

VOICE OF THE RIVER

Newsletter of the Anacostia Watershed Society

SUMMER 2019

VOLUME 28, ISSUE 2



ANACOSTIA
WATERSHED
SOCIETY

From Sadness to SHADness in the Anacostia River

By Chris Lemieux, Manager of Education

The heavy winds and even heavier rainfall of spring 2019 made for harrowing shad times... Each spring during the height of the American shad run, the Anacostia Watershed Society heads out to harvest healthy eggs so that D.C. area students can take care of them until they hatch as part of our "Schools in Schools" shad restoration program. We get the eggs from pregnant females in nearby waterways. During the first attempt, AWS managed to collect enough eggs for 14 out of 31 schools, but the poor weather meant we had to cancel our second attempt and our planned back-up.

Now, if you think this adversity would stop us, then you would be mistaken. If there's anything we've learned from the Anacostia River, it is the value of perseverance and resiliency.

Our dedicated shad teachers are fully committed to the value of this project and recognize how crucial this work is to bring ecological balance back to our local waters. They also know how meaningful it to give this level of life

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Students release shad fry at the dock at Bladensburg Wetlands

science to their students. You can't beat having students hands-on and minds-on experiences with these living creatures. For many of these educators, watching the kids take responsibility for their tiny hatchlings is when the students blossom. So, our teachers

shifted their schedules around to make it work, and AWS staff scrambled to get things done. And then things went our way!

Just as it looked like we wouldn't be able to give this experience to the rest of the schools, a simple phone call to our partners at the Maryland Department of Natural

Resources was all it took to save the day. On Friday, May 10th, I got in touch with the fisheries biologists from the Manning Hatchery in Brandywine, MD to see if they had 2 liters of eggs to spare for pick-up on Monday. And our partners came through! Monday morning after a trip to Brandywine, all the eggs were prepped for delivery to the remaining schools.

The next few days saw a flurry of shad-related activity. Students got their eggs and helped care for thousands of larval fish, **resulting in the release of more than 10,000 baby shad into the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers.**

Thanks to the strength of our partnerships and passion of our educators, this shad season was saved!



AMERICAN SHAD
Alosa sapidissima

President's Corner

by Jim Foster, President

Welcome to summer!
The Anacostia River and
the entire watershed is
blossoming...



The Anacostia Watershed Society is pleased to welcome incoming County Executives Elrich and Alsobrooks to the local leadership moving the Anacostia River toward swimmable and fishable. They've already appointed strong leaders to join with Mayor Bowser and DOEE Director Tommy Wells to sustain our momentum.

One of the most exciting developments we're seeing is the strong enforcement action by new Environmental Crimes Units at the Metropolitan Police Department and Prince George's County Police Department. Using cameras, tip lines and surveillance, they're catching and arresting illegal dumpers, helping to keep trash out of the Anacostia.

Taking the lead from us in the Anacostia watershed, the Maryland Legislature extended our local ban on styrofoam food containers to a state-wide ban. We know how effective this ban is because we've seen a reduction in this formerly pervasive litter in our trash traps.

We're making slow but steady progress on the last big hurdle toward fishable and swimmable – the legacy sediments in the river bottom and banks. To jump start progress, AWS is supporting an approach called "Adaptive Management" which basically says get started on what you can while you figure out the harder questions. The EPA has embraced this approach, and we want to take advantage of their openness to get started on initial remediation projects. We recently congratulated Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton for her support in filing a \$5 million dollar amendment for sediments to the federal 2020 budget!

And believe it or not, initial planning meetings have started about potential swimming access points on the Anacostia River! Despite record rainfall last year, water samples on many days were within the federal requirements for safe swimming. Heavy rains will always limit swimming, just like they do at other rivers and the ocean, but we're working to address inflows of bacteria so that we can increase the number of swimmable days in the future.

Thank you for all you do to support AWS and our mission of Swimmable and Fishable by 2025.

