

Defending UMD's Wooded Hillock

At the request of a group of concerned individuals, the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) has been working in partnership with student groups, faculty, and University of Maryland (UMD) facilities management staff to address the potential destruction of a 8.75 acre plot of rare woodland located on university grounds in College Park, MD. The Wooded Hillock as it is known to the student population, has come under intense scrutiny after being identified as the proposed relocation site for the College Park campus's mail center, motor pool operations, and other physical plant installations.

Development plans for the Wooded Hillock have posed a problem for student and faculty groups since final site selection for the construction project



Students from the University of Maryland—College Park visit the woodland atop the Wooded Hillock. Forest ecosystems of this type are becoming increasingly rare in our region. (May 2009)

was first disclosed at a public meeting on March 25, 2009. At issue: the apparent lack of regard for the site's distinct ecological features and the university's stated commitment to environmental sustainability and sensitivity.

In the intervening period between March and May 2009 further investigation revealed that the hillock site actually encompasses one of the last remaining undeveloped terrace gravel forests in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. These rare forested hilltops host an array of plant and animal species—including woodland orchid, laurel trees and native blueberry bushes—some of which are quite rare in the region, . Most of these high points on the landscape were developed early in the region's history because of the relative safety they provided from natural disasters and military attack.

Throughout the month of May 2009, AWS met with UMD students,

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Down The Garden Path: AWS Memories Written In Stone

On September 18, 2008, the Anacostia Watershed Society held an open house celebrating the renovation and reopening of its headquarters at the historic George Washington House in Bladensburg, MD. That event also helped launch the Bricks to Blossoms fundraising campaign aimed at raising \$100,000 for an endowment supporting future historic preservation efforts and environmental retrofits on the building. Individuals contributing \$200 or more to this ongoing campaign receive a very special thank-you gift; the opportunity to set a brick paver engraved with a special message in the new pathway adjacent to our rain gardens at the George Washington House. In April 2009, our first order of 18 engraved Bricks to Blossoms pavers arrived and were set in the ground. The photo below shows the path's current length and location. AWS hopes to extend the path along the south side of the building as additional

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Those who contribute \$200 or more to the Bricks to Blossoms campaign receive a personally engraved brick paver set in AWS's garden walk.

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President's Corner: AWS Chooses Clean Water



I am pleased to announce that the Anacostia Watershed Society has joined a new coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) known as the Choose Clean Water campaign. With membership drawn from a variety of national and regional environmental groups—including the National Resources Defense Council, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Audubon Naturalist Society, and the James River Association—Choose Clean Water will take aggressive action to refocus federal attention on cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay and the Anacostia River.

During the first week of May, the campaign took its first major step toward environmental change in the Bay region. Coalition partners met to draft and sign a new call to action addressed to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Executive Council, an advisory body on Bay policy whose members include the governors of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New York; as well as, the Mayor of the District of Columbia and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa Jackson. The letter, which detailed concerns regarding land use, agriculture, storm water and sewage regulations, and enforcement of pollution standards was delivered to the Executive Council in advance of their annual meeting on May 12. Stoking the fires of political will, the coalition also issued the following challenge to these important regional leaders:

[We challenge you] to exercise your existing authority to enforce

the law to deliver water quality benefits, exercise your authority with new rulemakings [sic] and initiatives to increase effectiveness on the ground, and request funding and policy changes necessary to get the job done. We ask you to increase the accountability of the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership...to ensure that it is committed to take full advantage of existing federal, state, and local authority as effectively as possible to improve all of the waters in the Bay watershed...This Partnership must be unafraid to take and ask for bold, comprehensive action.

Choose Clean Water will soon move on to its next course of action: promoting reauthorization of Chesapeake Bay provisions laid out by the Clean Water Act. AWS's ongoing participation in campaign activities will allow us to share a seat at the table as the coalition continues to chart the future of environmental policy throughout the Bay watershed. I look forward to your support as we work to supply local knowledge, skill, and expertise in this struggle to save the Chesapeake Bay

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A satellite image of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and the United States' Middle Atlantic region. Captured by Jeff Schmaltz; MODIS team; NASA, Posted on: Wednesday, 12 October 2005, 05:45 CDT. The Bay appears near the bottom left of the photo.

Anacostia Watershed Society, Inc.

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AWS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization seeking to return the Anacostia River and its tributaries to a swimmable and fishable condition through the development and implementation of high quality environmental advocacy, education, and stewardship programs.

