

The Anacostia River: Pride and Preservation

The Anacostia Community Museum works to highlight the history of the Anacostia watershed and its surrounding neighborhoods through the lenses of faith, race, class, development, politics, and culture.

The museum seeks to cultivate deeper engagement between the river and residents to spur preservation and instill pride in communities.

Kevin Laden and his daughter Ruby enjoy a canoe ride during the 2012 Anacostia River Festival.

Anacostia Community Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Far right: Volunteers pick up litter during the Anacostia Watershed Society's Earth Day cleanup at Bladensburg Waterfront Park.

Anacostia Community Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Right: Third graders from Northeast Washington's Maury Elementary School prepare to plant rice seedlings at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens as part of the Anacostia Watershed Society's "Rice Ranger" program.

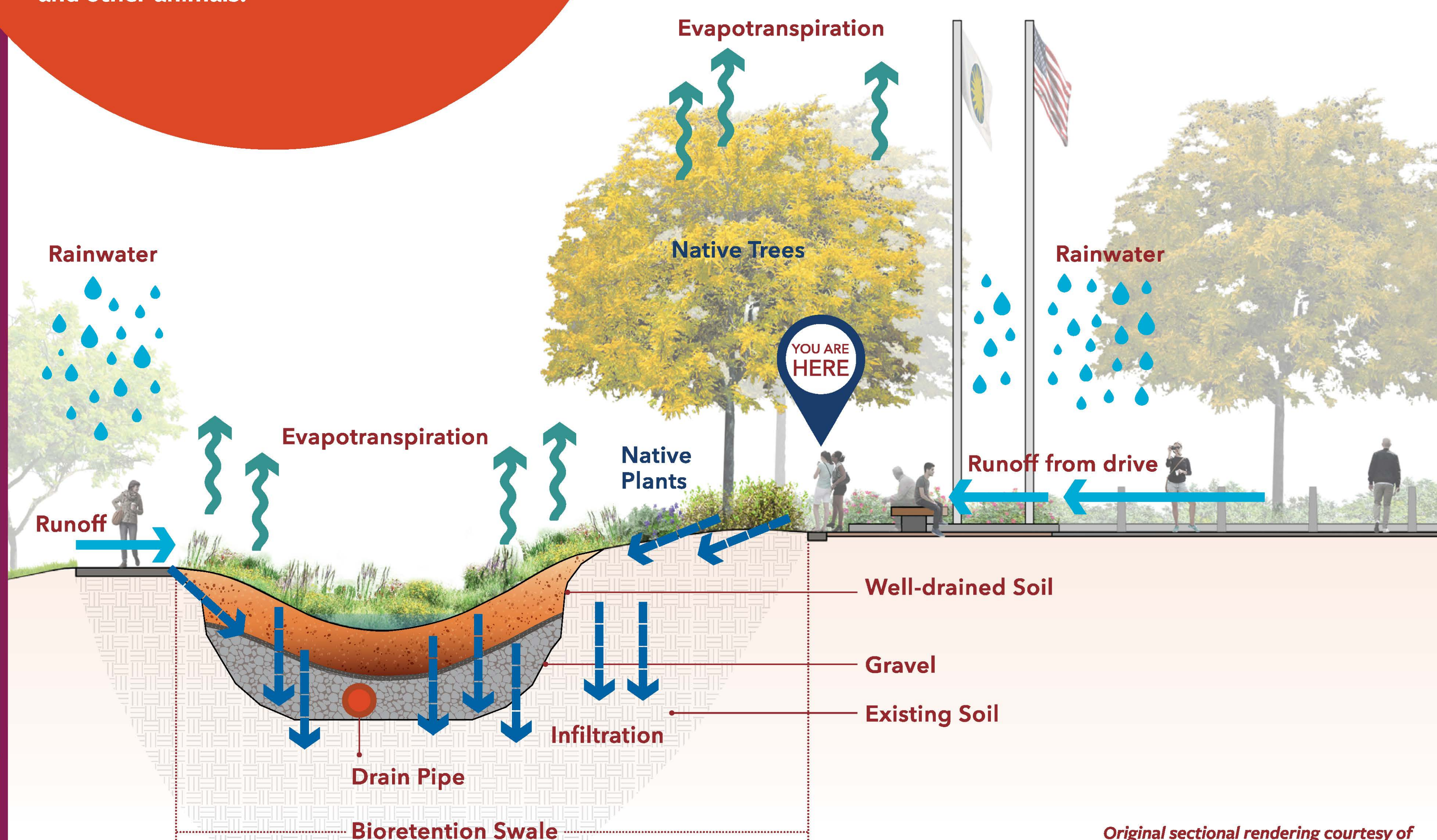
Anacostia Community Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution

IT'S UP TO US!

Our actions can have a positive or negative impact on the Anacostia River. In small ways and big, we can take care of our waterways and repair years of neglect to achieve the swimmable, fishable urban river many desire.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

This Smithsonian Gardens exhibit was designed to protect our waterways and restore native habitat. The bioretention swale, pictured below, works to capture and retain stormwater runoff from the parking lot, improving water quality and reducing pollutants. The plants you see in this garden are native to the area and provide food and shelter for native species of birds, insects, and other animals.



Original sectional rendering courtesy of Rhodeside & Harwell.



"I learned the Anacostia River, even with all its problems, was a source of healing for a people who are often forsaken and ignored in our nation's capital. My hope is the river can become a bridge . . ."

—Brenda Richardson, community leader

IT'S OUR RIVER

Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, residents in neighborhoods along the Anacostia River have continually fought for environmental justice.

Communities have rallied against environmental hazards, such as utility generators, landfills, and incinerators, and have prevented their neighborhoods from being destroyed by freeway and bridge construction proposals.

Community organizations, including Seafarers Yacht Club, Earth Conservation Corps, and the Anacostia Watershed Society have worked to encourage a sense of civic engagement and stewardship among local residents.

Left: Earth Conservation Corps (ECC) volunteer LaVette Spears with Mr. Hoots. Since 1992, the ECC has encouraged at-risk youth to take pride in their community and help clean up the Anacostia River.

Anacostia Community Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Background illustration: A hearty native species, the soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) tolerates both seasonal flooding and drought.