For the River,

Anacostia Watershed Society

AWS is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect and restore the Anacostia River by bringing partners and communities together to achieve a clean and safe Anacostia River for the benefit of all living in its watershed and for future generations.

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Saturday Environmental Academy - Teens at SEA!

By Catherine Estes, Program Director,
Saturday Environmental Academy

The Anacostia Watershed Society's Saturday Environmental Academy (SEA) just wrapped up our academic year theme of "The Year of the Anacostia!" Students were engaged in field trips and activities that increased their awareness of: environmental issues facing the river, what's being done to help make it fishable and swimmable by 2025, and ways they can celebrate and enjoy it! Some exciting activities students participated in included:

- **Meeting up with the Earth Conservation Corps along the Anacostia River for a Raptor Program.** Students got an up-close look at several raptors—an American Kestrel, a Red-Tailed Hawk, a Harris Hawk, and a Eurasian Eagle Owl. Many even got to (quietly and gently) touch the owl!

- **Planting potatoes, doing other gardening activities, and taking a native plant hike in and near the National Arboretum's Washington Youth Garden.** Connecting this day to our theme was easy since this remarkable DC resource/greenspace borders the Anacostia River, allowing it to help control and filter stormwater runoff before entering the river.

- **Helping with AWS-led environmental stewardship activities that benefit the Anacostia,** including a native tree planting at Colmar Manor Park, a native mussel monitoring project at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, and an Earth Day Cleanup at River Terrace Park (which borders the Anacostia).

- **Learning about the water filtration process in a hands-on way at Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant and then taking a tour.** DC Water and Blue Plains are instrumental in helping the Anacostia River be as clean as possible and get cleaner. Students got a real insider's view of the successful Clean Rivers project.



- **Taking an overnight to the West River Center in Maryland.** The overnight is always a highlight for the students and this one was no different! Hiking, feeding giant snapping turtles, participating in team building, rock climbing, canoeing, playing basketball, playing in a life-size foosball game, and having a s'more-filled campfire were some of the things SEA students enjoyed!

- **Boating on the Anacostia River in dragon and outrigger boats with volunteers from the National Capital Area Women's Paddling Association.** This was an awesome way to enjoy the

river that included SEA students' family members for our culminating session!

We look forward to next year's fall and spring programs, which will focus on "Climate Change: Impacts and Solutions in the Anacostia Watershed." We'll investigate the topic in the SEA way—the hands-on way—with field trips to a farmer's market to explore connections between food choices and climate change, service activities that combat climate change and build community resiliency, and more!

Learn more about SEA at
www.anacostiaws.org/sea

Anacostia Watershed Society

Earth Day Cleanup

2019 Impact

2,004 Volunteers 😊

38 Tons of Trash

14.46 Tons of Bottles and Cans



147 Tires

On April 13, 2019, thousands of Anacostia Watershed Society volunteers mobilized to work together for a cleaner Anacostia River. At 45 different sites along neighborhood parks, streams, and creeks, passionate community members cleaned up trash and debris that would otherwise flow into the river.

With the success of last year's campaign against plastic straws (which were turned into the artwork seen in the lower right!), for 2019, we focused on the source of some of the most abundant debris in the river: single use beverage containers. By collecting over 14 tons of glass containers, plastic bottles, and cans, we have shown that drastic action is needed to protect the river from this source of pollution.

Thanks to our volunteers, site leaders, sponsors, and government partners for another fantastic day for the Anacostia River!



Photo Credit: Marco Sanchez



#AWSEarthDay

Thank you to our sponsors!



MONUMENTAL
SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT
FOUNDATION



Thank you to our
government partners!



Co-founder



Thank you to our Celebration Sponsors!



Sen. Paul Pinsky
@PaulPinsky

Picking up trash with other volunteers and the Anacostia Watershed Society for #AWSEarthDay in The Town of Riverdale Park.

