

# Anacostia Watershed Regional Messaging

Prince George's County Focus Group Summary

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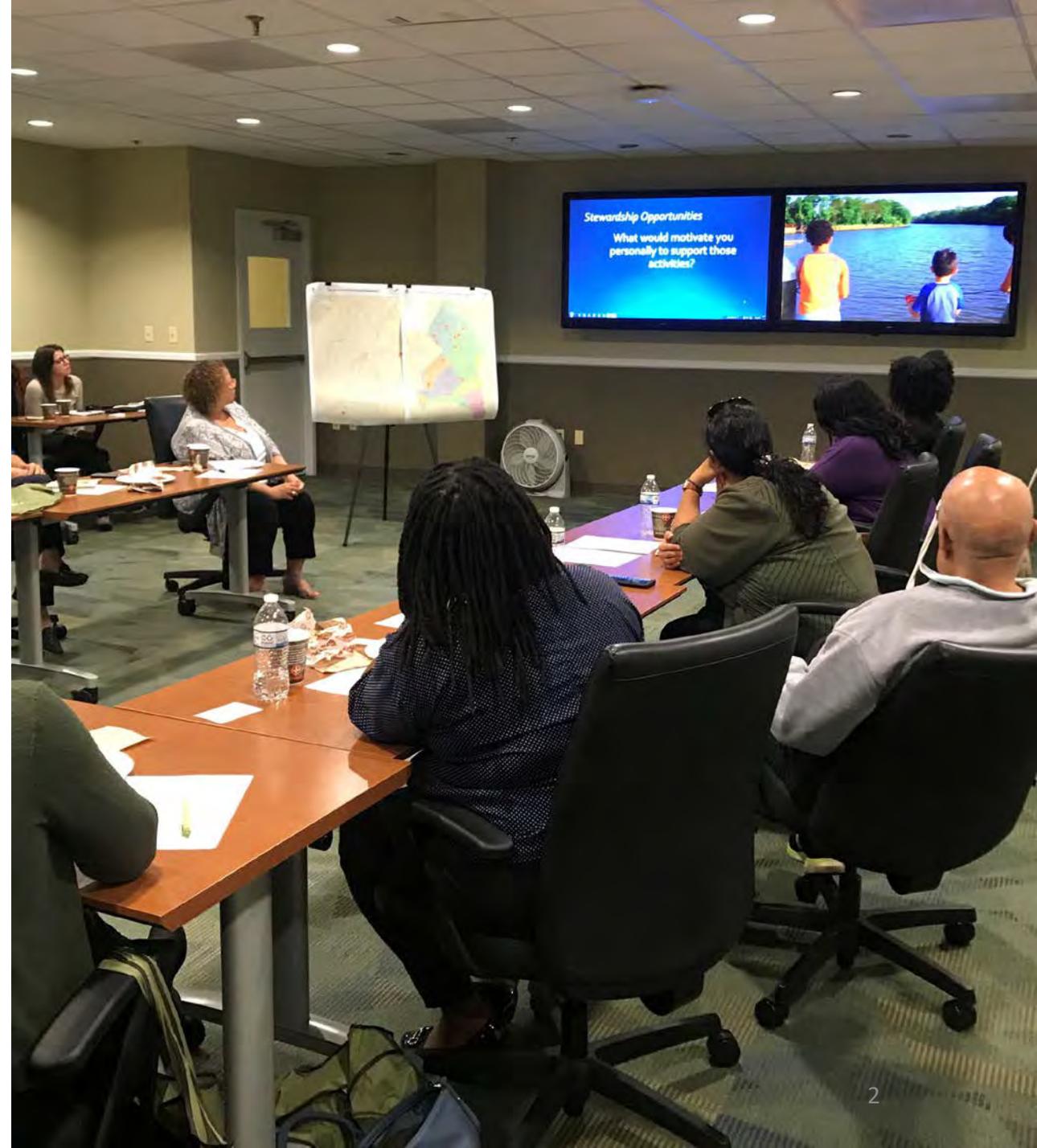


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# Overview

- Focus Groups Approach
- Summary of Focus Group Discussions
- Emergent Themes
- Recommendations