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Curbing the Spread of Non-native Invasive Plants

Here is some wonderful news for all the volunteers out there who have dedicated hours of precious time to helping the Anacostia Watershed Society eliminate invasive plants from Washington, D.C. metropolitan area parks. This summer, AWS will launch a new environmental advocacy campaign aimed at ending the import, sale, and distribution of non-native invasive plant species throughout our region. Why? Because we know that the rising tide of pernicious flora can only be stemmed by eliminating the plants in question from nursery shelves and landscaping inventories. The concept of eliminating commercial trade in certain types of plants is not new. Some jurisdictions, including Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan, have gone as far as legislating outright bans on the sale and use of dangerous invasive species that threaten our native ecosystems.

Stay tuned to AWS's Web site—www.anacostiaws.org—for more updates during the weeks and months to come. Better yet, subscribe to our e-mail list on the Web for up-to-the-minute AWS information!



An AWS volunteer from Accenture, Ltd. in Washington, DC, works to remove English ivy (*Hedera helix*) from Magruder Park in Hyattsville, MD. (Feb. 2009)

New Conservation Biologist Joins AWS Staff



Hello! My name is Jorge Bogantes Montero, conservation biologist and the newest staff member here at the Anacostia Watershed Society. I recently moved into the DC area

after living in Central America. I developed my environmental expertise working on protected areas, wildlife conservation, ecological restoration, and environmental education in Costa Rica. Since arriving here in the U.S., I have traded in the troop of howler monkeys that once served as my rain forest alarm clock for Metro buses and taxi cab horns.

During my first few weeks here at AWS, I visited some of the region's wonderful parks, including Magruder Park in Hyattsville, MD, and scenic Chapman Forest in Charles County. Though no hamster-sized beetles circled my porch light and no 13-foot-long crocodiles cruised the rivers, I found myself feeling like a kid in a candy store as I walked these woodlands for the first time. Thanks to that sense of wonder, I have quickly been able to learn about local flora and regional non-native, invasive plant control from AWS's resident experts, Conservation Biologist Dr. Marc Imlay and Horticulturist Steve McKindley-Ward.

The rain forest landscapes I used to work in offer many different conservation challenges, including some requiring some highly specialized solutions. Nearer the equator, where rain fall reaches 98 inches per year, ecological threats—deforestation and water pollution—posed by ever-expanding banana and pineapple plantations overshadow issues like sprawl and urban storm water management that are more common here in the U.S. Nevertheless, I see that

many problems I tackled in Costa Rica—lack of environmental education, threats to biodiversity, and problems with pollution—are identical to those AWS faces each day. I look forward to adding some new and unique perspectives on our common conservation challenges as I work alongside all of you to help the Anacostia Watershed become a little bit healthier each day.

Thank you all for your commitment to saving the environment. I hope to see you out on the river very soon!

Ft. Dupont: Natural Hotspot Inside an Urban Center

On April 7, 2009, the Anacostia Watershed Society turned a new page in D.C. environmental conservation history. That day, AWS conservation biologists Dr. Marc Imlay and Jorge Bogantes Montero visited Fort Dupont Park, a 376-acre green space in southeast Washington, D.C. run by the National Park Service (NPS). The two scientists were on hand to make a final assessment of the park's suitability as

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Students from the SEED School of Washington, DC, learn to identify and remove invasive plants at Ft. Dupont Park. (May 2009)

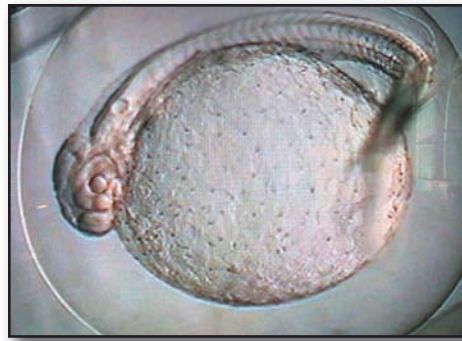
More Than Two Eyes and a Wiggle!

A hush fell over the class as students from Thomson Elementary School in Washington, DC, watched hundreds of baby fish wiggle their way across a projection screen at the front of the room. The Shad fry these second graders had nurtured for almost a week twisted and squirmed as they freed themselves from their tiny eggs. Later that same day a similar scene played out to cheers and applause as a group of fifth graders at the National Cathedral School witnessed their own fishy brood spring into the world. AWS's microscope camera and projector—two of our most powerful teaching tools—magnified the miniature drama for all the kids to see. As each fry broke free of its crib and darted off the screen, the class raised a steady chant—“Hatch! Hatch! Hatch!”—that echoed through the school halls.

Each year, these twin miracles of birth and learning set the stage for one of the most pivotal moments of the Shad and Herring Awareness and Restoration Effort. Known more affectionately as SHARE, the program marries classroom-based science curricula with a very practical environmental restoration activity; namely, the protection and support of anadromous* fish populations on the Anacostia and Potomac rivers.