12:11 PM - 13 Apr 2019

3 Retweets 13 Likes



Sen. Paul Pinsky @PaulPinsky - Apr 13



DC Water
@dcwater

A Saturday morning cleaning up the Anacostia river is a great way to start the day! Thank you @anacostiaws and everyone else who participated in the annual #AWSEarthDay event this morning 🌍 #TrashFreeDC



11:42 AM - 13 Apr 2019

7 Retweets 43 Likes



Sydelle Moore
@sydellebelle

Thanks so much to everyone who showed up for this year's #LCA service project for #EarthDay. Thanks @anacostiaws #AWSEarthDay #Skipthebottle #ANC5D #OurWard5



2:44 PM - 13 Apr 2019

2 Retweets 16 Likes



Kingman Park Kaleidoscope and 4 others liked
Andrew Overton @AROverton · Apr 13

This morning, @LCVoters joined #AWSEarthDay clean-up in Carver-Langston. Big thanks to ANC Commissioner @sydellebelle & @anacostiaws for organizing to clean-up my neighborhood, protect the Anacostia River, and restore the Chesapeake Bay. #SaveTheBay #TrashFreeDC



4 Retweets 23 Likes

It's a Tree-Palooza

By Ariel Trahan, Director of River Restoration

The Anacostia Watershed Society is always looking for ways to add more trees and native plants to the land in our watershed. In our urban area, sometimes finding places to plant trees and plants can be one of our biggest challenges. That is why this spring we are thrilled to be partnering with WMATA to plant over 350 trees at stations along the Green Line.

We will be planting a variety of native tree species including Sweet Bay Magnolia, Eastern Redbud, Sweetgum, River Birch, Flowering Dogwood and Sycamore. All of these trees will help to beautify the metro stations while also absorbing stormwater runoff.

This initiative is part of a partnership AWS has with a company called Urban Offsets that is working to help American University become carbon neutral. AWS will be planting a total of 475 trees as part of this carbon offsets program at metro stations, as well as at a number of different municipal properties in Prince George's County, including Fairmont Heights and Forest Heights. We were honored to have Ward 8 Councilmember Trayon White join us to help plant the first tree of this partnership on April 18th at the Anacostia Metro station.

We will continue to need your help with re-greening the Anacostia Watershed! Stay tuned on our email list or on our website for your chance to come and do this rewarding work. If you have a volunteer group who wants to help with tree planting (which we do in the spring and fall), use our group volunteer form which can be found online here:

anacostiaws.salsalabs.org/volunteergroupinformationform2019/

The World Bank has been volunteering with us and made a video about this work! Watch it here:

anacostiaws.org/blog/see-the-trees.html



Photos, above AWS President Jim Foster, Councilmember Trayon White, WMATA Director of Sustainability Rachel Healy join others to plant the inaugural trees at Anacostia Metro

Who's Your Hero?

By Emily Conrad, Director of Development

We are so grateful for and inspired by all the thankless heroes who dedicate their time and efforts to clean their neighborhood parks and streams and inspire others to be environmental stewards. Help us recognize the heroes in your community working to clean up and protect the Anacostia River and its tributaries by nominating an Anacostia River Hero today! Awardees will be selected in four categories and honored at our annual Countdown to 2025 event on September 16th at District Winery. Each Anacostia River Hero will receive a cash award to thank them for their tireless work to advance the vision of a healthy Anacostia River.

Anacostia River Next Generation Hero: awarded to a high school or college student who promotes awareness of river restoration and inspires action to

protect the Anacostia River

Anacostia River Civic Spirit Hero: awarded to a community member who volunteers his/her time to improve the health of their local community and streams

Anacostia River Educator of the Year: awarded to an educator working in DC or Maryland who is committed to engaging their students in meaningful outdoor learning and creating future environmental stewards



From left: 2018 Heroes Zandra Chestnut, Jahliil Wormley, and Mike Mangiaracina

Daniel DiTondo Legacy award:

presented to a Rice Rangers student in recognition of their artistic exploration of nature as demonstrated in their Naturalist Notebook

Go to www.anacostiaws.org/blog/2019-hero-nominations-are-open to nominate a hero today!

Anacostia River Discovery Series

FREE SUMMER FUN ON THE ANACOSTIA RIVER!