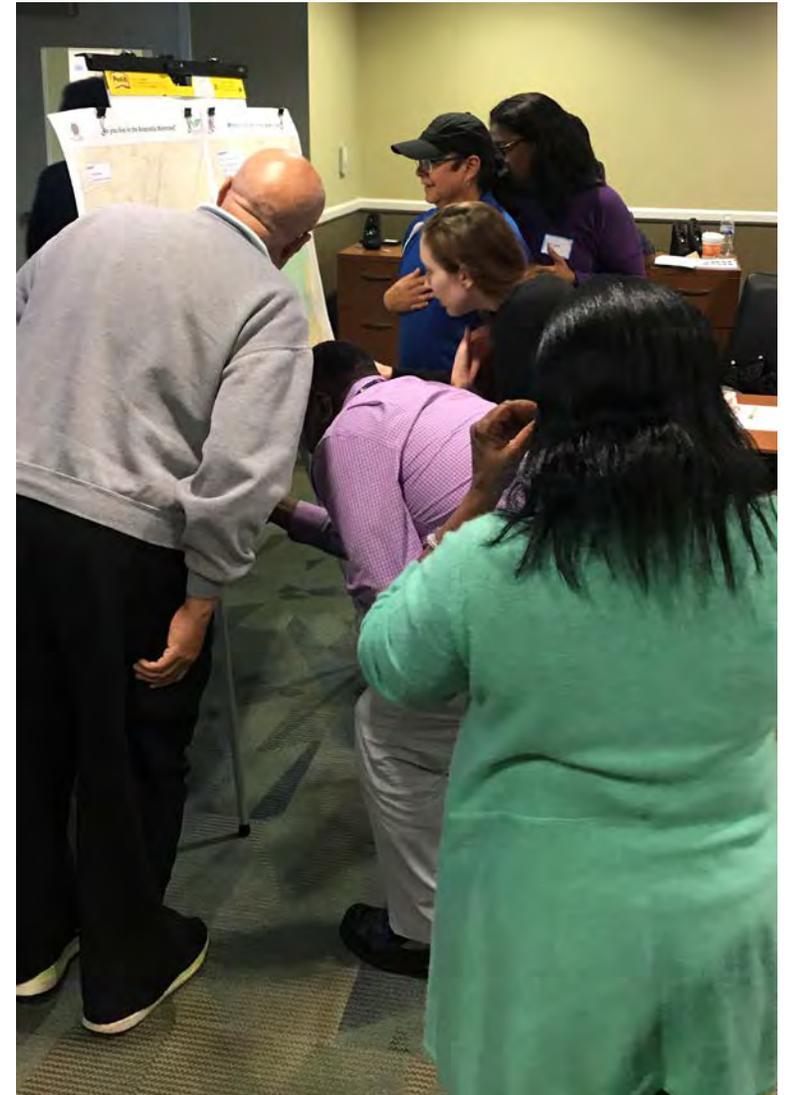
# Focus Group Demographics (22 participants)

<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>	<b>Observed Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>
63% African/Black/African American 18% Hispanic/ Latino 18% White/Caucasian 6% Asian/ South Asian 6% Native American 6% Middle Eastern or North African	50% Female 36% Male 6% Transgender	Participants were between the ages of 25 – 71 with an average age of 39 years.

# Focus Group Discussion Topics

- Icebreaker: share two favorite activities that you have done in or along a waterway.
- Perceptions of the Anacostia River
- Opportunities and Barriers to Enjoy the River
- Stewardship Opportunities

Participants also completed a survey at the beginning and then following the focus group discussion to see how perceptions changed.



