
Anacostia Watershed Messaging

Prince George's County Focus Group Summary

*Developed by Skeo Solutions for
Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments,
the Anacostia Watershed Messaging Work Group and
Prince George's County Department of Environment*

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INTRODUCTION

The Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) was awarded National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) technical assistance to gather community input on improving the effectiveness of existing public education, messaging and communications about Anacostia watershed restoration programs. To support the project, NFWF technical assistance provider, Skeo Solutions worked closely with the COG to conduct background research, coordinate with local governments in the Anacostia watershed to design the approach, design and conduct focus groups with residents and summarize the findings and outcomes in this report.

The COG staff and the Anacostia Watershed Messaging Work Group (Work Group), which includes representatives from Prince George’s and Montgomery County, MD and the District of Columbia, plan to integrate outcomes from the focus groups into the development of a more effective regional messaging campaign that better connects with residents and increases their awareness of recreational opportunities and restoration efforts throughout the Anacostia watershed. For this focus group effort, the Work Group wanted to:

- understand the perceptions and awareness levels of Prince George’s County residents living in the watershed,
- evaluate the reach of the recent ‘Year of the Anacostia’ messaging campaign, and
- learn how their messaging and promotional materials could better reach more diverse residents across the watershed in the future.

Previous Community Research

In 2012, Lake Research Partners in collaboration with the National Wildlife Federation produced a report entitled: *Restoring the Anacostia River* for the Summit Fund of Washington. This undertaking sought to understand how to build broad-based support for Anacostia River restoration among people who live near the Anacostia River and to figure out what would be the best approach to achieve ongoing public support for progress with restoration efforts. The Summit report provided insights from four focus group meetings with residents of Montgomery County, Prince George’s County, and Washington, DC, and from thirty interviews with key stakeholders in the Anacostia River region. Findings from the 2012 report include:

- Anacostia River restoration efforts are focused in D.C., and river revitalization is also focused in D.C. (Navy Yard park, National’s Stadium, Southwest Waterfront redevelopment).
- Maryland residents don’t feel as closely connected to the Anacostia River.
- Prevailing negative perceptions based on old information and narrative.
- Not enough publicity about progress on river restoration because the prevailing perceptions were that the Anacostia River was still among the most polluted rivers in the nation.
- People don’t understand the sources of river contamination and how they can take action.
- Civic engagement around ongoing river restoration is highly desired.

Two other surveys were conducted around Litter Research in Montgomery County (2016), and perceptions about the willingness to address litter (2011) in the District of Columbia rivers and waterways.

2018 Prince George’s County Focus Group Approach

At the request of the COG, Skeo’s technical assistance included meetings with the Messaging Work Group and Prince George’s County Department of the Environment to inform the process and development of an agenda and materials for two focus groups that were convened in Prince George’s County in collaboration with the County’s Department of the Environment on October 23 & 24, 2018. The focus group meeting approach included conducting a survey at the beginning and the end of the meeting and a facilitated discussion among participants. The findings are discussed in the following section.

An invitation to participate in a focus group was shared via Prince George’s County organizational leaders to assist with identifying participants and an open call for focus group participants on social media platforms. The invitation included that dinner would be provided and participants would receive a \$50 Visa gift card for participating. Nextdoor provided the single largest number of responses. Interested residents were invited to complete an application that included questions about demographics, availability, place of residence and prior environmental or watershed knowledge. Two hundred and twenty-one applications were completed, and 40 participants were selected to attend the focus groups. Twenty-two County residents who lived adjacent to, or very nearby waterways within the Anacostia watershed participated in the focus groups over two evening sessions. Focus group participants expressed appreciation for the incentives offered during and at the conclusion of the Focus groups.



Participant demographics are presented in Table 1 and closely resemble Prince George’s County demographics. Demographics were not tracked for each question nor for the answers provided during the focus group discussion.

IMAGE 1. TWO FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

TABLE 1. FOCUS GROUP DEMOGRAPHICS

Race & Ethnicity	Observed Gender	Age
63% African/Black/African American 18% Hispanic/ Latino (Mexican, Salvadorian, Columbian, etc.) 18% White/Caucasian 6% Asian/ South Asian 6% Native American 6% Middle Eastern or North African 0% Pacific Islander	50% Female 36% Male 6% Transgender	Participants were between the ages of 25 – 71 with an average age of 39 years.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

This report summarizes the key findings from the focus group responses including participant perceptions of the Anacostia Watershed and participant views about opportunities and barriers to access and enjoy the Anacostia River and tributaries. The focus groups also discussed their views about stewardship and their perceptions about outreach efforts and communications strategies (see Attachment A for focus group meeting agenda). Focus group participants were asked to complete a supplemental pre- and post-survey to better understand their perceptions prior to and after their participation in the focus group (see Attachment B for supplemental survey form). This section summarizes questions and responses from the pre-survey, the focus group discussions, and the post-survey responses. The report concludes with a set of recommendations for the Work Group to support their future Anacostia watershed messaging campaigns and communications strategies.