MOTORIZED BOAT TOURS



CANOE TRIPS



PADDLE NIGHTS



BIKE RIDES



WETLAND WALKS

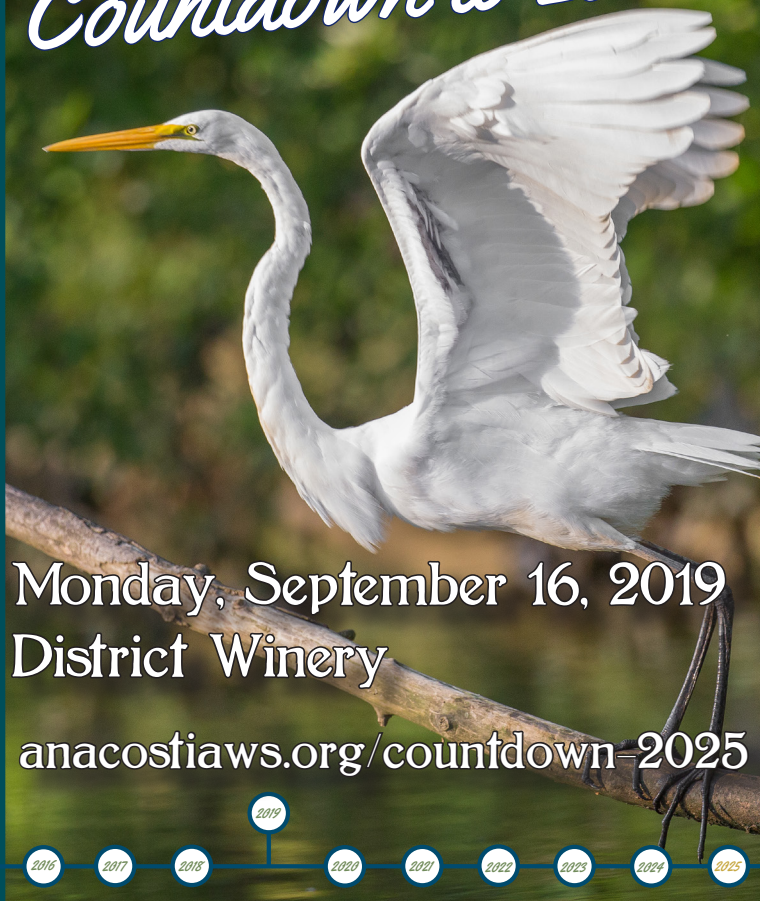
For information and registration, please visit:

anacostiaws.org/anacostia-river-discovery-series

Other events have spots left! Register today!

AUGUST - OPENS JUNE 17			SEPTEMBER - OPENS JULY 22		
Aug 1	Bladensburg Waterfront Park		Sep 5	Diamond Teague	
*Aug 3	Kenilworth Park		*Sep 7	TBD - BioBlitz	
Aug 8	Kingman Island		Sep 12	Bladensburg Waterfront Park	
Aug 15	Diamond Teague		Sep 19	Anacostia Park - AREC	
*Aug 17	Anacostia Park - AREC		Sep 26	Kenilworth Park	
Aug 22	11th Street Bridge		*Sep 29	PedalPaddlePaloosa	
Aug 29	Kingman Island				

Countdown to 2025



Monday, September 16, 2019
District Winery

anacostiaws.org/countdown-2025





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Summer 2019 Edition

IN MEMORIAM



This May, we were saddened to hear of the passing of one of our longtime friends and strongest Anacostia River Champions, Bruce McNeil.

Bruce drew much of his inspiration from the Anacostia River. In our offices hang a few prints from his series where he transposed images of native peoples and masks inside modern day photos of the river. His art challenged you to take a closer look at this beautiful resource around us, and discover the secrets that you can find.

We will miss Bruce dearly, and we count ourselves lucky to have had such a warm, creative presence advocating for the river through his art.

Photos: Bruce at our 25th Anniversary Celebration in 2014 and some examples of his art