



THE ANACOSTIA NETWORKER

The Newsletter of the Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee
Dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Anacostia River and its tributaries

Vol. 1, Spring 2002

The Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee (AWCAC) was formed in 1996 to serve in an advisory capacity to the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Committee (AWRC). This citizen-based committee provides a vital link between the watershed community and the AWRC to ensure that public interests are considered during all stream restoration and protection projects and activities. AWCAC includes six members from each of the three Anacostia watershed jurisdictions (Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, Maryland and the District of Columbia). Many of these individuals represent watershed organizations based in their communities.



The qualification for membership in AWCAC is an active interest in the effort to protect and restore the Anacostia River and its tributaries. AWCAC meetings are held quarterly at different locations in the three jurisdictions and are open to all interested persons. For more information contact John Galli at 202.962.3233 or jgalli@mwccog.org.

Richardson, and Mr. Jim Collier.

Some AWCAC Activity Highlights

- Participated in a four-day Environmental Protection Agency panel to develop recommendations for methods to reduce the toxins, nutrient overloads and trash in the Anacostia River and Rock Creek (March 1998);
- Co-hosted a College Park Town Meeting entitled Clean Water: An Asset for the Quality of Life and Economic Growth of College Park (May 1998);
- Coordinated a Beltsville Town Meeting on Little Paint Branch Preservation and Restoration: Charting the Future of Little Paint Branch (January 1999);
- Designed and installed aluminum stream identification signs at six Prince George's County road crossings with funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust (September 2000);
- Revised the AWCAC Bylaws, thus giving the group greater autonomy and facilitating the expansion of its membership (2001); and
- Lobbied Maryland State Legislature against the Inter-County Connector and its environmental impacts to the Anacostia Watershed (2002).

Restoration News

Much has been accomplished since the state of Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Montgomery and Prince George's Counties signed the first Anacostia restoration



agreement in 1987. Fortunately, the ecological health and appearance

Meet the Members

Current AWCAC members include: Ms. Elizabeth Arnold, 2001 Chair (Prince George's County/Hyattsville Organization for a Positive Environment), Mr. Bob Ferraro (Montgomery County/Eyes of Paint Branch), Ms. Linda Keenan (Prince George's County), Mr. Bryan Knedler (Prince George's County), Ms. Barbara Medina, (Montgomery County), Mr. David Paglin (Montgomery County), Mr. Charles Pritchard (Montgomery County), Mr. Lutz Rastaetter (Prince George's County/Concerned Citizens to Restore Indian Creek), Ms. Helene Smith (Montgomery County/Friends of Sligo Creek), and Ms. Patricia Thomas (Montgomery County).

Although there are currently no official members from the District of Columbia, the committee is actively engaged in recruitment efforts there. Unofficial D.C. members include Mr. John Garner, Ms. Brenda

of the tidal river and its tributaries continues to improve thanks to the work of dedicated watershed residents, environmental organizations, and businesses. Also key to the restoration effort have been the significant financial and staff commitments from the member governments and agencies of the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Committee, which include the District of Columbia Department of Health, the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority, the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, the Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources, the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Park Service.

In 1991, the original signatories reconvened to adopt the *Six-Point Action Plan* to serve as the framework to guide long-term restoration efforts. The goals outlined in that agreement addressed the following:

1. Reduction of Pollution Loads
2. Restoration of Ecological Integrity
3. Improvement of Fish Passage
4. Increase in Wetland Acreage
5. Expansion of Forest Coverage
6. Increase in Public and Private Participation and Stewardship

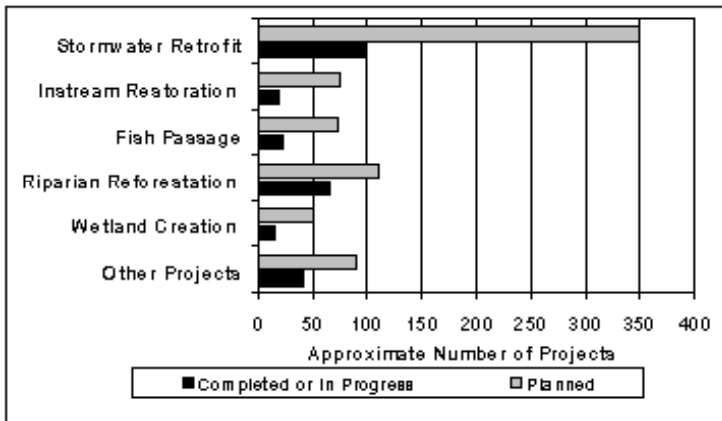
The most recent restoration agreement, signed at a highly publicized event on December 3rd, 2001, commits the three Anacostia jurisdictions to a suite of 50 specific, long-term restoration indicators and targets and to the implementation of basin-wide efforts to reach the six goals by the year 2010.

