



The Path to 2025: Anacostia Watershed Society 2019-2021 Strategic Plan

Mission: The Anacostia Watershed Society’s mission is to protect and restore the Anacostia River by bringing partners and communities together to achieve a clean and safe Anacostia River for the benefit of all living in its watershed and for future generations.

Vision: To restore and sustain the Anacostia as a swimmable and fishable river for the health and well-being of all by 2025 and beyond.

How We Define Success:

- The water is “swimmable” when the water quality safely supports all types of water-based recreation in and on the water.¹
- The water is “fishable” when the water quality is good enough to sustain a healthy, balanced population of native aquatic life.²
 - Water quality attributes such as turbidity, nutrient levels, metals and toxic contaminants, harmful bacteria and sediment are significantly reduced, and dissolved oxygen is consistently elevated;
 - The river water flow is balanced and it contributes clean water to the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay; and
 - Populations of clean water species return to the river and thrive.

Strategies for Reaching and Sustaining a Clean River

Strategy 1. The Anacostia Watershed Society will lead, convene, and participate in collaborative efforts to develop and implement watershed-wide plans to eliminate sewage/bacteria/nutrients, trash, sediment, toxics, stormwater runoff, and other pollutants in the Anacostia River.

Action Items:

- We will advocate for and help convene a broad coalition of key agencies, jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, and citizen leaders to assume a lead role in the successful restoration of the Anacostia River.
- We will monitor and advocate for the timely completion of DC Water’s Clean Rivers Project, which will result in a 98% reduction of sewer overflows, and the WSSC consent decree objectives, as well as the estuary-wide Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study and Plan for toxic sediment clean up.

¹ River Network and Clean Water Act

² River Network and Clean Water Act

- We will lead the effort to monitor, track, communicate, and advocate for water quality improvements through our annual State of the River Report Card and provide real-time monitoring to inform the public of the river’s health.

Metrics of Success:

- Water quality (“grade”) of the Anacostia River improves to a “C” or above.
- The DC Water Clean Rivers Project is completed by 2022 and results in a 98% reduction of sewage overflows. WSSC consent decree is completed and 100% of sewer infrastructure is repaired.
- Estuary-wide Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study is completed, a Record of Decision is made, and an Estuary-wide toxics cleanup plan is prepared, approved, and funded to achieve targeted cleanup completion date of 2022.

Strategy 2. The Anacostia Watershed Society will advocate for and work with partners to restore the ecological health of the river.

Action Items:

- We will reduce contaminants in stormwater flow, restore natural habitat, encourage sustainable landscape practices that are incorporated into everyday practice, and promote innovative solutions.
- We will restore and enhance wetlands, meadows, and other river habitats to bring back wildlife and native plants and improve water quality.
- We will focus our efforts on restoring freshwater mussel and American Shad populations in the river, two historically and ecologically important species.
- We will design, install, and encourage urban retrofit solutions to reduce stormwater runoff and increase climate resiliency.

Metrics of Success:

- 50 acres of river habitat is restored, enhanced, and maintained.
- Shad and mussel populations are reintroduced and sustained.
- 5 low impact development demonstration projects installed per year in highly visible areas throughout the watershed.

Strategy 3: The Anacostia Watershed Society will educate, demonstrate, and engage the public in sustainable solutions that foster a clean river with healthy and vibrant communities by building deeper connections to the river among communities in the watershed.

Action Items:

- We will serve as a trusted advisor to school systems and educate and engage youth to become life-long stewards of the river.

- We will educate and encourage people of all ages from communities in the watershed to make choices and take actions that support the river.
- We will increase and improve targeted communications to promote behavior change and the benefits of a clean, healthy, robust, and balanced ecosystem.
- We will influence and engage a broader and more inclusive cross-section of residents and stakeholders from the watershed in meaningful educational experiences, stewardship activities, sustainable practices, and advocacy to benefit the river and its watershed.

Metrics of Success:

- A business plan is developed and implemented to operate a new Education Center along the Anacostia River at the 11th Street Bridge Park that will provide meaningful education and on-the-water experiences to a greater number of watershed residents.
- 10,000-12,000 people are empowered, educated, and engaged in meaningful Anacostia River restoration, education, and recreation programs each year.
- A corps of 250-300 watershed residents, youth, and stakeholders are trained and empowered as ambassadors over the next three years to bring the collective voice of the community to bear in the future of the river and watershed.

Strategy 4. The Anacostia Watershed Society will advocate for and pursue favorable federal, state, and local legislation, laws, regulations, and funding to reduce contaminants in the river.

Action Items:

- We will be vigilant and proactive in securing effective legislation, funding, and enforcement to maintain momentum toward recovery and protection of the river’s ecological health.
- We will advocate for:
 - Bottle management policies in DC and MD;
 - A bag ban in MD;
 - Stormwater flow management to be emphasized in permits, plans, and the implementation of best practices; and
 - Continued implementation of development practices that reduce stormwater runoff, increase tree canopy, and improve climate resilience.

Metrics of Success:

- Bottle Management legislation is passed in the District of Columbia and Maryland.
- Bag Ban legislation is passed in Maryland.

Strategy 5. The Anacostia Watershed Society will secure and ensure sustainable organizational operations (capacity, funding, resources, and systems) to restore the Anacostia River.

Action Items:

- We will raise funds from diverse revenue sources, monitor and control expenses, and establish an operating reserve to cover at least 10% of annual operating costs.
- The Anacostia Watershed Society will be a “Great Place to Work.”
- We will develop and implement a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan that is integrated throughout the organization (i.e. programs and operations).
- We will attract, engage, and retain talented people, with an equitable, inclusive, and people-centric approach to delivering results.
- We will commit to and invest in “best in class” total reward and development programs to attract and retain a talented team of employees, who are ambassadors for the mission.
- We will recruit, educate, and engage a committed and passionate Board that is representative of the communities in the watershed and actively supports, promotes, and participates in efforts to achieve the mission.
- We will embrace and embed a “safety first” approach in all work.

Metrics of Success:

- \$10 million or more is raised in 3 years³ from diverse revenue sources.
- An operating reserve of \$150,000-\$175,000 is established in 3 years to sustain the organization.
- An organizational Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan is developed and implemented.
- Employee retention rate is between 85-90%.

³ The revenue amount is a rough estimate and placeholder until we undertake the budgeting process.