

Chesapeake Bay Program logo and navigation links

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

1998 BAY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The District of Columbia uses the annual [Executive Council meeting](#) to measure its progress in meeting the goals and commitments of the [Chesapeake Bay Program](#) (CBP) partnership. Throughout its 15 year partnership with the Bay Program, the District has worked steadily to address the common negative impacts on the Bay watershed- nutrients, toxics, and habitat destruction. The work of local partnerships within the District of Columbia has been instrumental in curbing the further degradation of our local waters. Though the results of the labor of the partnerships were not quick fixes, they are strong intermediate steps in the restoration process. Highlights of the progress made by the District this year include:

- *The Kingman Lake Wetlands Restoration Project.* In October 1998, the final agreement to restore 42 acres of wetlands in Kingman Lake, an oxbow bend in the Anacostia River, was signed. The project is the result of a partnership between the U.S. National Park Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Baltimore District, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Prince George's County Government-Maryland Department of the Environment and the District of Columbia Government. The wetlands will be created by using dredged material from the Anacostia River to increase the elevation of the existing mud-flats. The mud-flats will then be planted with a variety of native aquatic plants. When completed in 1999, the \$ 3.4 million project will address the CBP habitat restoration goal and nutrient reduction goal by providing shelter and food for wildlife in the Anacostia River and filtering pollutants from water that moves through it.
- *Watts Branch Streambank Restoration.* Watts Branch is the largest tributary of the Anacostia River within D.C. Plans to restore the stream's eroding banks have been on hold for several years. The creation of a task force of stream neighbors, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies has revived the restoration projects by identifying monetary resources and helping hands needed to restore Watts Branch. Seven vehicles and a large volume of trash have been removed from the stream and adjacent park. Illegal dumping signs have also been posted along the stream to remind scofflaws that they will face prosecution and fines for using the area as a dumping ground. When completed the restoration of the Watts Branch will result in improved habitat for the fish and other wildlife in the area.

- [Anacostia River Business Coalition](#). Since its inception in October 1997, the Anacostia River Business Coalition has worked to educate businesses and citizens about pollution prevention and to support restoration activities in the Anacostia watershed. The coalition has introduced the CBP's Businesses for the Bay program to 900 D.C. businesses and sponsored a pollution prevention workshop to encourage the replacement, reduction, or recycling of hazardous materials. The Coalition also developed a public awareness campaign - "A Cleaner Anacostia River- Make It Happen"- to remind citizens that their everyday activities can have an effect on water pollution. The colorful posters appear on Metro buses and in Metrorail stations around the city. The Anacostia Business Coalition is one effort by the District to address the toxics reduction and prevention goals of the Bay Program.
- *Biological Nutrient Removal at Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant*. The Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) process is currently applied to one half of the plant's wastewater flow (approximately 150 million gallons per day). The test process has been in place for 2 years. Results indicate that BNR at Blue Plains can reduce the nitrogen content in the effluent to a concentration that would allow the District to meet its 40% reduction goal by the year 2000. Results also indicate that the nitrogen content can be reduced to the better than expected levels of 4.9 million pounds per year. Phosphorus removal is being implemented at the limit of technology for the Blue Plains plant.



- [Combined Sewer Overflow \(CSO\) Reduction Efforts](#). A combined sewer system is a wastewater collection system which carries sanitary wastewater and storm water through a single pipe to a treatment plant. Combined sewer overflow is discharge from a combined sewer system prior to the treatment plant. In the District of Columbia, approximately one third of the city's land area is served by a combined sewer system. This sewer system has a major degrading effect on the water quality of streams and rivers when a large number of rain storms occur. A Long Term CSO Control Plan is being developed. The plan will consider watershed issues, will characterize, monitor, and model the combined sewer system, and will identify a solution for abating CSO in the District of Columbia. In the interim, immediate improvements to the system are being constructed. Progress in controlling CSO in the District addresses the toxics and nutrient reduction goals of the Bay Program.

- *Little Falls Dam Fish Passage.* During the last Executive Council meeting a check for \$253,314 was presented to Maryland's Governor Glendening. The check was the District of Columbia's contribution to the construction of a fish passage over Little Falls Dam on the Potomac River. Removal of this barrier to fish migration will restore access to spawning habitats for [striped bass](#), American shad, herring and other anadromous fish. Ground breaking by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Little Falls Dam is scheduled for the late Summer/ Fall 1999.

Changes in the District of Columbia Government has resulted in the formation of the Department of Health. The majority of the District's environmental programs are now part of the Department's Environmental Health Administration. Priorities of the Administration include the protection and preservation of the ecological system of the District of Columbia, and the restoration of the Anacostia River, a Bay Program "[region of concern](#)". Partnerships among all facets of our watershed was one of the keys to progress during 1997-98. We wish to thank all the organizations, agencies, and individuals that worked with the District of Columbia Government to make these successes possible. The new initiatives and directives received this year by the Executive Council will be used by the District of Columbia as a platform for more progress in the region's quest for sustained restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

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