Pre-Survey Responses

The questions and responses from the pre-survey are summarized below.

Watershed Issues

Focus group participants ranked how important 10 issues were to them. The overall results of the ranking process are presented below, from most important to least important:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Litter (most important) | 6. Employment |
| 2. Economic Development | 7. Crime & Safety |
| 3. Recycling & Waste | 8. Education |
| 4. Housing | 9. Animal Welfare |
| 5. Clean Rivers & Streams | 10. Health Care (least important) |

Watershed Activities

Participants were asked to circle any activity that they thought they could do in Prince George's County near or along a body of water. Their responses ranked from most to least frequently selected include:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Bike/ Ride trails | 5. Visit winery/brewery |
| 2. Shop at farmers market | 6. Boat ride/kayak/canoe |
| 3. Art show or museum | 7. Birdwatching/wildlife viewing |
| 4. Go to club/dance | 8. Bus tour of historic sites/memorials |

When asked which activities could be done within the Anacostia watershed, participants frequently mentioned several, if not all the activities. The most commonly mentioned activities included birdwatching/wildlife, bike/ride trails and boat ride/canoe. The other activities, mentioned with approximately the same frequency, included winery/brewery, bus tour, art show or museum, club/dance and farmers market.

News Sources

Table 2 summarizes the top news sources participants selected on the survey and how they receive County Department of the Environment or related environmental news: e.g. trash/recycling changes due to inclement weather, flooding or stormwater practice rebates.

TABLE 2. FOCUS GROUP NEWS SOURCES

Top 5 News Sources	Environmental News Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social media ▪ Television (National/local news/public access) ▪ Community newsletters or listservs ▪ Electronic newsletters (email) ▪ Radio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social media (7) ▪ Next Door (6) ▪ Regular mail (5) ▪ Neighborhood associations (4) ▪ Internet searches (4) ▪ Inclement weather text messages (3) ▪ TV (2) ▪ Newspaper ▪ Radio ▪ Flyers ▪ Email

Social media was the most commonly selected news source for focus group participants *under* 30 and in their 30s. Focus group participants in their 40s selected both social media and television as their most common news sources. Television was the most popular news source for focus group participants over 50.

Regarding sources of environmental news, participants *under* 30 most commonly mentioned social media and Next Door. Participants in their 30s most frequently mentioned Next Door. Participants in their 40s most frequently mentioned social media and regular mail. There was no common favorite among participants over 50.

Focus Group Responses

The following is a summary of the facilitated discussion portion of the focus group meeting (see Attachment C for detailed responses per focus group discussion).

Activities

When participants were asked to share two activities they had done in or along any waterway they listed the following activities.

TABLE 3. FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITIES ALONG WATERWAYS

Mentioned more than once	Mentioned once
Swimming (6) Fishing (5) Waterslides (4) Kayaking (4) Sailing/boating (3) Cycling (2) Jet skiing (2)	Canoeing Clean-up days Day dreaming Exploring nature Family gatherings Jogging Paddle boarding Picnicking Restaurants by the water Rowing/crew Scuba Shopping Traveling Tubing Whale watching/nature watching

Perceptions

When participants were asked to share 2-3 words to describe their perceptions of their local waterway, they offered the following positive and negative responses:

TABLE 4. FOCUS GROUP PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL WATERWAYS

Positive Perceptions	Negative Perceptions
Abundant	Brackish
Beautiful	Desolate
Home	Divides geographies
Majestic	Dirty
Neighborhood	Dull
Transportation	Dumping ground
Wildlife	Inaccessible
	Isolated
	Lack of accessibility
	Lack of attractions
	Polluted
	Remote
	Scary
	Sediment
	Trashy
	Ugly
	Unappealing
	Unsafe

When participants were asked to share 2-3 words that describe their perception of the Anacostia River, their responses included the following:

