

# Center for Environment, Commerce & Energy

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Monday, September 27, 2010

## EPA Approves Trash Limit For Anacostia River



The Environmental Protection Agency approved the first multi-jurisdictional trash limit for the Anacostia River last week under the Clean Water Act, requiring the District and Montgomery and Prince George's counties to accelerate up their cleanup efforts. EPA wants an extra 600 tons of trash a year removed from the Anacostia River. If a locality does not meet or attempt to meet the requirements within its five-year management plan, it could face a penalty of \$37,500 a day per violation, according to the Clean

Water Act.

Skimmer boats owned and operated by the D.C. Water and Sewer Authority already take about 400 tons of trash out of the Anacostia each year. Earth Day volunteers for the Anacostia Watershed Society removed 25 tons from the river in April.

There are about 15 pollution limits in place to reduce fecal bacteria, nitrogen and other pollutants in the water. But trash has always been a very visible and steady problem in the highly urbanized watershed. Storm water systems permits are key element of the plan. Jurisdictions are given one year to figure out how to clean up their system under the permit. Annual reports are required to ensure the plan is working, which allows for modifications, if necessary.

The Washington, DC Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) has begun a \$2.6 billion project, the largest the authority has built, to reduce nitrogen and trash flowing to the river from its combined sewer overflow system. The project will construct Metro-size tunnels to hold the overflow during rainstorms until there is enough capacity at Blue Plains to treat the storm water.

The D.C. Council approved 5-cent tax on plastic bags has led to a 66 percent reduction in plastic bags in the water. The District spends about \$6 million a year on litter removal. Montgomery County spends about \$3.1 million a year on picking up litter. ([Wash Post](#), 9/26/2010)



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