significant change in recent decades. Further, there are many federal, state and local agencies, watershed groups, and citizen-based groups that work in the watershed, challenging efforts to coordinate projects. Despite these considerations, there has long been robust potential and varied successes.

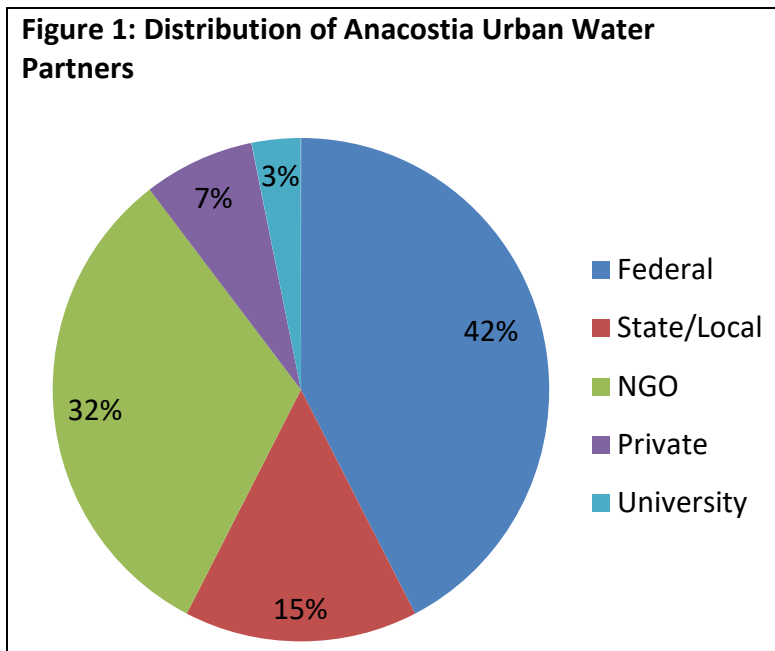
Many partnerships and coalitions are working to restore the river, and there is significant data on water quality, restoration activities, and other parameters in the Anacostia. A critical element of the Urban Waters Partnership in the Anacostia has been to plug into and enhance existing efforts underway to restore the Anacostia and reconnect underserved communities to the river and its waterfront, much of which is public land. There have been successful Urban Waters initiatives in the watershed, and as the Partnership continues to evolve, the location expects to see more project successes, and an enhanced ability to coordinate Urban Waters efforts.

Members of the Partnership

The federal agency co-leads for the Anacostia location are the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Park Service (NPS). The EPA has set the regulatory framework through Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for cleaning up the Anacostia River. The NPS is the largest landholder along the Anacostia River in the District, with major parcels including Anacostia Park, Kenilworth Park, and Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. The NPS therefore plays a key role in providing access, amenities, and restoration both along and within the river. Additionally, the NPS leads outreach programs to teach youth about the river and wildlife, while also providing workforce development opportunities.

The EPA, NPS, and the District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) jointly fund the Anacostia Ambassador through a grant to the Anacostia Waterfront Trust. The Anacostia Waterfront Trust is a DC-based nonprofit with a mission to work with public and private stakeholders to catalyze and support the creation of a world-class waterfront along the Anacostia River. The DOEE manages the District's stormwater management program and is responsible for developing and implementing plans that will reduce pollution to sustainable levels consistent with TMDL allocations. The DOEE also conducts stream restorations within the watershed and provides incentives for voluntary pollutant reduction measures. Additionally, the DOEE educates the public on watershed protection and coordinates with regional partners on Chesapeake Bay and Anacostia River issues. Finally, DOEE, in partnership with NPS, is conducting a remedial investigation and feasibility study of options to address the toxic contaminants in the river.

As of 2016, there are 125 members of the Urban Waters Partnership in the Anacostia River. Most of these partners are with federal agencies and non-governmental organizations, including environmental, watershed, and community-based organizations. Figure 1 shows the distribution of members, and they are listed below.