TABLE 5. FOCUS GROUP PERCEPTIONS OF THE ANACOSTIA RIVER

Positive Perceptions	Negative Perceptions
A project	Dangerous
Annual cleanups	Dirty
Better than before	Dull
Cleaner than before	Forgotten
Improved	Hurting
Potential	Infested
Some revitalization	Neglected
Vast	Old
	Polluted
	Underutilized

Participants compared how the words listed about their local waterways were similar or different from the words they shared about the Anacostia watershed. Overall, participants felt that the words they used in both questions were similar (including beautiful, dirty, dull, dumping ground, inaccessible, isolated, lack of accessibility, lack of attractions, polluted, potential, remote, scary, sediment, trashy, ugly, unappealing, unsafe) but noted the following differences:

- The Anacostia is less remote [than local waterways].
- Local waterways include the Chesapeake Bay, which they equate with expensive real estate.
- Local waterways feel like a more solvable problem, as opposed to the Anacostia River which feels huge!
- The Anacostia River in the District has more restoration and commercial development activity underway. There is more care, maintenance and attention going towards the River in D.C. versus their local Anacostia waterways in Prince George’s County.

Watershed Understanding

When asked where they thought the Anacostia river system was, most participants thought it was in Washington, D.C. or the DC, Maryland, Virginia (DMV) region. One participant asked if the Anacostia had tributaries that come into Prince George’s County.

Participants were asked if they had heard of the term ‘watershed’ before and the majority (13) said that they had never heard of the term; a few (6) had heard the term but were not sure what it meant, and four participants shared what they understood the term to mean. After this question and discussion, participants were asked to place a dot on a map of Prince George’s County that highlighted the Anacostia and other watersheds in the County (Image 2 & 3). The majority of participants shared that they did not realize that they lived in the Anacostia watershed..

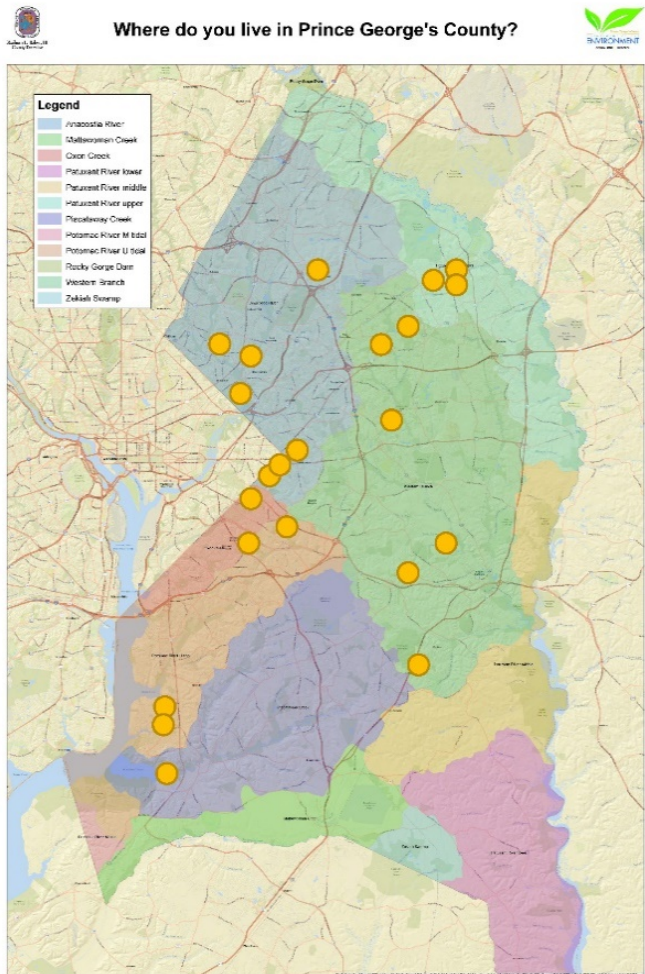


IMAGE 2. FOCUS GROUP LOCATOR MAP



IMAGE 3. PARTICIPANTS PLACING DOT ON WATERSHED MAP

Once participants identified where they lived in relation to the Anacostia watershed, they were asked if they thought that living in the Anacostia watershed influences their quality of life. Participants felt that living in the Anacostia watershed negatively affects their quality of life. These are the reasons they gave:

- If the water was cleaner, I would spend time in it and allow my children to swim in it.
- Mosquito infestation limits the amount of time that people can spend near local waterways.
- The lack of cleanliness and overall appeal of the Anacostia watershed negatively affects nearby property values and limits the number of attractions available in Prince George's County.
- Regular flooding and sewage overflows impact recreational areas and attractions, contributing to why they seem unappealing.

