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| **UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  **REGION III- OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**  **1650 Arch Street Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029**  **Phone - 215/814-5100 Fax - 215/814-5102**  EpaEPA Environmental News |

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**EPA Announces ‘Clean Rivers, Green District Partnership’**

**With District of Columbia and DC Water**

***Green Infrastructure Initiative Supports Sustainable D.C. Goals***

**(PHILADELPHIA** – Dec. 14, 2012) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the District of Columbia, and D.C. Water have joined in a partnership agreement to use green techniques for wet weather pollution control in the District. The “Clean Rivers, Green District” agreement outlines the collaborative steps to support green infrastructure to achieve sustainable stormwater management, more livable communities, and other environmental improvements in the District.

“This agreement demonstrates the parties’ commitment to green infrastructure and establishes a framework for intergovernmental collaboration moving forward,” said EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. “The Clean Rivers, Green District Partnership aims to prevent pollution from coming in contact with rainwater in the first place, while also providing public health, livability, and economic benefits for the District and its residents.”

DC Water has proposed expanding its commitment to the use of green infrastructure as a supplement to its investments in a series of tunnels for the control of combined sewer overflows in the District. The Clean Rivers, Green District Partnership agreement outlines the cooperative steps that EPA and the District will take in support of a green infrastructure demonstration project proposed by DC Water, and how it will relate to the existing federal consent decree commitments for controlling combined sewer overflows.

“This partnership agreement reinforces our unwavering commitment to being responsible stewards of the environment,” says Mayor Vincent C. Gray. “We are charting an innovative and responsible course that creates new job opportunities while also protecting the health of our rivers and residents alike. The District is already at the forefront of the sustainability movement -- we already lead the nation in municipal use of green power, LEED-certified buildings, and many other measures, including green roof installation and other stormwater management practices. This project moves us closer to achieving the ambitious goals in my Sustainable DC vision.”

“As the leading local authority on the environment, the District Department of the Environment is already moving forward on significant green infrastructure projects, such as our RiverSmart Homes initiative,” says DDOE’s interim Director Keith A. Anderson. “This partnership will allow us to greatly expand on our already innovative practices and we look forward to working with DC Water and EPA to ensure that we move closer to achieving Mayor Gray’s goal of making our waterways cleaner and healthier.”

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“This could be the best opportunity to improve the District's environment in a generation,” said DC Water General Manager George S. Hawkins. “I applaud our partners in the federal and District governments for joining us to explore the possibility of a greener future.”

Under the 2005 consent decree, DC Water was permitted to evaluate more decentralized, green techniques as an alternate, or a supplement to structural controls in the Rock Creek and Potomac River drainage areas of the District. DC Water’s proposed demonstration project consists of the design and construction of a number of large-scale, multi-million dollar green infrastructure projects in the Potomac and Rock Creek watersheds.

These projects will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of green infrastructure to retain and control rainwater using techniques that mimic natural control measures to meet water quality goals. If successful, these techniques could be used to help address the combined sewer overflow problems in the District.

The agreement also commits the parties to work together to implement a Green Design Challenge to engage private sector participation in demonstrating and advancing green infrastructure technology in an urban setting. The agreement also seeks to enlist participation by public and private organizationsin a collaborative effort to develop next generation green infrastructure designs, and facilitate participation by academic institution**s** in various aspects of the project.

This multi-year program may require modification of the 2005 combined sewer overflow consent decree. The agreement reiterates the requirements in the consent decree regarding modification. For any modification, DC Water must provide an opportunity for public comment, address any concerns, and present a modification package for EPA and Department of Justice consideration. If EPA and the Department of Justice agree with the modification package, they will recommend modification of the consent decree to the court.

Throughout this initiative, DC Water, EPA, and the District will work together to assess the water quality benefits and impacts of alternative green controls to ensure that they meet EPA’s expectations and Clean Water Act requirements. The parties will also engage other critical stakeholders, such as non-governmental organizations, to assist and help assess progress.

To view the agreement: <http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/pdf/pdf_chesbay/GreenPartnshipAgreement.pdf>

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