The Anacostia Urban Waters Partnership also plugs into other existing partnerships that have been created to further the restoration of the Anacostia River, including the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership, the Leadership Council for a Cleaner Anacostia River, the Anacostia Park and Community Collaborative, and the District of Columbia (DC) Federal Stormwater Management Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Workgroup. These partnerships and their relationship to the Urban Waters Federal Partnership are described further in the following sections.

List of Partners

Federal

- Anacostia Community Museum
- Centers for Disease Control
- General Services Administration
- National Capital Planning Commission
- National Institutes of Health
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Park Service
- U.S. Department of Defense - Army
- U.S. Department of Defense - Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Defense - Navy
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of Interior
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- U.S. Economic Development Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey

State/Local

- DC Water
- District Department of Planning and Recreation
- District Department of Energy and Environment
- District Office of the City Administrator
- District Office of Planning
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection
- Prince George's County Department of the Environment

Nongovernmental Organizations

- 11th Street Bridge Park
- Alice Ferguson Foundation
- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Anacostia Riverkeeper
- Anacostia Waterfront Trust
- Anacostia Watershed Society
- Audubon Naturalist Society
- Clean Water Action
- Conservation Fund
- DC Appleseed
- DC Environmental Network
- DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative
- Earth Conservation Corps
- East River Family Strengthening Collaborative
- Environmental Law Institute
- Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens
- Friends of the National Arboretum
- Groundswell
- Groundwork Anacostia River DC
- Institute for Public Health Innovation Living Classrooms
- Maryland League of Conservation Voters

- National Parks Conservation Association
- Progressive National Baptist Church
- Sierra Club
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trash Free Maryland
- Urban Institute
- Washington Parks and People
- Wilderness Inquiry
- Zion Baptist Church of Eastland Gardens

Universities

- University of District of Columbia
- Georgetown University

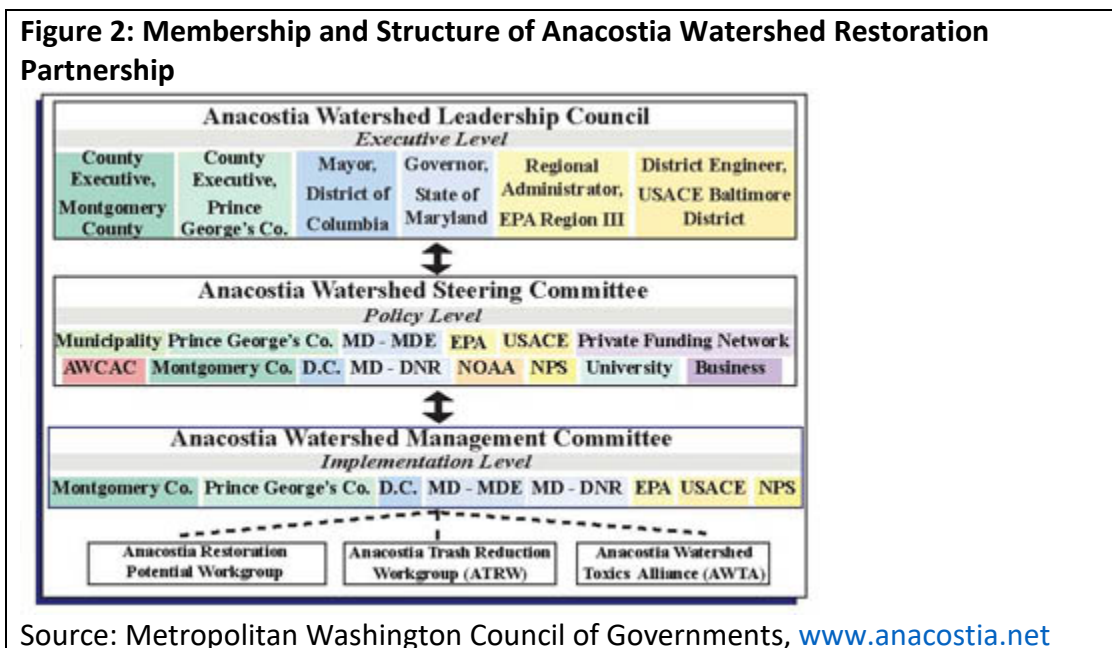
Private

- Cohen Siegel Investors
- Corvias Solutions
- Mortgage Bankers Association
- The Summit Foundation
- Ward 7 Business Partnerships