Opportunities & Barriers to Enjoy the Watershed

When asked what motivates them to visit local waterways or waterfronts, participants stated:

- Attractions: Special events, food/restaurants, entertainment/music, shopping, happy hour and advertisements/publicity
- Access to Natural Places: peaceful, beauty, ease of access, scenery, calming
- Outdoor Recreation: boating (kayak/canoe/paddle board rental facilities, small boats, etc.), hiking and trails along the water
- Facilities: Clean and safe

The top three barriers to visiting the water were:

1. Lack of access to waterways and facilities
2. Lack of information about events, safety, facilities and history
3. The negative appearance of the waterways and facilities (perceived as not clean, safe and accessible to people who live nearby)

Other barriers included:

- Irregularity of events
- Lack of watershed event promotion
- Lack of maintained and updated recreation and rental facilities
- Lack of handicap access
- Inability to swim
- Mosquitoes, weather related flooding and odors
- Lack of education on how clean the Anacostia waterways are
- Perceptions that the waterway and outdoor recreation is not for local residents
- Insufficient development that includes/protects interests of County residents
- Lack of interest

When asked what participants would most like to preserve or improve about local waterways, participants identified the following themes:

- Accurate and up-to-date health and safety information to align public perception with the current watershed status.
- Protecting and enhancing local waterways to increase Prince George's County resident use and interest in the Anacostia watershed.

- Creating local, community-based attractions for County residents versus creating attractions that are commercialized or for tourists.
- Increase incentives and programs for home, business and municipal stormwater management, including green and equitable development regulations for new developments.
- Increase opportunities for County residents to learn the local waterway history and create opportunities to celebrate the County’s cultural diversity and vibrancy.

Stewardship Opportunities

Education was identified as the primary role for the County in partnership with residents and community organizations to protect the Anacostia watershed and its waterways. Participants were interested in taking the conversation about the Anacostia watershed deeper into communities that live in and around the watershed, including:

- Have cleanup days combined with an educational aspect.
- Increase watershed education in County schools focusing on how individual actions impact water quality and how they can decrease stormwater pollution.
- Promote civic responsibility to protect local waterways and adopt alternatives to polluting activities.
- Word of mouth education.
- Encourage residents to attend local government meetings.
- Tell the story of the Anacostia watershed and its importance to Prince George’s County.

When asked if they had heard of Anacostia watershed restoration or conservation efforts, participants had only heard of the Anacostia Watershed Society. Other organizations or events mentioned included:

- University alumni association cleanup days
- DC Waterways Swimmable by 2025
- Stormwater fee

When asked what would motivate participants personally to support watershed restoration activities, the responses included:

- More easily accessible and up-to-date information.
- Information on how individual and collective actions impact the Anacostia watershed and more programs that support household and neighborhood stewardship efforts in the watershed.
 - Examples included building rain gardens and installing rain barrels.
- Visible effort from County and state government as well as developers to protect the watershed and make smarter decisions about growth and development that respects, prioritizes and preserves the County’s natural environment.
- County meetings in accessible locations held at times when people who work can attend.
- Educational materials highlighting how watershed restoration supports community priorities and improves quality of life including: pest control, flood reduction, overgrowth maintenance, safer, more frequent access points.

Outreach Communications

Year of the Anacostia Video

Participants were shown a 30-second video developed to celebrate the Year of the Anacostia campaign and to promote the Anacostia watershed. After viewing, participants were asked what in the video resonated with them. Overwhelmingly participants enjoyed the video and liked it that it was short, had minimal words and looked inviting. Comments included:

- The people and children looked happy and safe.
- The river and surroundings were clean.
- A wide variety of activities were highlighted.
- It was bright, happy, uplifting and instills a sense of local pride.
- Great video for social media.
- It was culturally relevant, informative and eye catching.



IMAGE 4. PARTICIPANTS VIEWING VIDEO

Participants shared what they would like to see added to this or future videos:

- Add a map to show where features are in the watershed.
- Include activities like picnicking, barbecuing, nightlife, jumping and swimming in the water, yoga, people talking and on-water activities.
- Include additional types of people like police, park rangers, pets, people with different types of mobility and rental equipment vendors.
- Build on this video to create a series of videos that delve deeper into how to access locations, what amenities are available, the history of the watershed's pollution and restoration efforts.