To date, the AWRC and its members have identified over 700 stormwater retrofit, wetland creation, stream restoration, riparian restoration, combined sewer overflow (CSO) abatement, trash and toxics reduction, and other restoration-related projects designed to correct existing environmental problems and enhance overall ecosystem quality. Of these, approximately one-third have either been completed or are in progress. Since 1987, roughly \$35 million has been spent on restoration project implementation, with an additional \$30 million spent on land acquisition, planning, monitoring, engineering, design, and maintenance. In addition, \$65 million has been spent on engineering controls designed to reduce the impacts of CSO's on the tidal river and of leaking, aging sewer lines on the streams. Despite these expenditures and the many important accomplishments to date, many Anacostia tributaries continue

to be plagued by the problems of excessive erosion, trash, and myriad pollutants that can only be remedied through the concerted efforts of all watershed residents and the financial commitments of the three Anacostia watershed jurisdictions, the state of Maryland, and the Federal government.



A Highly Degraded Reach of Brier Ditch Tributary, Spring 2002



Status of Restoration Projects for the Period 1987-2001

Spring 2002 Calendar of Events

• Sustainability Fair (5/3/02-5/4/02)

Sustaining America's Special Places - Your Parks, Your Communities. National Mall, Washington, DC. For details contact: Jeff Young at 202 619-6386 jeff_young@nps.gov

• Anacostia Environmental Fair (5/10/02)

Anacostia Park, DC. Join DC governmental and non-profit environmental organizations for a day of student investigation, exhibits and celebration of the Anacostia River and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. For details contact: AWS at 301-699-6204 or Claire Tebbs (CBF) 202-494-1282.

• Anacostia Reforestation Project (5/11/02)

Gum Springs - Upper Paint Branch Park. Montgomery County, Maryland Located off Briggs Chaney Road. Stream: Upper Paint Branch. For details contact John Galli at 202 962-3348 or jgalli@mwkog.org.

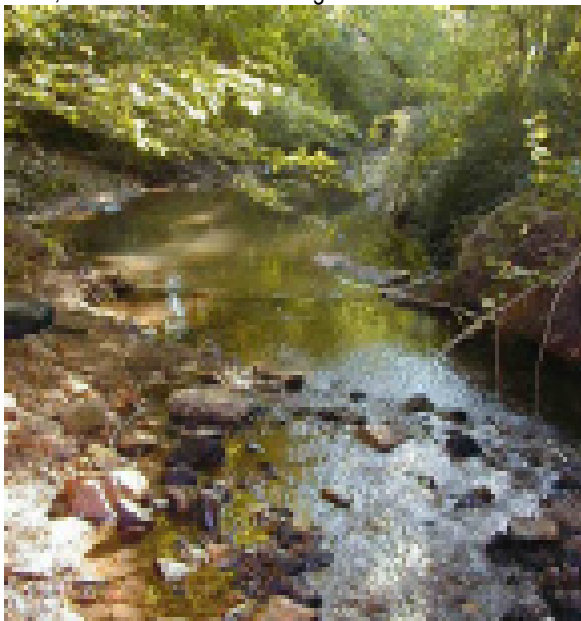
• Become a Watershed Watcher

Contact Jim Connolly (AWS) at 301-699-6204

Action Alert!

The Inter-County Connector (ICC) is a proposed highway spanning Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in suburban Maryland, a few miles north of the Capital Beltway. The ICC would link the I-270 corridor near Gaithersburg on the west with the I-95 corridor near Laurel on the east. The ICC Master Plan Alignment crosses the Paint Branch headwater tributaries three times and parallels the primary wild trout spawning area for more than a mile. This highway would destroy more wetlands and forest than any other project ever submitted to the Corps of Engineers for permits in this district. Federal agencies have stopped the ICC three times in the past 40 years, most recently in 1997 when the EPA gave it its worst possible rating.

Recently, the Maryland Senate passed by overwhelming numbers a resolution to restart the environmental impact study (EIS) on the so-called Master Plan Alignment of the ICC. Building this alignment of the ICC would remove the forest buffer and impact the wetlands protecting the headwater streams of Little Paint Branch, Paint Branch, Northwest Branch, and Rock Creek. Governor Glendening canceled the last EIS when the preliminary report echoed the environmental concerns of previous EIS studies of this road. The charge to pass this non-binding resolution was led by Ida Ruben, the Senator whose district covers the headwater streams of Little Paint, Paint, Northwest Branch and Sligo Creek.



