

# Anacostia Watershed Urban Waters Federal Partnership Washington, DC

## Updated Work Plan, June 2023-2025

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### I. Background

The Anacostia River watershed in the District of Columbia and Maryland is home to more than 800,000 people, 43 species of fish and some 200 species of birds. The watershed has been heavily urbanized over time, losing 6,500 acres of wetlands and 70% of its forest cover. Impervious surfaces now cover more than 25% of the watershed. Near the U.S. Capitol, the Anacostia River flows next to communities that suffer some of the region's lowest employment rates, highest poverty rates, poorest health indicators, and other challenges.

The Urban Waters Federal Partnership is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) led effort that seeks to “revitalize urban waters and the communities that surround them, transforming overlooked assets into treasured centerpieces and drivers of urban revival.” To accomplish this, partners collaborate among federal agencies, local government, academic and non-government organizations (NGO). In this framework, communities take center stage in planning and developing work to improve water systems and promote their economic, environmental, and social benefits.

There are 21 UFWP partnerships across the country (<https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners>). A unique aspect of the Anacostia partnership has been the hiring of the new Ambassador, Xavier Brown, through a partnership with the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), who is stationed at Anacostia High School (AHS). Thus, there are tremendous opportunities for Urban Waters partners to build on existing expertise and programs at UDC including their land grant status, College of Agriculture Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES), and emphasis on work force development. In addition, there is UDC's Community-to-Career program at Anacostia High School, which helps make college accessible for low-income, urban learners. Thus, one focus of this Work Plan is to inspire and engage young people ranging from middle school students through young adults in our projects and to connect them with internship and early career opportunities.

### II. Goals

The Anacostia Urban Waters Federal Partnership will use the mission, vision, and principles of the [Urban-Waters Federal Partnership](#) to support the following priorities:

- Create a pipeline for students for well-paid conservation, environmental justice and engineering internships, summer jobs, and eventually full-time careers.
- Help reconnect citizens around the Anacostia River to their waterways and parks
- Build a network of community and federal partners
- Regularly consult with residents on their concerns and priorities for Urban Waters

### III. Existing Efforts

Many examples currently exist of collaboration around environmental and educational efforts in the Anacostia Watershed. One notable example is the 2022 DC Electric Vehicle Grand Prix. Students from Anacostia High School collaborated with engineering students from the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) to create an electric vehicle and participate in the local Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) sponsored Grand Prix. Anacostia High School (AHS) was awarded the medal for best new team.

Other examples of collaboration by Urban Waters partners are the Kingman Island Junior Rangers program and an Asset Mapping initiative. The Junior Ranger job training initiative is a collaboration between Living Classrooms, DOEE, UDC, and AHS and prepares high school students for entry-level jobs in the green sector while beautifying [Kingman and Heritage Islands](#). And during the summer of 2022, students from AHS and UDC worked together to create an asset map of the Anacostia community and write research grants. The projects centered around environmental justice and what members of the Anacostia community felt about their neighborhood—topics ranged from food justice to community violence and safety.

These are just a few examples of how federal and local government, academia, and local NGOs are successfully collaborating to address deserving communities and their urban waters needs. The following pages identify additional projects that the Urban Waters partners, the steering committee, and community members have identified as priorities. We acknowledge that there are numerous restoration, education, and recreation projects that are occurring in the watershed. This document is intended to identify priority projects that many of the Urban Waters partners can contribute to moving forward.

Specifically, Urban Waters partners will focus on five priority projects for 2023-2025:

1. Early College for Anacostia High School students
2. Educational Events for Urban Waters partners
3. Assessing and Reinvigorating the East Capitol Urban Farm
4. Internships and Career Development Programs
5. Facilitating Urban Waters partnership activities

### IV. Work Plan 2023-2025

The Steering Committee, Ambassador, and community members propose the following categories and projects as priorities for all partners to support for the 2023-2025 years. The Ambassador will work with partners to determine what resources their respective agencies/institutions might bring to bear to these efforts.

#### EDUCATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

##### *1. Early College at Anacostia High School (AHS) (2024)*

Early College is a national program that allows high school students to earn transferable college credits for free while earning their high school diploma. UDC's Community-to-Career program at Anacostia High School (UDCC2@ANA) follows the national design and focuses on getting students on a higher education path and taking professional certification or college courses. UDC intends to expand its services as the Early College program advances, including enhanced communication and benefits for parents and caregivers.

The program helps make college accessible for low-income, urban learners. Nearly 75% of students enrolled in early college high schools nationwide are African American or Latino. UDCC2@ANA is also more than just about earning credits or certifications. The free Early College program will provide students with opportunities to experience college level courses while still in high school and, by doing so, accelerate their path to degree completion and early entrance into the careers of their choosing.