# Perceptions

## *Perceptions of Local Waterways*

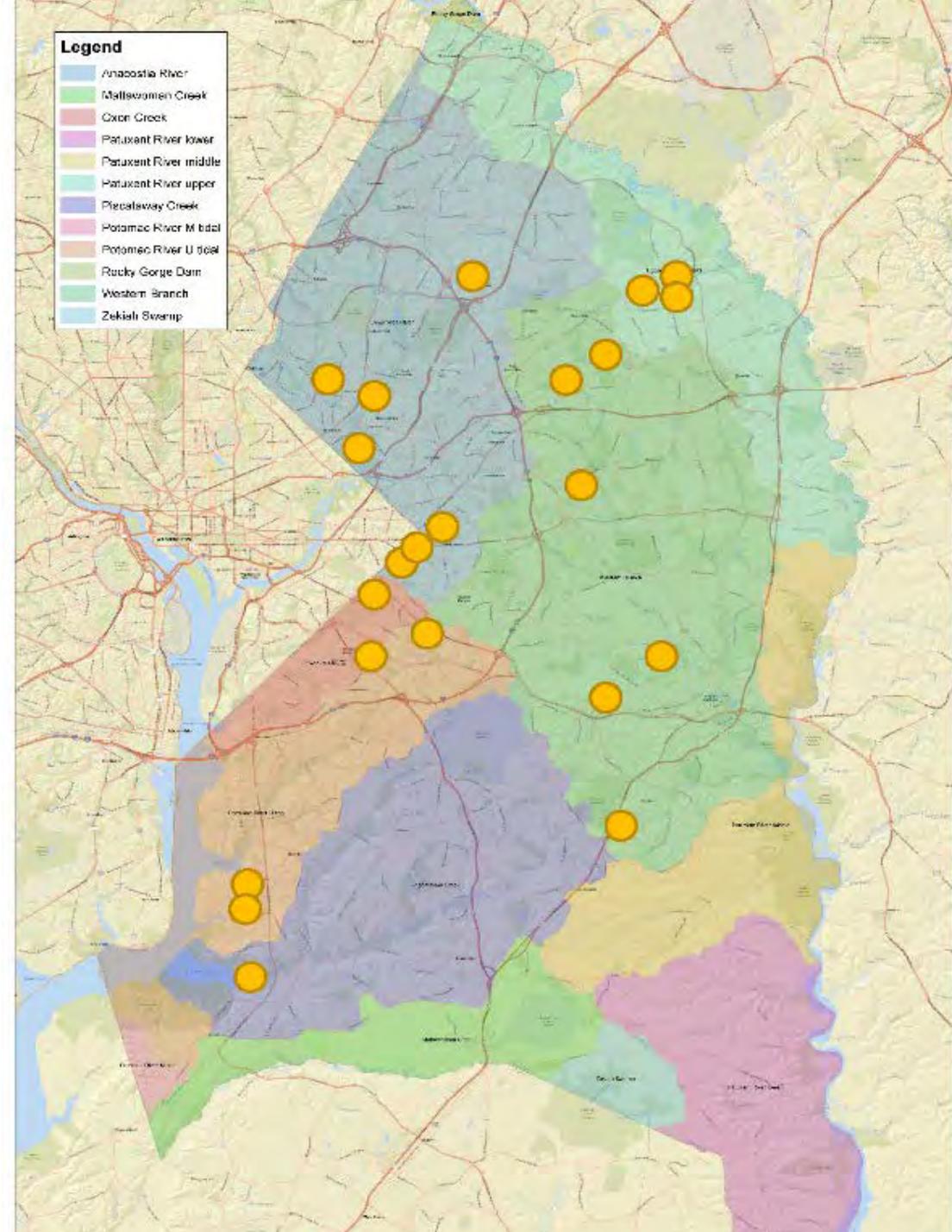
<i>Positive Perceptions</i>	<i>Negative Perceptions</i>
Abundant	Brackish
Beautiful	Desolate
Home	Divides geographies
Majestic	Dirty
Neighborhood	Dull
Transportation	Dumping ground
Wildlife	Inaccessible
	Isolated
	Lack of accessibility
	Lack of attractions
	Polluted
	Remote
	Scary
	Sediment
	Trashy
	Ugly
	Unappealing
	Unsafe

## *Perceptions of Anacostia River*

<i>Positive Perceptions</i>	<i>Negative Perceptions</i>
A project	Dangerous
Annual cleanups	Dirty
Better than before	Dull
Cleaner than before	Forgotten
Improved	Hurting
Potential	Infested
Some revitalization	Neglected
Vast	Old
	Polluted
	Underutilized

# Watershed Understanding

- When asked where they thought the Anacostia river system was, most participants thought it was in Washington, D.C. or the DC, Maryland, Virginia (DMV) region.
- Most participants either weren't familiar with the term watershed or had it heard but did not know what it meant



# Opportunities and Barriers

## **Top motivations to visit local waterways or waterfronts:**

- Attractions: Special events, food/restaurants, entertainment/music, shopping, happy hour and advertisements
- Outdoor Recreation: peace, beauty, ease of access, scenery, boating, hiking, calming, transportation options on and along the water (trails, kayak/canoe/paddle board rental facilities, small boats, etc.)
- Facilities: Clean and safe

## **Top barriers that prevented visiting the water were:**

- Access to waterways and facilities
- Lack of information about events, safety, facilities and history
- The aesthetic appearance of the waterways and facilities