Once our educators identify classrooms willing to serve as a micro-hatcheries, participating students care for their animal charges throughout the early lifecycle; from preparing well-balanced aquarium conditions to choosing an appropriate location and technique for releasing the young fish.

Each day of the week-long program provides an opportunity for teaching scientific realities and the importance of preserving a healthy local environment. Among other facts of nature, students come to understand how water temperature and cleanliness



AWS teaching technology opens a window on the microscopic world of this baby fish waiting to hatch from its egg. This embryo will grow up to be an adult Shad (*Alosa sapidissima*).

affect the development of fish larvae. They find out how the unique chemical composition of water allows a young fish to return to the river of its birth during the breeding season. They discover how far Shad and their herring cousins travel over the course of a lifetime—from Washington to the Chesapeake Bay, to the North Atlantic Ocean and back again. Most importantly, they learn the vital ecological role these animals play as plankton eaters and sources of food for predatory fish and birds like the osprey and the bald eagle.

This year's SHARE program culminated on May 1 with the dramatic release of thousands of tiny Shad fry at the confluence of the Anacostia's Northeast Branch and Northwest Branch in Bladensburg, MD. More than 400 students from 6 area schools came together to celebrate the happy day. Each one of those students not only experienced the true power of scientific knowledge, they found out how environmental stewardship can have real impact on the world just beyond their own backyards.

**Anadromous: a word describing certain fish, like shad and herring, that live most of their lives in the open ocean, but are born and return to breed in bodies of fresh water like the Anacostia River.*

...President's Corner, continued from pg. 2

once and for all.

I and my staff will always remain committed to the hard work of recovering our own small corner of the Chesapeake, but we cannot do it without the support of people like you who become donors, volunteers, interns, community partners, and board members. This summer, we have several talented individuals interning and volunteering with us to help get the job done. If you would like to join them and have a talent for fundraising, administration, or environmental field work, please give me a call (301-699-6204) or send me an e-mail message (jfooster@anacostiaws.org). I would be happy to discuss potential opportunities with you.

—Sincerely,
James R. Foster, President
Anacostia Watershed Society

P.S.: To read more about the official launch of the Choose Clean Water on May 20, 2009, visit AWS on the Web at www.anacostiaws.org or go to choosecleanwater.org.



SHARE students watch newly-hatched Shad fry through plastic containers at the Anacostia River near Bladensburg Waterfront Park. As adults



Detail of an engraved brick pavers laid alongside the George Washington House as part of AWS's Bricks to Blossoms campaign. (June 2009)

...Garden Path, *continued from pg. 1*

Bricks to Blossoms contributions are made. Our thanks go out to all those who have helped us preserve the little slice of American history embodied here at the George Washington House. Your dedication to our cause is now—quite literally!—written in stone.

If you would like to contribute a gift of \$200 or more to the Bricks to Blossoms campaign, please call AWS Development Director Pat Gladding at 301-699-6204 or write an e-mail to pat@anacostiaws.org. Once we have your information, we will engrave your name and a message of your choice on a new brick that we will add to our pathway later in the year.



astic magnifiers before releasing the young animals into the ults, the fish will return to the Anacostia to spawn.

AWS Joins Community 1st—America's Charities of Greater Washington

On Wednesday, April 29, 2009, the Anacostia Watershed Society and 19 other Washington-area organizations joined together to launch Community1st of Greater Washington, DC (aka, Community1st), a new federation of charities focused on increasing workplace giving throughout the region. All 20 founding members of Community1st recently departed the United Way in order to partner with America's Charities, an umbrella organization that has helped local employers like Kaiser Permanente, Washington Gas, and AARP raise more than \$40 million in employee gifts over the last nine years. These businesses and others like them engaged America's Charities to run their workplace campaigns in the wake of a financial scandal at United Way of the National Capital Area (UWNCA) in 2002.

Since 2002, UWNCA has all but stopped promoting gifts to individual charities in order to raise funds for its own community impact grant program. As a result, fewer campaign dollars have gone directly to charities designated by individual employees. Similarly, groups like AWS have received a lower percentage of each UWNCA gift sent to them. (In fact, United Way absorbs 10-12% of each workplace gift and keeps all gifts under \$50 regardless of employee specifications.) By contrast, America's Charities has dedicated itself to distributing an average of 98% of all workplace funds it raises directly to its member charities, and has capped administrative costs at a maximum of 6% per gift. This leaner, more transparent approach to workplace giving creates a win-win situation for employees, employers, and charities alike.