The Urban Waters partners will join with the existing efforts to provide added value. This could take many forms including the identification of additional partners, both public and private, who could provide resources such as funding, supplies and equipment, training, and mentorship.

**Current Partners:**

- UDC
- Washington DC Public Schools (DCPS)
- Anacostia High School
- Pepco Holdings
- DOEE

**Milestones:** Identify 2-3 Federal and non-Federal Urban Waters partners who can support the Early College at Anacostia High School program during the 2023-2025 period.

## *2. Internships and Career Development Programs*

Our goal for 2023-2025 is to create more pathways for students who attend AHS and other DC schools to connect to environmental internships and career development opportunities. Examples of past events to be considered for the current Workplan include items A through C. Other events will also be considered.

A. Through the guidance of Anacostia UWFP Ambassador Xavier Brown, UDC, DOEE and DOI staff, Anacostia High School students participated in the summers in 2022 and 2023. UDC, DOEE, and their non-profit and Federal partners have created over 30 paid internships for Anacostia High School students, sponsored by the Department of Employment Services (DOES) and Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). UDC is using funding from Pepco to ensure that students have transportation, access to supplemental activities, lunches, and other benefits. Apple Propel Center funding allowed UDC to offer iPads to all participants.

B. The Engineering and Public Leadership students from Anacostia High School collaborated with the Georgetown University Environmental Justice class. This collaboration

culminated in a Justice 40 internship. Students from Georgetown supported students from Anacostia High School by taking the summer presentation that the students did in 2022 with the Department of Interior and identifying ways to implement their ideas. The focus of the project was to identify ways to enhance Anacostia Park

C. “Street Law” for Environmental Justice Issues-Street Law is an incredibly successful program launched over 50 years ago that engages law students to educate and encourage high school students to engage in advocacy around civil and legal issues. These effective and impactful model and framework used by Street Law could be adopted to create an environmental justice advocacy program for DC high school students. Given the large number of law students who wish to engage in pro bono legal work in DC and the significant number of public input opportunities related to the Anacostia River restoration in the next few years, both the resources and opportunities necessary to launch this initiative already exist in DC.

#### **Current Partners:**

- DOI
- EPA
- USDA
- DOEE
- Living Classrooms
- Friends of Anacostia Park
- Conservation Nation
- UDC
- NPS
- Undivided Project
- DC Appleseed

#### **Milestones:**

- By end of Q2 2024- partners will complete an inventory of all programs available for High School and College Students.
- By end of Q2 2024- compile a list of all of field trip opportunities that each Urban Waters partner can offer.
- By end of Q3 2024-host a round table session with students to find out ways we can create new programs and improve the existing programs.
- By end of 2024-determine concrete ways partners can become more involved in these types of programs.

## **EVENTS**

### ***3. Urban Water Events 2023-2025***

Anacostia UW Partners will support and attend events that take place in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to continue connecting and educating the community about the resources of the

Urban Waters Partnership and the Federal family. Potential events include the Washington, DC, Electric Vehicle Grand Prix, a hands-on educational program for high schools in Washington, DC, Maryland, Ohio and Virginia. For this competition, student teams apply engineering, science, and math principles and strategies. Additional potential events include the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forum, a regional event focused on inspiring and empowering local environmental leaders, and Rooting DC, the largest annual gardening conference in the District.

Urban Waters Partners may have play many roles, such as participating in event planning, identifying additional partner organizations, bringing in speakers, conducting training, or providing funding, or logistics support.

**Current Partners:**

- DOEE
- Pepco
- AHS
- DCPS
- Living Classrooms
- EPA
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS)

**Milestones:**

- End of 2024: Compile list of resources that the Ambassador and other Urban Waters Partners can take to events to represent and promote the partnership (such as NRCS soil health demonstration)
- Annually: Steering Committee will decide in Quarter 1 of the year which events to support and attend
- Annually: Quarter 1: Quarter 4: Support and attend events.
- Annually: Quarter 4: Steering Committee Meeting\_–partners will report out on successes and challenges of that year’s events and plan for the following year.

**URBAN AGRICULTURE**

Building on the expertise of UDC Causes and the DOEE Office of Urban Agriculture <https://doee.dc.gov/urbanag> and others, the partners will identify opportunities to provide added value to ongoing programs.

***4. Hydroponics in DC Public Schools and Reinvigorating the East Capitol Urban Farm***

The Anacostia Urban Waters Partnership has a unique opportunity to highlight multiple styles of urban agriculture. We have a first-of-its kind hydroponics learning lab for DC Public schools located at the Anacostia New Tech High School. The partners will meet with the builders and operators of this facility to discuss the feasibility of using the lab as a template for other schools.