Nature of the Partnership

Membership within the Anacostia Urban Waters Partnership is voluntary. Partners represent organizations and individuals who have participated in Urban Waters projects in the Anacostia or have expressed interest in being part of the Urban Waters network or participating in future Urban Waters projects. Most of these partners also participate in at least one of the other collaboratives that exist to restore the Anacostia River:

Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership (AWRP): Founded by a resolution of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) in 2006, the AWRP has quantified restoration goals for the river, developed measurements of progress, and coordinates restoration and planning activities. Figure 2 shows AWRP’s structure. The Leadership Council does not meet regularly, but the committees meet quarterly. Most Leadership, Steering, and Management Committee members are representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies, whereas the Citizens Advisory Committee is comprised largely of small watershed groups working within the Anacostia Watershed. The MWCOG employs an Anacostia Executive Watershed Manager to coordinate the AWRP, and additional MWCOG staff provide technical assistance. The Anacostia Ambassador is a Steering Committee member.



Leadership Council for a Cleaner Anacostia River: Formed in 2014, the Council is a forum that provides updates to and shares data and best practices among high-level local, state, and federal government officials and environmental leaders on the remedial investigation and cleanup of toxics in the Anacostia River. Former DC Mayor Anthony Williams and current DOEE

Director Tommy Wells co-chair the Council, which meets quarterly. The Anacostia Ambassador participates in these meetings.

Anacostia Park and Community Collaborative (APACC): APACC is a collaborative of 18 community-based and citywide nonprofits working together to envision the community-driven, equitable redevelopment of the Anacostia River parks and adjacent neighborhoods, as well as a thorough cleanup of the Anacostia River. The Anacostia Waterfront Trust first convened APACC in 2015, and the group meets approximately each month. The Anacostia Ambassador grant also provides staff support for APACC; the Anacostia Ambassador participates in meetings.

District of Columbia (DC) Federal Stormwater Management Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Workgroup: In 2013, the EPA, NPS, General Services Administration (GSA), and Department of Defense (DoD) signed an MOU to better manage stormwater in the District of Columbia to help meet the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Executive Order 13508 to Protect and Restore the Chesapeake Bay. MOU signatories and District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) formed a workgroup to advance these goals, and the Anacostia Ambassador became a member in 2016.

Since coming on board in 2016, the Anacostia Ambassador has been participating in each of these organizations as well as meeting with members of the Urban Waters Partnership to identify opportunities for collaboration that would facilitate restoration and revitalization. The Anacostia Ambassador has started a blog and sends out monthly updates to the Urban Waters Partnership members.

Organization for Planning and Action, and Researching Consensus

The three major partnerships described above all meet on a quarterly basis with the exception of APACC, which meets monthly. The Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership develops an annual work plan that is approved by the Anacostia Watershed Steering Committee, of which the Ambassador and several Urban Water partners are members.

The Anacostia Ambassador has a work plan that is approved by the EPA, NPS, DOEE and the Anacostia Waterfront Trust, which are partners on the grant. However, there is not a work plan for the Anacostia Urban Waters Partnership as a whole.

There was an All Partners Meeting in 2015 and a Partnership Kick-off meeting in 2011; however, Urban Waters meetings do not occur on a regular basis in part because a number of meetings

are already underway around the Anacostia. The Anacostia Ambassador has monthly meetings with key NGO, federal and local government partners. The Ambassador also communicates to a variety of forums, including a monthly blog and email updates that are distributed to the Anacostia Urban Waters partners, a quarterly *Urban Waterways* newsletter that goes to a national audience, and a forthcoming resiliency newsletter that will be distributed to District agencies involved in the 100 Resilient Cities effort described below.

