

WHAT'S ON



TAP?

NEWS FOR DC WATER CUSTOMERS | VOL. 16 ISSUE 6

General Manager's Message



Dear Customers,

In late May, we celebrated an important milestone that could have tremendous positive consequences for the District and for you – our ratepayers! Please read

this issue to learn more about the agreement to modify our Long Term Control Plan – what we call the DC Clean Rivers Project – to enable a significant investment in green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure includes rain gardens, green roofs, porous pavement and other measures to manage stormwater runoff before it reaches the sewer system. The goal of the Clean Rivers Project is to greatly reduce the combined sewer overflows to our rivers that occur during heavy rains. The previous plan to address the problem relied entirely on building huge underground tunnels. Now, by incorporating green infrastructure, this work will provide additional benefits including increased property values, more beautiful neighborhoods, and local green jobs.

DC Water has established a goal to have 51 percent of new jobs created by the green infrastructure construction and maintenance filled by District residents.

With the expanded economic opportunities, environmental benefits and improved water quality, this new agreement is an accomplishment we can all celebrate. To learn more about the plan, please visit dcwater.com/green.

George S. Hawkins
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Modification to CSO control plan includes large-scale green infrastructure

Local green jobs training program also in the works

Reaching agreement on the modification to the 2005 consent decree, DC Water, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Justice are looking to large-scale green infrastructure (GI) to achieve combined sewer overflow (CSO) controls. The agreement allows for GI installations and other modifications of the Clean Rivers Project for the Potomac River and Rock Creek.

Since 2011, DC Water has explored green infrastructure as a tool to reduce combined sewer overflows. The updated agreement ensures that the Rock Creek and the Potomac River will receive water quality improvements that are equivalent to the previous tunnel-only plan while also supporting natural habitats, enhancing public spaces, and supporting local jobs. The modified construction schedule will also reduce the burden on ratepayers by lessening the impact on future rate increases needed to finance the \$2.6 billion project.

The plan calls for the elimination of the underground tunnel for Rock Creek. Instead stormwater runoff will be managed through GI such as rain gardens, green roofs and porous (allows water to penetrate) pavement. This portion of work will be completed by 2030.



DC Water CEO and GM Hawkins speaks passionately about GI while D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, Reverend Kelly Wilkins and Shawn Garvin, U.S. EPA Regional Administrator.

For the Potomac River, DC Water will build an underground tunnel that holds 30 million gallons of combined stormwater and sewage, to be completed by 2030. DC Water will also construct GI by 2027 and targeted sewer separation by 2023.

The Anacostia River plan, a 13.1 mile-long underground tunnel, remains unchanged. Already under construction, it is on time and on budget for completion in 2022, and will provide environmental benefits as early as 2018.

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser and DC Water CEO and General Manager George S. Hawkins also signed a Memorandum of Agreement that will create an ambitious local jobs program that includes training and certification opportunities for District residents interested in green infrastructure construction and maintenance jobs.



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Save some green by being green

Water is an essential aspect of daily life. But how can people use this vital resource without wasting it?

To conserve water, make sure to turn off any taps not being used and limit your time in the shower. Water-saving features such as low-flow water faucet aerators and low-flow showerheads change the flow of water to reduce the amount used. Installing a water faucet aerator to regular faucets can reduce the flow of water by two gallons per minute and conserves energy by minimizing the amount of hot water used.

A water leak can cost money, waste water and cause property damage. A leaking toilet can waste 1,440 gallons of water a day, translating to more than \$400 on your water bill in one month! Use leak detection tablets to diagnose toilet leaks. (Learn more at bit.ly/toiletvideo)

Saving water is beneficial to the environment and your bottom line.



Green your lawn, not the Bay



When people fertilize their lawns, many don't think about the negative effects the nutrients have on our waterways, including the Chesapeake Bay. Nitrogen and phosphorous promote the growth of algae, which in turn uses up the dissolved oxygen in the water — a necessary ingredient for survival of aquatic life. While

wastewater treatment plants have drastically reduced the amount of nutrients leaving their facilities, the urban and suburban runoff has increased. You can help by not overfertilizing your lawn. If you use fertilizer, here are some tips:

1. Use a fertilizer with a low first number, preferably less than 10, and that contains a minimum of 50 percent slow-release nitrogen, which must be "activated" by microbes in the soil before it can be used by plants. It is also not water soluble.
2. Do not fertilize when rain is expected in the next 24 hours. The nutrients will wash out of your lawn and into the sewer or stormwater system, ultimately ending up in our waterways.
3. For the same reason, never fertilize within 10 feet of streams, creeks, or the Bay.
4. Use a broom to remove fertilizer spilled onto driveways and sidewalks.
5. Plant low nitrogen-using grasses such as alkali grass and many members of the fine fescue family.
6. Use plants that are native (indigenous) to the area, as they thrive in normal weather conditions and usually do not need extra water or fertilizer.

SPOTLIGHT ON ROCK CREEK PARK SONGBIRDS

With an ultimate goal to restore habitat in Rock Creek National Park for migrant and resident birds, the Rock Creek Songbirds initiative performs important work restoring the Rock Creek watershed benefiting people, wildlife and the environment. This work also improves water quality.



Student at Mundo Verde Charter School ready to plant a Northern Red Oak.

Though Rock Creek contains good bird habitat, these places have been shrinking in recent years. The Songbirds initiative partnered with Casey Trees and other organizations to plant more than 200 native oaks, maples, hollies and other species in the Piney Branch section of the park, with seed funding from Audubon's Toyota TogetherGreen program. Trees reduce stormwater runoff, reduce the heat island effect, and provide natural habitats.

Working with the Songbirds project, four DC elementary schools (Mundo Verde Charter, Bancroft, Eaton, and Maret) have introduced a migratory bird component in their curriculum. Mundo Verde and Bancroft students planted demonstration native tree nurseries in front of their schools and these saplings were transplanted to the park.

For more information, please call 301-512-5899 or email jsdryden@comcast.net, or visit the website: audubondc.org/rock-creek-songbirds



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