

## **Progress toward Anacostia Watershed Restoration Goals and Interim Targets for the Period 1999-2000**

Like many urban rivers, the Anacostia and its tributaries have been the victim of more than 300 years of abuse and neglect. Covering 176 square miles of once beautiful land in Maryland and the District of Columbia, the Anacostia watershed has been extensively farmed and urbanized. These land-intensive practices have taken a tremendous toll. Loss of habitat, erosion, sedimentation, flooding, destruction of wetlands, channelization, toxic pollution, decaying older communities and waterfront areas and loss of river-based recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing and swimming all characterize what had become of the Anacostia River and much of its watershed.

This began to change with a landmark agreement between Maryland and the District of Columbia in 1984 that officially recognized the need for restoration. A 1987 agreement added Montgomery and Prince George's Counties into the restoration partnership. In 1991, this partnership adopted, through its "Six-Point Action Plan," six broad-sweeping goals designed to restore the Anacostia River and its tributaries. Through this partnership and with the indispensable assistance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, significant progress has been made toward all six goals. However, far less would have been achieved without the dedication of the community-based groups who have both galvanized support and effectively mobilized the watershed's citizenry in the restoration effort.

While much has been accomplished, the restoration is far from complete. Tremendous challenges and opportunities await. The partnership needs to be strengthened. Funding commitments need to be reaffirmed and continued. With a growing human population, more resources will be required for the protection, restoration and management of the watershed's natural resources. Additional resources are needed to continue the economic revitalization and environmental restoration of the watershed's older communities. Reconnecting the watershed's citizens to the river and its tributaries also remains a challenge. Finally, greater effort is needed to enlist both the community and private businesses in the restoration.

As we approach the 21st century the river and its tributaries must once again become a focal point for the watershed's communities, schools, churches and private businesses. The larger goal of a restored Anacostia watershed is achievable. The vision encompasses a watershed that supports a clean, healthy river system, is economically vibrant, and is a desirable place to live, work and recreate in.

The attainment of these goals and objectives can, however, only be realized through a sustained major commitment on the part of government, citizens and private businesses. Therefore:

**WHEREAS** over the last three hundred years, the Anacostia watershed has been extensively logged, farmed, mined and urbanized resulting in a major decline in water quality and habitat; and

**WHEREAS** beginning in 1984 Maryland and the District of Columbia officially recognized the need for restoration, leading in 1987 to the landmark "Anacostia Watershed Restoration Agreement" which both expanded the membership to include

Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and resulted in the formation of the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Committee; and

**WHEREAS** through the 1991 Anacostia Watershed Restoration Agreement the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Committee developed "A Six-Point Action Plan to Restore the Anacostia River" which set forth specific watershed restoration goals and implementation strategies through a unique cooperative local/state, federal and grass-roots partnership; and

**WHEREAS** since 1987 over \$100 million dollars have been spent restoring the Anacostia watershed resulting in the reduction of storm flows and associated pollutants from nearly 10 square miles of developed area, the restoration of degraded habitat in over eight miles of stream, the restoration of 32 acres of tidal wetland and the creation of approximately 100 acres of non- tidal wetland, acquisition of over 300 acres of stream valley parkland for the protection of sensitive aquatic resources, riparian buffer reforestation of nearly 10 linear stream miles and the support for and participation in the restoration effort on the part of both private businesses and thousands of the watershed's citizens;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Signatories reaffirm their commitment to continue to work toward completing the restoration of the Anacostia watershed through the pursuit of the following interim 1999-2000 restoration goals and targets:

The Signatories will finalize, through a public participation process, a suite of specific, long-term restoration indicators and targets by mid-year 2000, and that they pledge to continue implementation of a basin-wide strategy to equitably achieve the six fundamental goals and associated targets by the year 2010.

The Signatories Further Affirm that beginning on or about Earth Day in the year 2000, and biennially thereafter, they will reconvene to assess progress, provide general direction and examine the needs and means to further the goals of the restoration effort.

**Goal #1: Dramatically reduce pollutant loads, such as sediment, toxics, CSOs, other nonpoint inputs and trash, delivered to the tidal river and its tributaries to meet water quality standards and goals.**

Reduce stormwater related impacts through the control of runoff by stormwater retrofitting 400 additional acres of existing developed area within the watershed by the year 2000.

Develop a short and long-term plan for effectively reducing the occurrence of CSO events from the District of Columbia's combined sewer system by the year 2000.

Develop a comprehensive trash and floatables reduction strategy for the river and its tributaries, which includes an actual demonstration of a promising trash reduction system(s) by the year 2000.

Work toward a more coordinated effort for routinely monitoring physical, chemical and biological conditions in the watershed necessary to accurately measure restoration progress and protect human health and aquatic life.

**Goal #2: Protect and restore the ecological integrity of the Anacostia River and its streams to enhance aquatic diversity, increase recreational use and provide for a quality urban fishery.**

Protect ecologically sensitive headwater tributaries and targeted stream reaches within the watershed through the use of zoning and master planning tools and techniques, stream valley park acquisition, special protection area designations, and other appropriate watershed management approaches.

Restore physical aquatic habitat in an additional two miles of degraded tributaries by the year 2000.

Continue to support interagency efforts to protect and restore Paint Branch's unique brown trout fishery.

Expand and improve recreational fishing opportunities for anglers, of all ages, throughout the watershed.

Continue to support efforts which expand recreational use in the watershed and increase direct access to the river.

**Goal #3: Restore the natural range of resident and anadromous fish to historical limits.**

By the year 2000, open up an additional two miles of the tributary system to anadromous and resident fish.

Support annual monitoring of anadromous fish runs in the tributary system by the year 2000.

Complete a watershed-wide inventory of existing fish barriers by the end of 1999; develop an action plan for the modification or removal of designated key blockages by the year 2000.

**Goal #4: Increase the natural filtering capacity and habitat diversity of the watershed by sharply increasing the acreage and quality of tidal and non-tidal wetlands.**

Permit no additional net loss of existing non-tidal or tidal wetland acreage within the watershed.

Restore and/or create an additional 41 acres of tidal wetland by the year 2000.

Develop five new non-tidal wetland projects for wildlife habitat by the year 2000.

Expand watershed monitoring efforts to include wetland areas and their associated wildlife.

**Goal #5: Protect and expand forest cover throughout the watershed and create a continuous riparian forest buffer adjacent to its streams, wetlands and river.**

Develop a watershed-wide green infrastructure plan which integrates both passive recreation with the protection of open space areas, including remaining large stands of forest, by the year 2000.

Reforest one additional mile of stream corridor by the year 2000.

Continue to encourage and assist private landowners in the watershed to both protect existing woodland and reforest their properties.

**Goal #6: Increase citizen and private business awareness of their vital role in both the cleanup and economic revitalization of the watershed, and increase volunteer and public-private partnership participation in watershed restoration activities.**

In cooperation with the Anacostia River Business Coalition (ARBC), continue to pursue restoration support and implementation opportunities with the private sector.

Continue to support and expand the exposure and participation of the watershed's citizenry in the restoration effort through the Anacostia Watershed Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Continue to encourage the creation of watershed-based environmental curricula, with associated community service, for all Anacostia watershed schools.

Expand efforts to enlist environmental groups, universities, private businesses and citizens in restoration-related activities such as stream monitoring, cleanups, tree plantings, etc.

Encourage community-based advocacy support and environmental education programs for the river and all of its major tributaries.

Expand and integrate monitoring and reporting efforts to more effectively evaluate and share restoration progress with the public and elected officials.

Continue to support and expand efforts which lead to both economic revitalization and environmental improvement of the watershed's older communities.