# Opportunities and Barriers

What participants would most like to preserve or improve about local waterways:

- Accurate and up-to-date **health and safety information** so public perception can align with the current improved status of watershed health.
- Protecting and enhancing local waterways to **increase resident use and interest.**
- Creating local, **community-based attractions** designed for County residents versus creating attractions that are geared for tourists (e.g. National Harbor).
- **Increase incentives and programs** to enhance municipal stormwater management, including green and equitable development regulations for new developments.
- Increase opportunities for County residents to **learn more about local water history** and to **celebrate the County's cultural diversity and vibrancy.**

# Stewardship Opportunities

Participants were interested in taking the conversation about the Anacostia watershed into communities, including:

- Having **cleanup days** combined with an educational aspect.
- Increasing **watershed education** in County schools focusing on how individual actions impact water quality.
- Promoting the **civic responsibility** residents will need to have to protect local waterways and alternatives to pollution.
- Word of mouth **education**.
- Encouraging residents to **attend local government meetings**.
- Telling the **story of the Anacostia** watershed and its importance to Prince George's County.

# Stewardship Opportunities

When asked if they had heard of Anacostia watershed restoration or conservation efforts, participants listed the **Anacostia Watershed Society** as the only Anacostia specific organization they had heard of.

Other organizations or events mentioned included:

- University alumni association cleanup days
- DC Waterways Swimmable by 2025
- Stormwater fee

# Stewardship Opportunities

When asked what would motivate participants personally to support watershed restoration activities, the responses included:

- More easily accessible and up-to-date information.
- Information on how actions impact the Anacostia watershed and more programs that support local stewardship of the watershed.
- Visible effort from County, state government and developers to protect the watershed.
- County meetings in accessible locations and times when people who work during the day can attend.
- Educational materials highlighting how watershed restoration supports local community priorities and improves quality of life.