Participants were also asked about the types of information that would help to change the way they think about the Anacostia watershed. Responses included:

- More information about the extent of the watershed in Prince George's County and creating more local connectivity and pride about the watershed.
- Identifying parks, activities, events and places for waterfront access that currently exist, and those that are planned in the future in Prince George's County within the Anacostia watershed.

Participants felt that there needed to be a more targeted effort to share, demonstrate and publicize the positive improvements that have been made in the Anacostia watershed, especially within Prince George's County. Tell the good news story about improved conditions in Prince George's County Anacostia watershed waterways, including how water quality metrics compare to other counties and the District in the watershed. They suggested the following:

- Better inform residents about how individual household behavior impacts the Anacostia watershed and river.
- Host a public dialogue about what needs to be done for the Anacostia watershed in Prince George's County to be successfully restored.
- Share more information about the history of the watershed including the diverse cultures of the area and the history of human settlement, growth and development, and how the watershed became polluted.

- Share what are the future scenarios for the watershed based on what is or is not accomplished.
- Develop a communications strategy that shares more positive watershed stories including youth-centered information, intergenerational stories and successful restoration stories.

Year of the Anacostia Icons

Participants were shown a series of icons without words or description, developed by the Year of the Anacostia campaign (see Image 5). They were asked to circle the icons that resonated the most for them, as reported in Table 5.

TABLE 5. FOCUS GROUP ICON VOTING

Icon Representation	# of Votes
Biking	15
Hiking	13
Grilling	11
Paddling	10
Yoga	9
Birding	8
Fishing	8
Swimming	6
Golfing	4
Playing	4



IMAGE 5. ICONS WITHOUT DESCRIPTIONS

Participants were shown the same series of icons with descriptive words in black and white (see Image 6). While participants shared that the words did not change which icons resonated the most with them, the overwhelming majority preferred the icons with the words. They shared the following additional suggestions about the icons:

- Liked the icon design and would like to see them on maps and as signs to show which activities can be done in various recreational areas.
- Prefer each icon have its own color.
- Thought it useful to integrate the icons into promotional videos.
- The hiking, playing, or birding icons did not resonate with some, and they recommended using different symbols for those activities.
- They suggested these additional icons be developed:
 - Boats or ferries
 - Dining
 - Emergency area
 - Growing/gardening
 - Native vegetation
 - Maps
 - Pet area
 - Picnic
 - Points of interest
 - Restaurants
 - Restrooms
 - Roller skating
 - Skate park
 - Sports facilities
 - Trails
 - Trash/recycling
 - Wildlife nature watching
 - Museums/art/cultural points of interest



IMAGE 6. ICONS WITH DESCRIPTIONS

Closing Reflections

At the end of the session, participants were asked several questions to reflect on the discussion and to understand how their perceptions may have shifted.

When asked what they had learned about the Anacostia River, its tributaries and the watershed that changed how they relate to the watershed, participants shared these general thoughts:

- The Anacostia watershed is not just in Washington, D.C. but is also a part of Prince George's County and the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- The watershed is getting cleaner and is not as polluted as originally thought.
- There are active conservation efforts working to clean-up the watershed.
- There are activities that are available to do in the County throughout the watershed.

Finally, participants were asked if they had their ideal watershed, how would that change their lives:

- I would visit the watershed more, be more active close to where I live and do more outdoor activities.
- I would spend more time and money near the watershed.
- It would increase the value of my property and attract businesses and tax revenue.
- It would improve the aesthetics of where I live and make me want to take better care of my surroundings.
- I would more appreciative, respectful and prouder of where I live.
- I would have more positive examples of water-based activities that I could do, and it would improve the way I value my personal health and wellbeing by participating in more water-based activities.
- It would increase civic engagement and visitors to the area.
- It would bring the community together around a common appreciation, purpose and vision for the County.

Post-Survey Responses

The participants completed a brief survey at the end of the focus group discussion (see Attachment D). When asked how the focus group discussion may have influenced their perceptions of the watershed, the participants shared the following general responses:

- I am more aware now of where I live and what is happening to improve the watershed.
- This discussion has inspired me to want to do more to both protect the watershed and be more active around water-based activities.
- I would like to explore the Anacostia watershed more and now have ideas for activities to do when family and friends come to visit.
- I am more interested in the history and culture of the watershed.
- I am more hopeful knowing that something is being done to improve the watershed.

Participants were also asked to share if there was anything new or different that they will do related to the Anacostia watershed as a result of what they heard during the focus group. The responses can be summarized as:

- I will be more mindful and take actions to be a better steward.
- I will be more involved with watershed efforts, including looking up meetings and cleanup days to join.
- I will be more active within the watershed and seek out water-based and recreation activities near where I live instead of going elsewhere.

