



## Anacostia Watershed Society

(301) 699-6204 Fax (301) 699-3317  
Email: [info@anacostiaws.org](mailto:info@anacostiaws.org)  
<http://www.anacostiaws.org>



November 21, 2007  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### CONTACT

Steven F. Reynolds  
Anacostia Watershed Society  
Ph. 301-699-6204  
F. 301-699-3317  
E. [steven@anacostiaws.org](mailto:steven@anacostiaws.org)  
W. [www.anacostiaws.org](http://www.anacostiaws.org)

### COAL SPILL ON ANACOSTIA RIVER HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY RELEASES WATER QUALITY TEST RESULTS; CONTINUES CLOSE SCRUTINY OF CSX CLEANUP PROJECT.

Washington, D.C.— As CSX technicians and D.C. government officials continue their recovery efforts at Anacostia Park, scientists at the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) continue monitoring water quality and environmental conditions around the wreckage of a freight train that derailed on November 9 dumping more than 600 tons of coal into the Anacostia River. Ongoing analysis of water samples collected near the accident site last week indicate only slight changes to acidity, dissolved oxygen, and conductivity levels in the area around the coal spill. These results confirm the findings of similar tests undertaken by CSX and the District of Columbia Department of the Environment (DDOE) over the past several days.

According to a statement issued by the CSX Corporation Monday afternoon, the six rail cars in contact with river water were cut up and moved onto a barge for transport away from the accident site. The recovery team used mechanical shears to dismantle the submerged train cars into pieces small enough to be hoisted by crane—leaving coal and some scrap metal lying on the river bed. Plans are in place to identify the remaining debris and remove it from the river by Thursday, November 23.

CSX hopes to minimize the environmental impact of the cleanup effort by restricting all recovery work to an area surrounded by a device known as an impermeable turbidity curtain. Extending about 10 feet below the river's surface, this floating vinyl barrier prevents churned up sediments and coal particles from moving above or below the wreckage site. To date, no details have been released concerning the treatment of contaminated water inside the barrier. AWS has contacted CSX and DDOE to determine if that water will be filtered to remove coal particles, heavy metals, carcinogenic Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbon (PAH) and other dangerous substances prior to being returned to the river.

While cleanup efforts progress apace at Anacostia Park, the CSX coal spill reminds residents of the metropolitan Washington, D.C. region that they continue to live alongside a waterway stressed by the continual input of pollutants. Already taxed by an estimated 20,000 tons of trash and 2 billion gallons of combined sewage and storm water overflows each year, the Anacostia River can ill-afford additional setbacks to its recovery like this one. With plans for the re-development of the river's waterfront proliferating throughout the District of Columbia and Maryland, and with growing recreational use and community stewardship around the watershed, the need for a clean and hospitable river becomes more and more apparent every day.

CSX and other corporations whose operations are intimately linked to the health of the Anacostia have a responsibility to help us maintain and improve this fragile, shared resource. Such responsibility stretches beyond the capacity to respond quickly in times of disaster to include sustained support for public and private programs that safeguard the river's ability to recover from serious environmental events. AWS is hopeful that CSX will embrace the opportunity to join with watershed stakeholders as a committed partner in the Anacostia River restoration effort.

###