Support for the Master Plan Alignment of the ICC is very low in the eastern part of Montgomery County and the western part of Prince George's County. Both the Prince George's and Montgomery County Councils voted against restarting the EIS. On the other hand, there is a great deal of support for constructing the ICC on the master plan alignment in Gaithersburg

and Rockville. In fact, Council Member Michael Subin from Gaithersburg ~~always votes with the minority in favor of the ICC~~ At least two major development projects hinge on the Master Plan Alignment. One project is in Prince George's County between I 95 and Route 1 and the other is in Howard County near its border with Montgomery County. Because they do not realize that east-west and north-south traffic will increase substantially if this road is built and because the environmental damage to Rock Creek has never gotten the publicity that the damage to Paint Branch has received, residents of western Montgomery County

actually believe that building the ICC will help their significant problems on Route 355 and I-270 without too much environmental damage.

AWCAC is opposed to the ICC and encourages your involvement in its efforts to protect both the environmentally sensitive Anacostia headwaters and the millions of dollars invested in the Anacostia watershed restoration to date. For more information, contact Bob Ferraro of the Eyes of Paint Branch at 301.890.1998, or write to P.O. Box 272, Burtonsville, MD 20866.

AWCAC Chair's Vision

Our own getaway amidst the urban landscape. Such a variety of water birds living so close to my home, yet seemingly oblivious to the bustling metropolis surrounding them. Wanting to share this incredible resource with community and friends, but for the moment just using it for rejuvenation, replenishment. A deep breath of fresh air. Sitting back and enjoying the way the water gently pushes my canoe downriver, past a pair of River otters swimming lazily on their backs. Eyes gazing on the reflection of sunlight on the wavelets, which quietly lap against the hull. I let my fingers graze on the top of the cool water, dreaming of the day when I might safely slip overboard for a quick swim. The quiet is interrupted by cyclists pedaling along the nearby bike trail and I thrill to know that others are also experiencing this special place. Potential allies for the work that lies ahead. All is well.

- Elizabeth Arnold, 2002 AWCAC Chair

Friends of Sligo Creek

The Friends of Sligo Creek (FoSC) is dedicated to protecting and restoring Sligo Creek and its stream valley parks.

One of our top priorities this year is to remove invasive vines where they are threatening native trees. The group also hopes to plant trees along the stream, to reduce the amount of litter found in the park and stream, and to work on lessening erosion of the stream banks.

Throughout March and April, *Friends* will map some eight miles of Sligo Creek Park, from the headwaters in Wheaton where the stream emerges to East-West Highway. *Friends* are walking the stream in sections, evaluating habitat and stream conditions and noting this information on maps provided by the M-NCPPC. On land, mappers will note the locations of spring wildflowers such as spring beauty, to identify priority areas for the removal of invasive plants.



A guided amphibian walk is scheduled in May, and an introductory walk pointing out species of invasive plants and their effect is planned for late April.

Spotted Salamander: An Anacostia Watershed Wetland Denizen

To learn more about Sligo watershed activities or to join FoSC, contact Sally Gagne at 301.588.2071, or visit the FoSC website at www.fosc.org

Citizens to Conserve and Restore Indian Creek (CCRIC)

As it's name implies, CCRIC members are dedicated to improving the health and beauty of Indian Creek. We are currently working to prevent a proposed mall development near the Greenbelt Metro station that threatens one of the few remaining large, wooded stream valleys within the Washington Beltway. We need your help to preserve this treasure.

Throughout the summer, CCRIC will be offering plant identification walks and bird watching tours along Indian Creek, starting at the Greenbelt Metro. Volunteers are invited to participate in our stream cleanups and monitoring activities.

For event dates and other information, visit our website at www.greenbelt.com/civic/CCRIC/ or call 301.441.3844 to request information. We meet one Sunday a month at the Greenbelt Community Center.

Eyes of Paint Branch

The Eyes of Paint Branch was formed in 1994 to preserve and enhance the ecology of the Paint Branch. We are a grass-roots organization of volunteer citizens devoted to preserving the Paint Branch watershed through education, community awareness, and action.

Eyes of Paint Branch organizes community activities such as stream cleanups, field trips, bird walks, tree plantings, and public education. Members are actively involved in monitoring the condition of the stream and coordinating with biologists and various organizations to ensure that the Paint Branch gets as much protection as possible.



Members also write letters to elected officials and testify at public hearings when important issues are being addressed. Publications of Eyes of Paint Branch include the newsletter "My Backyard," periodic bulletins, and short-fused releases called "Action Alerts." We also participate with other organizations such as Trout Unlimited on projects like the Embrace-A-Stream Project.

The Eyes of Paint Branch is always looking for people who are willing to help protect this irreplaceable treasure. To learn more, please visit our website at www.eopb.org, call us at 301.890.1998, or write to Eyes of Paint Branch P.O. Box 272, Burtonsville, MD.

Want to know more about your watershed?
Check out the Anacostia website at www.anacostia.org.