



Watershed Partners Newsletter

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

January 2024

Dear Watershed Partners,

Happy 2024! This first newsletter of the year is overflowing with announcements about new initiatives, opportunities for local and federal funding, and events in and around the watershed.

This month marks the 14th anniversary of the District's [Bag Law](#), which went into effect on January 1, 2010. The law's 5-cent fee led to a significant drop in the amount of plastic bags in our waterways, which should decrease even more now because our neighbors in Prince George's County just went a step further and [banned plastic bags entirely!](#) Thanks to such laws, we will keep our shared watershed and the river cleaner, safer, and healthier for all.



Announcing the new Office of District Waterways Management

The Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) is thrilled to announce the launch of the new Office of District Waterways Management within the Watershed Protection Division! The purpose of the Office is to plan, promote, and facilitate stakeholder cooperation for the diverse uses of and access to the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, the Washington Channel, and adjacent property. Our DOEE colleague Kara Pennino will lead the Office as the *Waterways Administrator*, bringing her background in sustainable urban planning, stakeholder engagement, and knowledge of the District's waterways. We invite you to connect with Kara at kara.pennino@dc.gov to learn more about the office and share your goals for our waterways.

The DC Council established the Office under the [Office of District Waterways Management Establishment Act of 2022 \(Law 24-336\)](#).

Green Zone Environmental Program – RFA coming soon!

DOEE anticipates releasing a Request for Applications (RFA) in the coming weeks for eligible entities to develop projects for the [Green Zone Environmental Program \(GZEP\)](#). GZEP is a summer workforce development program for District youth ages 14-24 that educates and trains the participants through diverse activities focused on green job skills.



Eligible applicants should prioritize establishing or deepening their connections to the environment, becoming aware of the impacts of stormwater runoff in District waterways, and conducting meaningful outreach to District residents. Please check [DOEE's Grants and Funding Opportunities webpage](#) in the coming weeks for the RFA and additional information.

Clean Waterways: MLK Day of Service 2024 on January 15



Ring in the New Year with Anacostia Riverkeeper and Pope Branch Park Restoration Alliance at our annual MLK Day of Service cleanup! This event is rain or shine and all supplies are provided. Wear layers, closed-toe shoes, and clothing you can get dirty in.

When: January 15, 2024, from 10 AM – 2 PM

Where: Pope Branch Park, 2900 M Place SE

Register [here](#), and complete the liability waiver [here](#). For questions, contact info@anacostiariverkeeper.org.

Environmental Justice Academy 2024 – applications due January 20, 2024

The Anacostia Community Museum's [Center for Environmental Justice](#) is now accepting applications for the [Environmental Justice Academy \(EJA\)](#).

The EJA is open to young women and non-binary youth of color, ages 14-18, from communities along the Anacostia River and its tributaries in Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland, and the District. Students in northern Virginia are also encouraged to apply. The Anacostia Community Museum will provide an honorarium for each participant.

Applications for the EJA are open through January 20, 2024. The student application can be accessed [here](#). Please spread the word to those who may be interested.

For more information go [here](#) or contact Alayna Stovall at stovallap@si.edu.

Vendor Forum on February 28! Restoration, LID, NEPA, and more!

The **DOEE Vendor Forum** will connect businesses with government decision makers, prime contractors, and information essential to successfully conducting business with the District of Columbia.



When: Wednesday, February 28th, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (Lunch will NOT be provided, however participants are welcome to bring their own lunch)

Where: DOEE Headquarters, 1200 1st Street NE, Washington DC, 20002

Details: There is no fee to attend but advance registration is required, [register now](#).

Due to limited capacity we ask that each organization send no more than two representatives. Hope to see you there!

Questions? Contact Elaine Vidal at elaine.vidal@dc.gov

EPA Community Change grants – rolling basis through November 21, 2024

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a new [Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants program](#), with awards up to \$10 million to \$20 million each. Approximately \$2 billion total in Inflation Reduction Act funds are available to benefit disadvantaged communities through projects that reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity to address environmental and climate justice challenges.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through November 21, 2024. If you have questions after reviewing the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#), contact Janani.Shankaran@dc.gov.

RiverSmart Schools – deadline is March 1, 2024

The RiverSmart Schools program is for K-12 students and teachers of DC Public Schools, DC Public Charter Schools, and parochial schools. It provides teachers with training and financial resources to install conservation sites (like rain gardens, cisterns, shade trees) and outdoor learning labs on their school grounds. Students, teachers, and the community participate in the design, installation, and maintenance of the sites, becoming stewards of the land and helping to protect the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers and Chesapeake Bay from nonpoint source pollution.

The application is due March 1, 2024, and is available [here](#).

Learn more about RiverSmart Schools [here](#). Please contact P. Trinh Doan at patricia.doan@dc.gov with questions.

Apply for a 2024 District Sustainability or Clean Energy Award

The application period is now open for the 2024 District Sustainability Awards and the 2024 Clean Energy DC Award. Individuals, and organizations are encouraged to apply. The awards highlight businesses, individuals, and organizations working toward a more sustainable DC.



Application instructions and eligibility requirements can be found [here](#): [District Sustainability Awards | doee \(dc.gov\)](#).

The application period closes on January 30, 2024. If you have questions or need help filling out the form, contact Mary Lynn Wilhere at (202) 535-1939 or at marylynn.wilhere@dc.gov.

In case you missed it

Check out some recent local and international coverage of the watershed, including some mentions and appearances by DOEE!

- **BBC News:** DOEE's Andy Oetman is featured in [this segment](#) about heat in urban areas and how infrastructure can help keep cities cooler (December 2023)
- **Washington Post:** [Sewers are overflowing everywhere. One solution is right in your backyard.](#) (December 10, 2023)
- **Washington Post:** [The nation's capital, built on water, struggles to keep from drowning.](#) (December 19, 2023)

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