



**ANACOSTIA
WATERSHED**
SOCIETY


Anacostia
RIVERKEEPER®



MEDIA ADVISORY

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**SENIOR LAWMAKERS, LEADING SCIENTISTS AND CLEAN WATER PROPONENTS
TO IGNORE PUBLIC HEALTH WARNINGS
AND TAKE THE ANACOSTIA PLUNGE**

***Action to Highlight the 28th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act's Missed Deadlines and
Unmet Promises To Make Waterways Swimmable and Fishable***

Editors' note: *Event participants will enter the Anacostia River in mock hazmat suits to highlight the failure to meet the 1983 deadline imposed by the Clean Water Act to clean up the nation's waterways.*

What: Despite public health warnings and the danger of infection, clean water proponents and scientists will take the plunge into the Anacostia River to raise awareness about the failures to meet the deadline set by the landmark Clean Water Act for waterways to be made swimmable and fishable.

Speakers will call on federal, state and local officials -- including DC and Prince George's county officials -- to take actions on storm water discharge and other measures to restore the Anacostia and all of the rivers leading into the Chesapeake Bay.

Who: Leaders from the Anacostia Watershed Society and Anacostia Riverkeeper, leading scientists, Maryland state Sen. Paul Pinsky (D-Prince George's County), former U.S. Sen. Joe Tydings, former Maryland state senators David Harrington and Gerald Winegrad, and other elected officials

When: Thursday, June 30, 2011, 10 a.m. EDT

Where: Bladensburg Waterfront Park, 4601 Annapolis Rd, Bladensburg, Md.

ANNAPOLIS—The Clean Water Act, enacted in 1972, promised that all American waterways would be clean for swimming and recreation by July 1, 1983. But 28 years later, this goal is far from being reached and American rivers and waterways remain heavily polluted.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency lists 90 percent of the Chesapeake Bay as being in violation of the Clean Water Act. Health departments routinely caution people to stay out of the water for 48 hours after a heavy rain due to overflow sewage. Humans and their dogs routinely contract serious infections threatening life and limb. Fish consumption warnings continue and human health remains at risk from water contact and eating resident fish.

Here in the nation's backyard, the Anacostia River remains one of the country's dirtiest little secrets. Two billion gallons of untreated sewage and storm water is dumped in the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers each year, along with thousands of tons of trash, toxic pollutants, and sediments. Resident fish from the Anacostia have been found to contain PCBs and other dangerous chemicals, as well as high rates of cancer and skin lesions.

A 2010 report card issued by the Anacostia Riverkeeper and the Anacostia Watershed Society details that the surrounding counties, the District of Columbia, the state of Maryland and the federal government have produced more words than action when it comes to cleaning up the river.

Progress has been made. For those with access to the river, the upper Anacostia remains a place of beauty - a sanctuary for turtles and birds such as herons, osprey, and even bald eagles, and a popular spot for crew teams and paddlers. But while the Anacostia has recovering wildlife populations and is a safe place for recreational uses such as rowing and paddling, it remains extremely unsafe for fishing and swimming.

At the event organizers will release their detailed demands for tighter restrictions on stormwater discharge and other measures to clean up the Anacostia River and Chesapeake Bay rivers.

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Sponsors:

Anacostia Riverkeeper: The mission of [Anacostia Riverkeeper](#) is to protect and restore the Anacostia River for all who live, work, and play in its watershed, and to advocate for a clean river for all its communities. Like a "neighborhood watch" for the watershed, we patrol our streams and rivers and hold polluters, developers, and government officials accountable to their environmental responsibilities. With our fellow Waterkeepers in the Chesapeake Bay Region, we protect families by stopping pollution.

Anacostia Watershed Society: 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, 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 win-win solutions through strong partnerships and coalitions, with all parts of the community, government, and other stakeholders. Core to our work is reaching out to, educating, and engaging the next generation of decision-makers, our youth.

[Senior Scientists & Policymakers for the Bay](#): After decades of effort, the voluntary, collaborative approach to restoring the health and vitality of the Chesapeake Bay—the largest estuary in the United States—has not worked and, in fact, is failing. A diverse group of 57 senior scientists and policymakers have joined forces to urge all the Bay states to transition from the voluntary collaborative approach in place for more than two decades, to a more comprehensive regulatory program that would establish mandatory, enforceable measures for meeting the nutrient, sediment, and toxic chemical reductions needed to remove the Bay and its tributaries from the Clean Water Act impaired waters list. This group unanimously recommends that all states draining into the Chesapeake Bay adopt the 25 action items in their Watershed Implementation Plans and act on them to improve the Bay's water quality and to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act.