2021 STATE OF THE ANACOSTIA RIVER REPORT CARD

ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY

River Stays on Course to Swimmable and Fishable

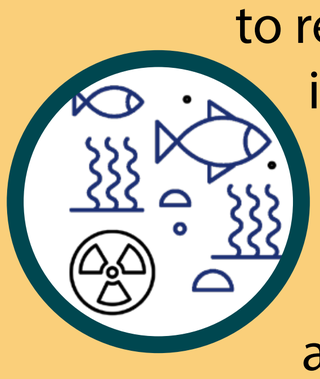
The Anacostia River's return to swimmable and fishable is well underway with its waters receiving a passing grade for the third time in four years in the 2021 State of the River Report Card. Thanks to significant efforts by the federal and District governments to address toxics at the river bottom, the Anacostia River Sediment Plan is finalized, and with the help of a $52 million judgment against Monsanto for pollution, restoration efforts are poised to continue swift progress. Despite it being the third wettest year on record, underwater grasses are strongly recovering, receiving a 100% score in the last two years, which demonstrates the resurgence of a healthy aquatic ecosystem.

2021 ANACOSTIA RIVER REPORT CARD

		SCORE	GRADE	MULTI-YEAR TREND
Water Quality Indicators (Quantitative)	Dissolved Oxygen	**52%**	**F**	↑
	Fecal Bacteria	**46%**	**F**	↓
	Water Clarity	**49%**	**F**	↑
	Chlorophyll *a*	**81%**	**B-**	↑
	Submerged Aquatic Vegetation	**100%**	**A**	↑
	Stormwater Runoff Volume	**48%**	**F**	↓
Remediation Indicators (Qualitative)	Toxics Remediation	**61%**	**D-**	↑
	Trash Reduction	**64%**	**D**	↑
	OVERALL GRADE	**63**	**D**	↑

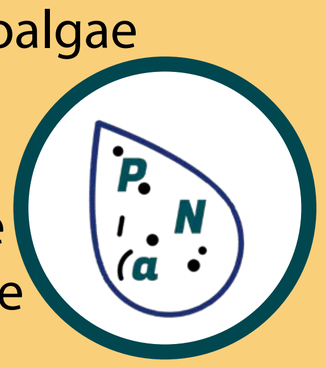
What We Track

Toxics remediation in the Anacostia River evaluates the efforts to remove and contain legacy pollution 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.

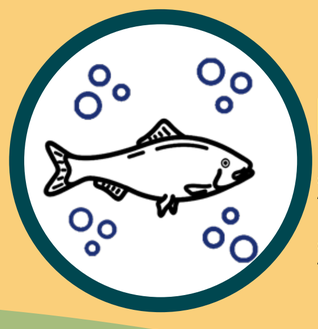


The Anacostia River is thriving with underwater grasses known as **Submerged Aquatic Vegetation!** These plants require light to thrive and are essential habitat for young fish and other aquatic life. A score of 100% means the Anacostia River has at least 20 acres of SAV beds, and 2020 data showed the river is home to 3X that amount at **67.2 acres!**

Chlorophyll a is the measure of microalgae biomass; this can impact the amount of phosphorous and nitrogen in the water. A score of 100% means that the body of water has only the appropriate amount of microalgae biomass.



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.



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

The Challenges

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.

The score for **Fecal Bacteria** went from 60% to 49%. 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.

Next Steps

Climate change remains a significant threat to the health of the Anacostia River. The wettest year on record in 2018 caused the failing grade in the last four years, and those rains generate polluted runoff that spills into area waterways. With increasingly severe storms predicted in the future, more stormwater management is needed to prevent pollution flowing into the river.

By reaching a settlement with Monsanto, the DC government has ensured that restoration work for the Anacostia River, including toxics remediation, can accellerate to acheive our swimmable and fishable goal.

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

Photo credit: Krista Schlyer