Anacostia Urban Waters workgroups and teams have formed around specific projects, such as the East Capitol Urban Farm and the Watts Branch Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Project, described in more detail below. The Anacostia Ambassador is exploring with partners whether it makes sense to form ongoing workgroups or communities of practice around specific topics, as well as the need and frequency for All Partners meetings.

Major Actions since the Beginning of the Partnership

A significant section of the **Anacostia Riverwalk Trail** connecting Benning Road in the District to Bladensburg Waterfront Park in Maryland opened in October 2016, creating a continuous network of almost 70 miles of trails between the District, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County. The Riverwalk Trail runs along the east and west banks of the river along publicly owned land and is the culmination of over two decades of planning. It provides access to 16 waterfront communities. The NPS played a significant role in planning and securing the funding for the final segment of the trail, which falls largely on NPS land along the river. In total, federal, state and local funds contributed over \$22 million to the project, including \$10 million from a U.S. Department of Transportation TIGER grant. Plans exist to continue expanding the trail network, including building a bridge across the river to Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens to the National Arboretum. The Anacostia Ambassador is a member of the Capital Trails Coalition, which is working to expand trail access in the region.

The University of the District of Columbia (UDC), the DC Housing Authority (DCHA), and five agencies with the Urban Waters Federal Partnership collaborated to create the **East Capitol Urban Farm** in Ward 7 of the District across from the East Capitol Metro Station and Watts Branch, the largest tributary to the Anacostia River. The project transformed a three-acre vacant lot into the District's largest urban farm and innovative aquaponics facility. The farm also includes a farmer's market, food trucks, public art, community gardens, and a discovery area for children, bringing much-needed services to one of the largest food deserts in the city. In addition to UDC and DCHA, partners include EPA, U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, DOEE, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, the DC Building Industry Association, Bradley Site

Design, Metropolitan National Church, Groundwork Anacostia River DC, and Walmart. The project broke ground in 2015 and opened in 2016.

Wilderness Inquiry's first Canoemobile launched from the Anacostia River in 2010, and the Minnesota-based nonprofit has been bringing students from District and Maryland schools out on the river every year since. The annual event partners with agencies at work along the river, such as the NPS, the National Park Trust and the Izaak Walton League, to educate children about water quality and native wildlife, in addition to teaching them how to paddle.

In 2016, Canoemobile on the Anacostia served 656 youth, of whom 575 were youth of color and 73 had a disability. From 2010-2016, Canoemobile has brought 2,453 youth onto the Anacostia, of whom 1,841 were youth of color and 269 had a disability. Canoemobile has expanded to 40 other cities, many of which are also Urban Waters locations, and represent just one of the numerous youth education and outreach programs along the Anacostia.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) contributed \$100,000 to develop a web-based **Anacostia River GIS Mapping Tool** for the watershed when the Anacostia was selected as a pilot of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership. The tool included 80 existing projects and over 3,000 potential restoration projects drawn from the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Plan, developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in partnership with MWCOG and federal, state, and local agencies. Through the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership, MWCOG is currently responsible for tracking implementation of AWRP projects.

NFWF Five-Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grants

- Stream Stewards (2014)
 - Partners Involved: Anacostia Watershed Society, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Riverdale Elementary and University Park Elementary schools in Prince George's County
- Chesapeake Bay Trash Trawl (2015)
 - Partners Involved: Alice Ferguson Foundation, Trash Free Maryland, 5 Gyres
- Partnership for Anacostia River Restoration and Urban Bird Education (2015 and 2016)
 - Partners Involved: Earth Conservation Corps, Environment for the Americas, DC Audubon, Brent Elementary School, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, Maryland Wood Duck

EPA Urban Waters Small Grants

- Urban Water Watchers Program (2013-2014)

