



ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY

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Consent Decree Announced at Washington Gas Toxic Site on Anacostia River

Washington, DC, December 12, 2011... A toxic problem a century in the making is finally getting the attention it deserves. Today the District of Columbia and its federal partners announced a draft clean up agreement for the former Washington Gas and Light site on the Anacostia River.

Beginning in the late 1800s, Washington Gas and Light Company operated a gas manufacturing facility at the "East Station" site on the banks of the Anacostia River near 12th and M Streets SE. Closed in the mid-1980s, the site has never been completely cleaned up despite a 2006 Record of Decision concerning lands along the river.

The Obama Administration seemed to finally take interest in the cleanup of the Washington Gas site when US EPA Region 3 Administrator Shawn Garvin issued a letter, dated August 16, 2010, notifying the government of Washington, DC that the site must be addressed "in a transparent and legally enforceable manner" by mid-December 2010. Unfortunately, EPA allowed this deadline to pass without account based on statements by Washington Gas and the District Department of Environment (DDOE) that a negotiated consent decree regarding site clean up was "imminent."

After eight months passed without the promised consent decree, in August 2011 the Anacostia Watershed Society, in partnership with Anacostia Riverkeeper, filed suit to compel clean up of the site under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). While action on the RCRA suit is still pending, today a draft consent decree was finally filed with the court.

"This consent decree is being issued a full year later than originally required by EPA Region 3 and months later than it was promised by the District Department of the Environment," said AWS Director of Advocacy Brent Bolin. "Better late than never, but we are still reviewing the details of the proposed consent decree. The citizens of DC deserve the best cleanup possible at this site."

CLEAN THE WATER, RECOVER THE SHORES, HONOR THE HERITAGE

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Mike Bolinder of Anacostia Riverkeeper agreed, noting that "Given the proximity of rowing clubs, yacht clubs, hiker/biker trails and fishermen, the clean up of the Washington Gas site is long overdue. We will keep fighting to ensure that the voices of DC residents are heard in this process."

About the Anacostia Watershed Society

The Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) is dedicated to cleaning the water, recovering the shoreline, and honoring the heritage of the Anacostia River and its watershed communities in Washington, DC and Maryland. Since 1989, AWS has worked to conserve and protect the land and water of the Anacostia River and its watershed communities through educational programs, stewardship efforts, and advocacy projects. AWS works to make the Anacostia River and its tributaries swimmable and fishable as required by the Clean Water Act. For more information about AWS, visit www.anacostiaws.org.