In addition, the 3-acre East Capitol Urban Farm (ECUF) was established on a vacant lot in 2015 in collaboration with the Urban Waters Federal Partnership and multiple public and private

partners. Through community engagement, the concept for the farm grew in scope to become a multi-functional community asset. The ECUF was intended to be a showcase for urban farming with a special emphasis on diverse, bio-intensive, niche crops; a farmers' market; food truck; public art; a nature discovery space for kids; community garden plots; pollinator gardens; interpretive trails; rain gardens; and provide workshops and training. Although the ECUF continues to be used, it has not reached its potential. Thus, the Urban Waters team will reach out to nearby residents and other stakeholders to determine their vision for the ECUF. At that point, the Urban Waters team (including local residents) will determine how to develop a partnership to reinvigorate ECUF.

### **Current Partners:**

- FWS
- Interior
- UDC
- DOEE
- FOAP
- USDA
- National Park Service (NPS)
- US Forest Service
- Georgetown University
- The Undivided Project

### **Milestones:**

- By end of 2023: Host meeting with CAUSES to discuss how the Urban Waters partners and CAUSES can support one another.
- By the end of 2023: Meet on-site with partners including nearby residents and current users.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Q 2023-1<sup>st</sup>Q 2024: Identify next steps for reinvigorating ECUF if that is the outcome of the meeting.
- By 4<sup>th</sup> Q 2023: Finish one on the ground project at ECUF with partners.
- By 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2024: Determine how to engage USDA by potentially collaborating with the USDA's People's Garden Initiative and Farm to School Program.
- By 2<sup>nd</sup> Q 2024: Connect with Jacob Campbell (UDC) on implementing a Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM)-based curriculum that will develop train-the-trainer programs with students from various schools.
- By end of 2024: Determine if developing a food forest that can complement both locations is possible.

## **COHESION AND OUTREACH**

### ***5. Urban Waters Partnership Cohesion***

#### **A. Update Urban Waters Website**

**Milestone:** By end of 2023-update website with new information, pictures and contacts, meeting notes

#### **B. Meetings**

##### **1. Steering Committee Meetings:**

**Milestone:** hold quarterly meetings, strive to have 80% of participants engage

2. Collaborative Meeting

**Milestone:** hold annually, create short report on results of meeting

C. Defining goals/metrics/impact/outcomes for program

1. Work with Bradley Design to work through design process

**Milestone:** Finalize design process by 1st Quarter 2024, Review annual progress and capture statistics.

## V. Summary

This Workplan is intended to guide the activities of the Anacostia Urban Waters Federal Partnership from 2023 through 2025. Here we outline five focus areas: (1) education and career development, (2) internships and career development programs, (3) events, (4) urban agriculture, and (5) partnership cohesion and outreach. At any urban waters location, success can be attributed to collaboration and engagement by all partners. Anacostia is no different and we will rely on the engagement of our steering committee and all of our partners to meet these goals.

## IV. Urban Waters Federal Partners for the Anacostia Watershed

### Local Government Partners:

- DC Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE)
- DC Public School (DCPS)
- DC Department of Employment Services (DOES)
- DC Parks and Recreation (DPR)
- DC Department of Employment Service (DOES)

### Nongovernmental Organizations/Community Organizations:

- Anacostia Business Improvement District
- Ward 8 Community Economic Development
- Friends Of Anacostia Park
- Hustlers 2 Harvesters
- My Seniors Keeper
- Student Conservation Association
- Anacostia Riverkeeper
- DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
- Anacostia Watershed Society
- Ward 7 Resilience Hub
- Anacostia Parks & Community Collaborative:
- Living Classrooms
- DC Greens (The Well)
- Anacostia Smithsonian Museum
- SOUL Program
- Casey Trees

### Private Sector:

- Pepco Holdings

- DC Water
- Giant Food
- Conservation Nation
- Mission Continues

Academia:

- University of The District of Columbia (UDC)
- Anacostia High School
- Kramer Middle School
- Sousa Middle School
- Georgetown University

Federal Agency Partners:

- US Army Corps of Engineers, Department of the Army (USACE-DA)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,  
US Department of Health and Human Services (CDC-HHS)
- Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- US Department of Education (ED)
- US Department of Energy: Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (US DOE)
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development (US HUD)
- US Department of the Interior (US DOI)
- US Department of Transportation (US DOT)
- US Economic Development Administration,
- US Department of Commerce (EDA-DOC)
- US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency, US Department of Homeland Security (FEMA-DHS)
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, US Department of Health and Human Services (NIEHS-HHS)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US Department of Commerce (NOAA-DOC)