



ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY

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For Immediate Release

Anacostia Watershed Society Releases 2016 State of the Anacostia River Report Card

Hopeful Signs Despite “F” Grade

Washington DC, June 29, 2016 – The Anacostia Watershed Society today released the 2016 State of the Anacostia River Report Card, building on more than 20 years of scientific monitoring and data collection. Using the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science EcoCheck methodology, the Report Card gave an overall grade of “F” to the Anacostia River, but indicated long term improvement on seven of the nine key indicators. The highest grade, a C+, was for the overall effort and commitment of government agencies, nonprofit organizations and the private sector to clean up and restore the river.

Four major obstacles continue to stand in the way of the Anacostia River reaching its goal of being swimmable and fishable by 2025, as required by the Clean Water Act:

- High levels of fecal bacteria;
- Legacy toxics buried in the riverbed and banks;
- Trash that’s littered and dumped; and
- Uncontrolled storm water from our increasingly developed region.

AWS is leading the effort to sustain progress on these four major obstacles. The [Anacostia River underground storage tunnel](#), required to be built by DC Water as part of a settlement agreement with AWS and other environmental groups, will significantly reduce storm water runoff and fecal bacteria (by 98%) when it comes online in late 2017. Anacostia Watershed Society is addressing the legacy contaminated sediments in the river by placing pressure on and holding parties accountable to complete long overdue cleanup studies and remediation activities. AWS members have been key advocates in favor of plastic bag fees and the recently passed bans on polystyrene food containers in Prince George’s County and Montgomery County Maryland and the District of Columbia.

“We’re seeing the impact of the improving water quality every day, with increasing populations of beavers, herons, mussels and the famous eagles who rely on the Anacostia River for their food and habitat,” said Jim Foster, President of the Anacostia Watershed Society. “While we still have a lot of work to do, fortunately we have strong leadership in the right places so we’re confident the Anacostia River will be fishable and swimmable by 2025.”

The Report Card, and supporting data is available at <http://www.anacostiaws.org/programs/publicaffairs/state-of-the-river>

About the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS)

The mission of the Anacostia Watershed Society is to protect and restore the Anacostia River and its watershed communities by cleaning the water, recovering the shores, and honoring the heritage. The vision is to make the Anacostia River and its tributaries swimmable and fishable by 2025, in keeping with the Clean Water Act, for the health and enjoyment of everyone in the community. Community involvement is critical to achieving this vision and AWS seeks strong partnerships and coalitions with all parts of the community, government, and other stakeholders. Anacostia Watershed Society’s programs include environmental education, stewardship, recreation, and engaging the community through advocacy and volunteer opportunities. www.anacostiaws.org

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