



ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY

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Anacostia Watershed Society and the DC Department of Energy and the Environment Announces Five New RiverSmart Schools for 2016

Previous schools selected for 2015 already nearing completion of schoolyard greenspace.

Washington DC – February 17, 2016 – The Anacostia Watershed Society and the DC Department of Energy and the Environment today announced that five District schools had been selected to participate in this year’s RiverSmart Schools program.

The RiverSmart schools program is a collaborative effort between the Anacostia Watershed Society and the DC Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE). These innovative schoolyard greening projects focus on incorporating landscape design principles that create habitat for wildlife, emphasize the use of native plant, highlight water conservation and either retain or filter stormwater runoff. In addition, these outdoor classrooms support effective teaching practices, promote student learning, and advance environmental literacy.

“Through RiverSmart Schools, we’re giving the District’s school children cleaner healthier environments in which to learn, and the knowledge and skills to lead the District to a greener future,” said Tommy Wells, Director of DOEE.

The value of the support given to each school ranges between \$3,500 up to \$70,000, depending on the scale of the project. In addition, schools receive funding for maintaining the sites for five years.

Selected teachers in each school will also receive a minimum of 16 hours of professional development on watershed ecology as well as lesson plans and curriculum that support DC education standards.

Selected for the 2016 RiverSmart Schools cohort are:

- Bruce-Monroe Elementary School at Parkview, 3560 Warder St. NW;
- Hart Middle School, 601 Mississippi Ave, SE;
- Mundo Verde Public Charter School, 30 P Street, NW;
- Payne Elementary School, 1445 C St., SE; and
- Seaton Elementary School, 1503 10th St, NW.

These five new schools join the dozens of District of Columbia schools that have already participated in the RiverSmart Schools program. Capital City Public Charter School, 100 Peabody St NW exemplifies the way the program works, where students planted over 200 native plants to transform the west courtyard. Urban Ecology students researched each plant and created infographics to engage the rest of the school. Students also received classroom visits from Anacostia Watershed Society educators, and field trips to the Anacostia River.

Teachers at the school led the project and describe the outcomes:

“At the center of our school in the courtyard, the RiverSmart Schools Program has played a significant role uniting our school communities. We highly value the program that allows students to learn through tangible exploration, building a sense of place they belong to and a commitment to environmental stewardship beyond the border of the school.”

Ryoko Yamamoto, School Garden Coordinator
Capital City Public Charter School

“After investing many hours of labor and learning in the project, my students feel a huge sense of ownership over our new courtyard. They are proud of the plants and their ability to capture water, and they are proud of the central role they played in creating a more beautiful and ecological courtyard for our school.”

Ellen Royse, Environmental Science and Urban Ecology Teacher
Capital City Public Charter School

“These schools are preparing the next generation of conservation leaders,” said Ariel Trahan, Director of Education Programs at AWS. “The students’ energy and passion is helping to restore and protect the Anacostia River, as well as the entire D.C. area.”

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

About the DC Department of Energy and the Environment

DOEE is the leading authority on energy and environmental issues affecting the District of Columbia. The mission of the agency is to improve the quality of life for the residents and natural inhabitants of the nation's capital by protecting and restoring the environment, conserving natural resources, mitigating pollution, increasing access to clean and renewable energy, and educating the public on ways to secure a sustainable future. www.doe.dc.gov