- Partners Involved: Living Classrooms of the National Capital Region, Watkins Elementary School in DC
- Citizen Scientist Project (2013-2014)
 - Partner Involved: Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum
- LID School Retrofits and Lesson Plans (2013-2014)
 - Partners Involved: University of Maryland, New Hope Academy in Landover Hills, Maryland
- Saturday Environmental Academy (2015-2016)
 - Partner Involved: Anacostia Watershed Society

Additional Partner Projects Ongoing and Underway

Data Sharing: The Anacostia Ambassador is spearheading an effort with MWCOG and the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership to **improve data tracking, analysis and dissemination to inform restoration and flood management efforts**. In 2016, the Anacostia Ambassador heard from multiple partners working in the watershed that shared data resources could reduce the time that organizations spend trying to site restoration projects. Data sharing across disciplines could also help partners prioritize projects that achieve multiple benefits, such as water quality improvements, habitat enhancement and flood management. Finally, partners are interested in information that would help predict the impact of project implementation and how many additional resources are needed to achieve restoration end goals. The Ambassador and MWCOG’s Anacostia Executive Watershed Manager are working with Urban Waters partners to conduct background research and developing options that they will present to the Partnership’s Management Committee in early 2017.

Market-Based Mechanisms to Manage Stormwater: One of the major sources of pollution to the Anacostia River is untreated stormwater runoff, which is among the costliest sources of pollution to address. DOEE has developed an innovative **Stormwater Retention Credit (SRC) program**, which allows developers and property owners to meet up to half of their stormwater management obligations by purchasing credits offsite. Given that the majority of development is occurring in portions of the city where runoff would eventually be captured in the combined sewer system and treated before discharge, greater water quality benefits can be achieved if parties purchase SRCs from portions of the city where runoff would otherwise flow into water bodies like the Anacostia. Doing so creates an opportunity to leverage private capital to fund green infrastructure in underserved parts of the city. The Anacostia Ambassador has been working to promote participation in the SRC program in a manner that increases environmental and social benefits, including participating in a White House Roundtable on Market-Based Mechanisms to Restore Chesapeake Bay, working with the Federal Stormwater MOU Workgroup

to determine if federal agencies have the authority to participate in the SRC program and evaluating policy options that would increase the water quality benefits associated with the program.

Major Actions Planned for the Future

100 Resilient Cities: The District of Columbia became a part of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) network in 2016. 100RC is dedicated to helping cities become more resilient to physical, social and economic challenges. The Anacostia Ambassador is working closely with the District's 100RC launch team to consider how restoring the Anacostia, developing resiliency corridors, addressing flood risks in the watershed, improving access to public resources, and addressing the socioeconomic challenges in nearby communities could be a focus of the District's 100RC effort.

Facilitating Stakeholder Engagement with NPS: Tara Morrison took the helm in December 2016 as the new Superintendent of NPS National Capital Parks-East, which includes Anacostia Park and Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. The incoming Superintendent has expressed interest in working with the Anacostia Ambassador to convene a stakeholders meeting or meetings that would identify priorities and opportunities for partnership and collaboration among NPS and the surrounding community.

Envisioning a Resilient Anacostia Waterfront: The public lands along the Anacostia River represent a substantial opportunity for projects that would improve the health of the river and the surrounding communities.

The Anacostia Ambassador will work with NPS, DC's Office of Planning and DOEE, Urban Waters Federal Partners, community-based organizations such as APACC and others how the Urban Waters Federal Partnership and entities such as APACC could best engage in and support the development and implementation of a vision for the Anacostia waterfront. Projects could include engaging in planning efforts led by NPS or the District, connecting partners involved in innovative shoreline restoration techniques, researching best practices from around the globe for urban waterfronts, and/or convening an Anacostia Visioning Symposium.

Challenges

There are a variety of factors and challenges in the Anacostia watershed. Moving forward, this Urban Waters location seeks to find creative solutions to increase coordination among new and existing partners to add value, while avoiding gridlock. The Anacostia Ambassador will work with

key partners to consider different types of governance structures, such as an Urban Waters Steering Committee, Workgroups, or Communities of Practice, that could inform the Urban Waters Federal Partnership and support partners to move forward on key initiatives.