Here at AWS, we believe that individuals, businesses, and charitable groups can no longer afford to ignore such innovation. In these troubled



AWS President Jim Foster (left), Communications Director Steve Reynolds, and Membership Coordinator Charlotte Freeman attend the launch of Community1st of Greater Washington at the JW Marriot in Washington, DC. (April 29, 2009)

economic times, the workplace remains one of the most stable—even growing!—venues for charitable giving in the country. That is why we have chosen Community1st to be our fiscal agent for all workplace campaigns in the DC region, including the Combined Federal Campaigns (CFC) in DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

Never fear! If your employer still runs a campaign through the United Way, you can still designate AWS as your recipient charity by writing our name on your annual donation form. (Please note: We will no longer have a specific United Way campaign number.) If you are a regular contributor through the CFC the news is even better. Our CFC number (#88425) will not change!

If you have any questions about AWS's participation in Community1st, please call us at 301-699-6204 or send an e-mail message to info@anacostiaws.org. If you know of any local businesses or organizations interested in running a Community1st/America's Charities workplace giving campaign, we can help you make the right connections. Call or write us today!

For more information about Community1st, visit our Web site at www.anacostiaws.org or go to www.charities.org/community1st/.



...Ft. Dupont, continued from pg. 3

a site for a new invasive plant control plan—the first of its kind AWS has created for a District of Columbia location. That visit not only confirmed the existence of 32 important native plant species within park boundaries, it also identified the presence of 14 exotic plant types, eight of which pose a serious threat to the local woodland ecosystem.

Though relatively unknown as a landmark, Fort Dupont Park is actually the second largest expanse of public parkland inside the District; second only to Rock Creek Park in Northwest. Its central location east of the Anacostia River makes it one of the most important recreational resources for residents in several communities, including Benning Ridge, Twining, Greenway, Capitol View, and Marshall Heights. The park's overall well-being also affects water quality on the Anacostia. Threats to biodiversity occurring along Pope Branch as the stream passes through the park core are likely to have a negative impact on the Anacostia's nutrient and sediment pollution levels.

Based on April's assessment, AWS will start implementing a major invasive species control plan at Fort Dupont this June. An early component of the new plan will utilize the park to provide invasive plant control training to as many as 8 work teams and 30 supervisors participating in Mayor Adrian Fenty's 2009 Green Summer Jobs Corps (GSJC) program for D.C. youth. Early estimates indicate that GSJC will place more than 150 pairs of boots on the ground at Fort Dupont this summer.

Thanks to our partnership with the District of Columbia Department of the Environment (DDOE) and GSJC, AWS will be able to attack invasives at Fort Dupont Park with an exceptional level of intensity. However, given the current extent of biological invasion, one summer of weeding will not be enough



Volunteers from AmeriCorp's CityYear Program work to remove invasive plants from Ft. Dupont Park in Washington, DC. (March 2009)

to finish the job. Repeated interventions will be required over the next five years before native plant populations will be able to re-establish themselves. With luck, and the application of some AWS expertise and determination, the Fort Dupont project will not only strengthen our relationships with NPS and DDOE, it will serve as a true model for other public-private conservation efforts throughout the region.

For more information about the 2009 Green Summer Jobs for Youth Corps, visit <http://tinyurl.com/ovekc7>. The Ft. Dupont Park Web site is located at www.nps.gov/fodu/.



LEARNING TO GIVE

If you would like to support AWS by donating a gift of stocks, bonds, securities or mutual funds, please contact: Bruce Myles at Lincoln Financial Advisors, 301-816-3196 or Bruce.Myles@LFG.com

May Rain Barrel Workshops a Success!

Barry Chenkin, owner of Aquabarrel, LLC, helped us spread the good word about residential rain barrels at a pair of workshops sponsored by AWS and the towns of Edmonston, MD, and Riverdale Park, MD, in May 2009. A total of 43 area residents learned how to capture and reuse the rain water falling into their house gutters. Thanks to a grant from M-NCPPC, AWS was able to give away 20 Aquabarrel 55-gallon rain barrel kits to the first 10 registrants at each workshop event.



Above: Aquabarrel's Barry Chenkin demonstrates rain barrel assembly at Edmonston's Town Hall. Left: Free rain barrel kits waiting for their new owners at Riverdale Park's Municipal Center. (May 2009)



A native azalea (*Rhododendron nudiflora*) in full bloom adorns the forest understory atop the University of Maryland's Wooded Hillock in College Park, MD. If construction plans advance, this habitat will be destroyed. (May 2009)

...Wooded Hillock, continued from pg. 1

faculty, and staff representatives to suggest viable alternative redevelopment plans that would spare the Wooded Hillock from bulldozers and paving machines. Since an opportunity to save this very special place in our watershed remains open, AWS's advocacy efforts on its behalf remain ongoing. Additional information on the Wooded Hillock's ultimate fate will be reported on the AWS Web site—www.anacostiaws.org—and through periodic e-mail updates.

