



## Anacostia River Restoration In Washington DC Using Low Impact Development

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Title: Anacostia River Restoration In Washington DC Using Low Impact Development

Article: The Anacostia watershed is considered as a highly degraded urban ecosystem located in suburban Maryland and the District of Columbia. It has often been called "the forgotten river" because, prior to 1987, its decline never received the attention that did its parent in the Washington metropolitan area, the Potomac River. In lieu of this, a concerted and focused effort for the restoration of the Anacostia watershed began over a decade ago. Through the years, local, state, regional, and federal government agencies, as well as environmental organizations, businesses, and dedicated private citizens have contributed significant resources toward protection and restoration of as much watershed ecosystem as possible. The Anacostia River watershed has been severely impaired by urbanization and covers three political jurisdictions in the Washington metropolitan areas including District of Columbia, Montgomery County and Prince George's County. Over the last several decades, massive efforts have been made to improve the quality of the Anacostia River but all ended with limited success. Last year, The Low Impact Development (LID) Center, in association with the Anacostia Watershed Society, was developing an LID retrofit plan for the District of Columbia Office of Planning for the restoration of the river. Once completed, it will serve as a model process for the District and other jurisdictions in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This is one of three legacy grants awarded annually by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) as signature projects and is the first Legacy grant awarded to the District of Columbia. LID is simple and effective in river restoration, not only in the District of Columbia but elsewhere in the world. Instead of large investments in complex and costly engineering strategies for storm water management, LID strategies integrate green space, native landscaping, natural hydrologic functions, and various other techniques to generate less runoff from developed land to the river. LID is highly different from conventional engineering. While most engineering plans pipe water to low spots as quickly as possible, LID uses micro-scale techniques to manage precipitation close to where it hits the ground. This involves strategic placement of linked lot-level controls that are designed to address specific pollutant load and storm water timing, flow rate, and volume issues. One of the goals of LID design is to reduce runoff volume by infiltrating rainfall water to groundwater, evaporating rain water back to the atmosphere after a storm, and finding beneficial uses for water rather than exporting it as a waste product down storm sewers. The result is a landscape functionally equivalent to predevelopment hydrologic conditions, which means less surface runoff and less pollution damage that will help in the restoration program of the river. In the District of Columbia, as urbanization continues to degrade our lakes, rivers, and coastal waters LID is widely being used to reverse this trend, resulting in cleaner bodies of water, greener urban neighborhoods, and better quality of life. It offers a strong alternative to the use of centralized storm water treatment. It aims to work within the developed

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and developing environments to find opportunities to reduce runoff and enhance restoration. LID controls storm water runoff at the lot level by using a series of integrated strategies that mimic and rely on natural processes. Samson Paulotti is an article writer for [The Restoration Resource Alabama](#) and [Cleaning & Restoration Information](#)

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