

# RainPay's SRC-Generating Rain Garden Project at the Progressive National Baptist Convention Headquarters

**What:** A rain garden was installed to generate Stormwater Retention Credits (SRCs) by retaining runoff from the rooftop, parking lot, and driveway at the Progressive National Baptist Convention. In a 1.7-inch storm, the rain garden retains over 11,000 gallons of stormwater runoff that would otherwise drain untreated directly into Watts Branch. The District's Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) certified the project through its SRC Trading Program, and the rain garden generates 11,165 credits annually.

**Who:** The Anacostia Waterfront Trust built the rain garden through its RainPay program in partnership with the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

**Why:** The rain garden reduces runoff that degrades Watts Branch and the Anacostia River and helps make a more sustainable DC.

**When:** The project was certified in May 2017.



**WHY IS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPORTANT?** Stormwater runoff carries harmful pollutants like pet waste, oil, grease, sediment, and litter into the District's waterbodies through storm drains or directly via over-land flow. Green infrastructure (GI) like rain gardens allows stormwater to be absorbed into the ground and soaked up by plants. GI is especially beneficial in areas draining to small streams like Watts Branch, since the banks of these small streams can be heavily eroded by stormwater, toppling trees as streambanks crumble and burying aquatic habitat with sediment. By improving protection for Watts Branch, the Anacostia River, into which Watts Branch flows, also benefits. GI can also help reduce the urban heat island effect while improving air quality, wildlife habitat, and climate resiliency. Local communities benefit through beautification and an increase in green space.

**WHAT IS THE SRC TRADING PROGRAM?** The District's stormwater management regulations require large construction and redevelopment projects to install GI to reduce runoff. Properties can meet up to half of their regulatory requirement by purchasing SRCs from other properties that install GI voluntarily. This allows regulated properties to pursue more cost-effective compliance methods and provides financial incentives for properties to voluntarily install GI. Learn more about DOEE's SRC Trading Program at [doee.dc.gov/src](https://doee.dc.gov/src).

**WHY DID THE ANACOSTIA WATERFRONT TRUST TAKE ON THIS PROJECT?** The Trust's RainPay program aims to accelerate the pace of cleaning up the Anacostia River and tangibly support DC's lower income communities through participating in the SRC program. The Trust partners with houses of worship, affordable housing providers, and other community nonprofits and small businesses to build GI projects in locations where they will have maximum environmental benefit to the Anacostia River, while increasing green-sector employment and providing economic benefits to the Trust and partner organizations through the sale of SRCs.

To further spread the environmental and economic benefits of restoring the Anacostia River, the Trust also provides GI training opportunities for community residents. Learn more at [rainpay.org](https://rainpay.org).

**IS THERE A REASON THIS SITE WAS SELECTED FOR THE TRUST'S FIRST PROJECT?** For the first RainPay project, the Trust thought it was important to find a site that was in the right place and with the right partner. RainPay focuses its projects in the most ecologically sensitive areas of the Anacostia watershed, specifically in the 2/3 of the District known as the MS4. In the MS4, stormwater typically drains to the District's waterbodies with little or no treatment. By contrast, large tunnels are currently being built to capture stormwater runoff that overflows through the combined sewer system (CSS). This makes GI projects in the MS4 more beneficial for District waterbodies. The rain garden installation is located in the MS4 area on a hill draining to Watts Branch, a key tributary of the Anacostia River. Watts Branch has also been identified by the Climate Ready DC Plan as vulnerable to increased flooding due to climate change. Learn more about Climate Ready DC at [doee.dc.gov/climateready](https://doee.dc.gov/climateready).

The Trust's partner on the project is the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC), a nationally significant convention of Baptist churches representing more than 2,500,000 American Baptists. The project is located at PNBC's headquarters in Ward 7 on the site of the former Nannie Helen Burroughs School for Women and Girls. The PNBC campus is the current home of the Monroe School, providing an opportunity for the project to add to the educational experience of students. The partners plan to deepen their collaboration by recruiting PNBC-affiliated churches to participate in the RainPay program.

**WHAT MOTIVATED THE PROGRESSIVE NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION TO PARTNER WITH THE TRUST ON THIS PROJECT?**

PNBC was interested in partnering with the Trust for many reasons. The Trust did the heavy lifting, providing the funds to build the project and managing the design, construction, and maintenance of the facility. By utilizing the SRC program, the Trust can not only provide these GI projects at no cost to landowners, but can also provide a revenue stream through lease payments for the land that hosts the project. It was also an opportunity for PNBC to demonstrate leadership in the community and to build a project that beautifies a section of their property while contributing to a healthier community. Additionally, as a part of the project, PNBC is now enrolled in RiverSmart Rewards, a DOEE program which allows District property owners to earn discounts on their water bills by reducing stormwater runoff through GI. Learn more about RiverSmart programs at [doee.dc.gov/riversmart](https://doee.dc.gov/riversmart).

*"We at the Progressive National Baptist Convention are excited to be partnering with the Anacostia Waterfront Trust on this beautiful rain garden. We think it is important because it is part of our mission to be "a voice for the voiceless" in this community, not only on those social justice issues that we are often very vocal about, but also on issues around sustainability and climate justice. To that end, we are very happy to be partnering on this project because it shows that we care not only about our local community but also that we want to be good stewards of all God's creation."*  
- Dr. Timothy Tee Boddie, PNBC

**WERE THERE ANY OTHER PARTNERS ON THIS PROJECT?**

The project was designed by Greening Urban LLC and constructed by Environmental Quality Resources LLC. Casey Trees donated three river birch trees for the project. Anacostia Riverkeeper and Green Scheme will be conducting a series of educational workshops at the site. Funding for the project was provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Altria Group, Inc. through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund.

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