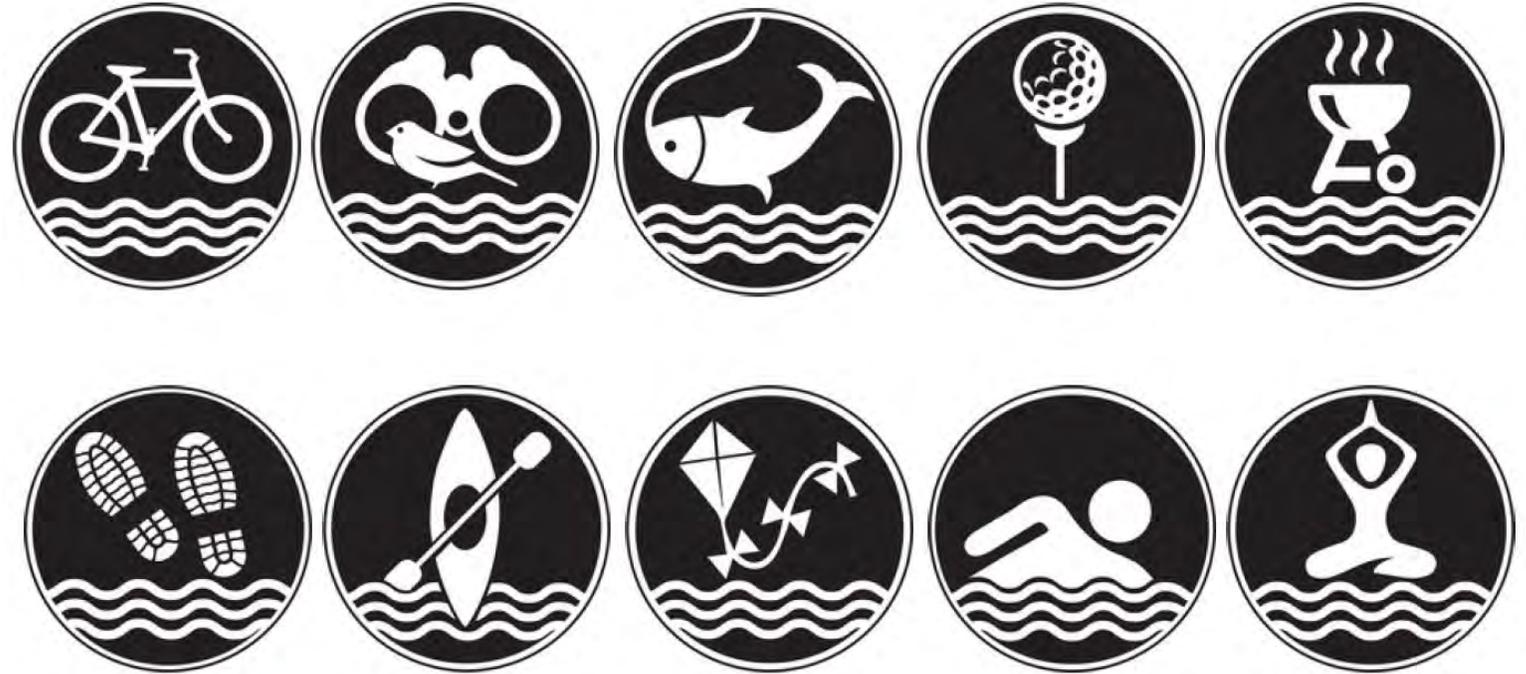
# Outreach Communications – YOTA Video

Generally, participants LOVED the video. Ideas shared of what they would like to see in this or future videos included:

- Map to show where features are in the watershed.
- Include activities like picnicking, barbequing, night activities, jumping and swimming in the water, yoga, people talking and on-water activities.
- Include additional types of people like police, park rangers, pets, people with different types of mobility and rental equipment vendors.
- Build on this video to create a series of videos that show how to access locations, what amenities are available, the history of the watershed's pollution and restoration efforts.

# YOTA – Icons that Resonated Most

Icon	# of Votes
Biking	15
Hiking	13
Grilling	11
Paddling	10
Yoga	9
Birding	8
Fishing	8
Swimming	6
Golfing	4
Playing	4



Icons with Words or No Words? While words did not change which icons resonated, majority preferred icons with words.

# YOTA – Suggestions for Additional Icons

- Boats or ferries
- Dining
- Emergency area
- Growing/gardening
- Native vegetation
- Maps
- Pet area
- Picnic
- Restaurants
- Restrooms
- Roller skating
- Skate park
- Sports facilities
- Trails
- Trash/recycling
- Wildlife nature watching
- Museums/art/cultural points of interest

# Overarching Summary

1. Perception that public outreach, restoration, development and improved access for the Anacostia River have been D.C. centered.
2. Largely unaware that substantial water quality improvements have been made in the Anacostia Watershed.
3. Many were surprised to learn that they lived in the Anacostia Watershed, but a few were aware.
4. Anacostia River in Prince George's County is largely inaccessible, dangerous, and a nuisance in terms of flooding, mosquito infestation, poor storm drainage.

# Emergent Themes from Focus Groups

- A desire to see Anacostia Watershed waterfront development that is environmentally sensitive and undertaken from an Equitable Development approach where development is undertaken in balance with environmental and natural resource considerations.
- A desire to see more targeted improvement in the Anacostia Watershed water quality specifically in Prince George's County.
- A need to create more synergy between inner ring PG County communities, and outer ring Prince George's County communities in the Anacostia River Watershed.

# Recommendations from Focus Groups

- Engage Prince George's County elected officials more directly in terms of land use, zoning and development decisions that better balance development, environment, natural resource protection, and public access to Anacostia watershed waterways.
- Be more conscious of the relationship between waterfront development and the potential for gentrification and displacement.
- Highlight and utilize the history and culture of various Prince George's County communities within the Anacostia Watershed to build awareness campaigns to bring people to the waterfront.
- Create a public awareness campaign that is targeted to reach and engage the diverse populations, age groups, ethnicities and language communities in Prince George's County. The video is great but was largely unknown to Focus Group participants.
- Icons were good but could be modified to better resonate with Prince George's County residents.

# Supplemental Survey - Communication

Top 5 News Sources	Environmental News Sources (listed in order)
<b>Social media</b>	• Social media
<b>Television (National/local news/public access)</b>	• Next Door
<b>Community newsletters or listservs</b>	• Internet searches
<b>Electronic newsletters (email)</b>	• Regular mail
<b>Radio</b>	• Neighborhood associations
	• Inclement weather text messages
	• TV
	• Newspaper
	• Radio
	• Flyers
	• Email

# Supplemental Survey – Source by Age

Age Group	News Source
<i>Under 30 and in their 30s (13)</i>	Social Media
In their 40s (5)	Social Media and Television
Over 50 (4)	television