2020 STATE OF THE ANACOSTIA RIVER REPORT CARD

ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY

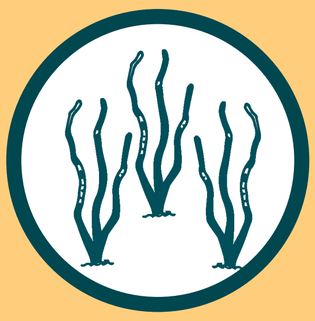
River Rebounds, Earns Highest Passing Grade So Far

Thanks to a complete resurgence of underwater grasses and actions taken by local jurisdictions to reduce trash and toxic sediment in the river, the 2020 State of the River Report demonstrates the Anacostia's resiliency and improving health. After suffering the wettest year on record in 2018, contributing to a failing grade on last year's report card, the Anacostia Watershed Society was heartened to witness the river's quick recovery, bringing us closer to our goal of a fishable and swimmable Anacostia River by 2025.

2020 ANACOSTIA RIVER REPORT CARD

		SCORE	GRADE	MULTI-YEAR TREND
Water Quality Indicators (Quantitative)	Dissolved Oxygen	**33%**	**F**	↓
	Fecal Bacteria	**60%**	**D-**	↑
	Water Clarity	**52%**	**F**	↑
	Chlorophyll *a*	**81%**	**B-**	↑
	Submerged Aquatic Vegetation	**100%**	**A**	↑
	Stormwater Runoff Volume	**60%**	**D-**	↓
Remediation Indicators (Qualitative)	Toxics Remediation	**55%**	**F**	↑
	Trash Reduction	**62%**	**D-**	↑
	OVERALL GRADE	**63**	**D**	↑

The Good News



The Anacostia River is thriving with underwater grasses known as **Submerged Aquatic Vegetation!** These plants require light to thrive and are essential habitat for young fish and other aquatic life. A score of 100% means the Anacostia River has at least 20 acres of SAV beds, and 2019 data showed a whopping **92.6 acres!**

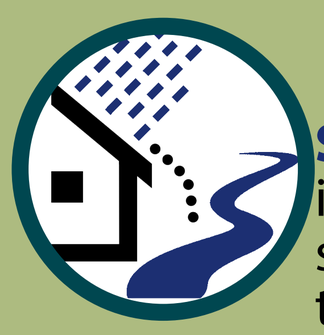
Chlorophyll a is the measure of microalgae biomass; this can impact water clarity and dissolved oxygen levels, indicating the amount of nutrients like phosphorous and nitrogen. A score of 100% means that the body of water has only the appropriate amount of microalgae biomass.

The score for **Fecal Bacteria** went from 39% to 60% in just a year! A score of 100% means that fecal bacteria levels are low enough that the river is safe for swimming at all times. This contamination is caused by sewage discharges and leaks, as well as from pet and wildlife waste.

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, on average, clear enough to see through at least 4.25 feet.

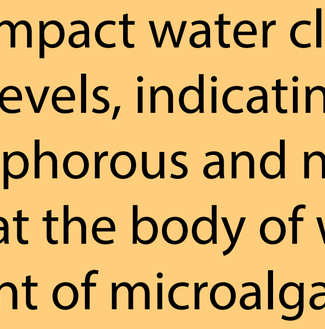
The Challenges

We continue to see a decline in **Dissolved Oxygen** levels and are working with partners to determine the cause. Critical for the survival of aquatic life and ecosystem sustainability, a score of 100% means that the water is equal to or more than 5mg/L of oxygen all the time.



Stormwater Runoff is the fastest growing source of pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and flushes trash and toxics from paved areas and erodes stream banks, filling the river with sediment.

Next Steps



Non-point source pollution, or stormwater runoff, is the fastest growing source of pollution to the Chesapeake Bay. By planting new trees and raingardens - in addition to better stormwater controls in urban areas - we can improve the river's grade.

The COVID-19 pandemic has threatened hard-won policies to reduce the use of single-use plastic, such as the enforcement of plastic bag bills in D.C. and Montgomery County. As a result, there is a greater onus on individual consumers, rather than regulatory agencies, to create less waste.

The District of Columbia has nearly completed the official plan to clean up toxic contaminants in the Anacostia River, this year. Through a series of mitigation and observation, the old pollution in the riverbed is expected to be removed over time.

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