Want to share your comments on this issue? Become a fan of the Anacostia Watershed Society on Facebook! Setup details are available on the Facebook Web site at www.facebook.com.

AWS GOES WEB 2.0

Are you a Facebook or Twitter user? Information and updates about our activities are now available through both of these social networking sites on the Web. Search for Anacostia Watershed Society to become a fan of the organization on Facebook. Follow [anacostiaws](https://twitter.com/anacostiaws) (or Anacostia Watershed) on Twitter to receive regular AWS tweets. See you online!

DC Council Passes Anacostia River Cleanup & Protection Act!

More than 20,000 tons of litter flow down the Anacostia River and its tributary creeks and streams each year. In its wake, this conveyor belt of trashed-up water leaves neighboring communities and parkland polluted, dirty and neglected. A recent AWS survey showed that plastic bags, bottles, wrappers and Styrofoam make up 85% of the trash found along the river inside the District of Columbia. On D.C. tributaries of the Anacostia, like Watts Branch, nearly 50% of that trash is composed of plastic bags like the ones given out by supermarkets and convenience stores.

According to the Web site www.trashfreeanacostia.net, DC taxpayers spend over \$50 million every year cleaning bags and trash out of the Anacostia River and off our streets. Soon, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will fine District government every time trash in the river exceeds a certain limit. That means there probably will be a fine levied after every heavy rain storm if the trash problem is not addressed. Even with DC's current recycling program,



Hundreds of single-use plastic bags catch on branches and other barriers along Nash Run, a small tributary stream of the Anacostia that flows under Kenilworth Avenue through the Deanwood neighborhood in northeast Washington, DC. (Feb. 2009)



Plastic bags from a national convenience store chain add some color to the trash piles caught on trees and shrubs lining this DC creek. (Feb. 2009)

every bag distributed costs taxpayers the money required to run those programs and clean unrecycled bags from streets and waterways. Bags also cost local stores money to purchase and give out, raising the price of our groceries and other goods.

The District of Columbia City Council has taken the first step toward rectifying this problem. On June 2, after a lot of advocacy work by AWS and other area environmental organizations, they approved the Anacostia River Cleanup and Protection Act of 2009—a piece of legislation that encourages all of us to shop with reusable shopping bags. Despite this forward-thinking action, lobbyists from the American Chemistry Council continue to try and defeat or cripple the measure as it head to the U.S. Congress for final approval. If Congress ratifies it, DC will become a national leader with respect to addressing pollution and trash created by disposable plastic and paper bags. Please give your DC Councilmember the support he or she needs to stay strong as this struggle continues. Remember, it's not only the Anacostia River that's at stake, it's the city's health, and its financial bottom line.

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AWS SUMMER 2009 CALENDAR

TRASH CLEANUP VOLUNTEER EVENTS[†]

June 20

Anacostia Park, Washington, DC
Time: 9:30AM - 12PM

September 12

Call 301-699-6204 for location
Time: 9:30AM - 12PM

GOOSE COUNT VOLUNTEER EVENTS[†]

July 6, 7, 8, & 9

Langston Golf Course, Washington,
DC
Time: 9:00AM - 10:30AM
What: Count Canada geese for the
National Park Service!
Contact: Mikaila Milton, milton@nps.
gov, or Steve McKindley-Ward, steve@
anacostiaaws.org or 301-699-6204

INVASIVE PLANT VOLUNTEER EVENTS[†]

July 4, August 1, Sep. 5
Greenbelt Park, Greenbelt, MD
Time: 11AM - 3PM

July 18, August 15, Sep. 1
Magruder Park, Hyattsville, MD
Time: 9AM - 1PM

June 27, July 25, August 29
Little Paint Branch Park, Beltsville,
MD
Time: 11AM - 3PM

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Weekday office volunteers needed
during business hours (9AM to 5PM)
for data entry & other clerical tasks.
Please call 301-699-6204 or write to
info@anacosstiaaws.org.

SPECIAL EVENTS

July 18

Lotus & Waterlily Festival at
Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens
Time: 10AM - 3PM
Sponsored by the National Park
Service

[†]Participation may require pre-registration.
Please visit AWS at www.anacostiaaws.org
or call 301-699-6204 for information.



Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) at
the AWS pond. (April 2009)