

2018 STATE OF THE ANACOSTIA RIVER REPORT CARD



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PASSING GRADE

What a gift for the Year of the Anacostia! For the first time since the Anacostia Watershed Society began issuing our State of the Anacostia River Report Card, the river has earned a passing grade. After years of persistent progress, in the last 18 months we have seen a significant increase in the rate of improvement of water quality indicators. Led by a dramatic regrowth of submerged aquatic vegetation as well as improvement in other key indicators, the river crosses the threshold to a healthier waterway. With the D.C. Water's Anacostia River Tunnel Project coming online in 2018 and sustained leadership by elected officials in the District and Maryland, we are confident we can sustain this rate of progress, and that a truly swimmable and fishable river is within our reach.



The return of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

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	SCORE(%)	GRADE	TREND	
Water Quality Indicators (Quantitative)	Dissolved Oxygen	48	F	
	Fecal Bacteria	63	D	
	Water Clarity	52	F	
	Chlorophyll <i>a</i>	80	B-	
	Submerged Aquatic Vegetation	100	A+	
	Stormwater Runoff Volume	59	F	
Remediation Indicators (Qualitative)	Toxics Remediation	43	F	
	Trash Reduction	56	F	
OVERALL GRADE		63	D	

Full report available online at: <https://www.anacostiaws.org/state-of-the-river-report-card>

The following parameters are used to assess water quality and conditions:

Dissolved Oxygen is critical for the survival of aquatic life and ecosystem sustainability. A score of 100% means that the water has equal to or more than 5mg/L of oxygen all the time.

Fecal Bacteria contamination is caused by sewage discharges and leaks, as well as from pet and wildlife waste. A score of 100% means that fecal bacteria levels are low enough that the river is safe for swimming at all times.

Water Clarity is a measure of light penetrating the water column; this affects the health of aquatic grasses. A score of 100% means that the water is clear enough to see through at at least 4 1/4 feet or 1.3 meters.

Chlorophyll *a* is the measure of microalgae biomass; this can impact water clarity and dissolved oxygen levels, and indicates the amount of nutrients like phosphorous and nitrogen. A score of 100% means that the body of water has only the appropriate amount of microalgae biomass.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation requires light to thrive and is essential habitat for young fish and other aquatic life. A score of 100% means the Anacostia River has at least 20 acres of SAV bed.

Stormwater Runoff flushes trash and toxics from paved areas and erodes stream banks, filling the river with sediment. A score of 100% means that the peak stream flow is the same as averaged values from recorded historical levels (1938-1942).

Toxics Remediation in the Anacostia River evaluates the efforts to remove and contain PCBs and PAHs in the riverbed that potentially pose chronic damage to people and wildlife. A score of 100% means that the toxic sediment is fully addressed and remedied.

Trash Reduction evaluates the efforts to reduce trash in the Anacostia River and the surrounding tributaries. A score of 100% means that trash pollution is fully addressed by local jurisdictions and no trash is visible on the river.

EcoCheck scoring method is used for all Water Quality categories, except for Stormwater Runoff Volume which is evaluated by AWS. Remediation Indicators were systematically evaluated by AWS professionals for numerous benchmarks to achieve removal of the pollutants. A standard school grading system is used to determine the letter grades, where below 60 = F. Historical data were used for trend analyses. Remediation Indicator valuations are from 2017. Other data sets are from 2016 and 2017, the most recent available.

Thank you to the following organizations for your support:

- Mid-Atlantic Tributary Assessment Coalition
- USDA Environmental Microbial and Food Safety Laboratory
- District Department of Energy and Environment
- The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment



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AWS is looking for potential funders to make this reporting sustainable. Please contact Emily Conrad if you can help at econrad@anacostiaws.org or 301-699-6204 x111

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