THEMES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on focus groups responses, the following themes emerged for consideration by Prince George's County Department of the Environment and the Messaging Work Group. It is important to note that these considerations are based on the limited sample size of 22 participants.

- There was a strong consensus among participants that Anacostia River and Watershed cleanup and revitalization efforts are focused in DC.
- None of the participants had heard of Year of the Anacostia campaign and were not aware of related restoration efforts in Prince George's County. Many had out-of-date information that was decades old.
- There is a general lack of access and knowledge of recreational amenities in the County, and participants demonstrated a strong interest to know more and to have up-to-date information readily available and easily accessible.
- There is interest in doing more outdoor activities in the Anacostia Watershed, but a lack of knowledge about what activities are available where is preventing people from experiencing the watershed. For example, many participants did not know of the Anacostia Waterfront Park in Bladensburg.
- Younger generations (under 30) who live in the County and frequently use social media are not seeing Anacostia social media pushes. They asked what sites the social media pushes were utilizing.
- There was strong interest in community-based equitable development practices and developing amenities within the watershed designed for Prince George's County residents that preserve and protect local waterways and other natural resources. Restoration and development need to consider the environmental impacts and meet the needs of current County residents instead of solely thinking about building its tax base by creating riverfront tourist attractions.
- Participants expressed interest in future conversations with the County Commission to give input into and participate in County land-use and planning processes to better integrate development and natural resource protection in Prince George's County.
- There is a divide between "PG County" (inner ring of I-495, often called DC's '9th Ward') and "Prince George's County". The two areas represent different socio-economic strata. PG County and especially Capitol Heights residents feel they are not being included in recreation, restoration and conservation efforts.

Based on the input from focus group participants, Skeo suggests the following recommendations to increase awareness, engagement, appreciation and stewardship of the Anacostia Watershed in Prince George's County:

- Consider regular Nextdoor posts with multi-media information regarding the Anacostia watershed, Prince George's recreation events and opportunities for residents to participate in future input meetings. Many participants use Nextdoor to receive news and County updates. For example, Nextdoor provided the single largest number of intake surveys for the focus groups.
- Consider a multi-media campaign with videos, maps, photos and historical references to tell the story of the Anacostia watershed's past, present and future targeted at Prince George's County residents.
 - Use maps to highlight current recreational amenities and their locations,
 - Identify what amenities are available through the icons that have been developed and consider developing additional icons based on participant feedback.

- Focus promotion and advertising of the videos to a Prince George’s County audience using social media outlets like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat to reach multiple audiences within the County.
- Provide more easily accessible information; review existing website and online resources to determine if consolidating resources and activities could improve access to educational and event information.

Work with local decision-makers to:

- Adjust meeting times, locations and other logistics which could limit resident input in decision-making.
- Identify equitable development practices for restoring and revitalizing the Anacostia watershed within Prince George’s County.
- Promote Anacostia watershed assets to County residents versus appealing to other localities or tourists.
- Consider hosting neighborhood events close to the waterways to “Know their Watershed” and get residents to the river and waterfronts.
- Develop a strong sense of County pride regarding the vast natural resources throughout the County.
- Host regular and frequent events to promote consistent use of the watershed amenities.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Focus Group Agenda

Anacostia Watershed Regional Messaging Campaign Focus Group Meeting Agenda

Purpose: Gather perceptions of the Anacostia River, watershed and local waterways.

1. **Reception (10 mins)**
 - Participants gather refreshments and complete survey.
2. **Introduction / Icebreaker Activity (20 mins)**
 - Welcome, meeting purpose and overview of agenda.
 - Introduce ground rules and roles.
 - Participants introduce themselves: Share your name and two favorite activities you have done in or along a waterway.
3. **Perceptions of the River (25 mins)**
4. **Opportunities and Barriers to Enjoy the River (25 mins)**
5. **Stewardship Opportunities (30 mins)**
6. **Closing (10 mins)**
 - Participants complete survey and receive gift card.

Anacostia Messaging Focus Group Ground Rules

- **One mic, one voice** – only one person speaks at a time
- **Step up, step back** – be aware of how much, or how little, you are speaking
- **Active listening and participation** – we want your full attention and involvement for the whole meeting
- **Use “I” statements** – speak from your personal experience and opinions honestly
- **Don’t diss my opinion** – allow others to express their thoughts and opinions freely without judgement
- **What’s discussed here, stays here** – commit to not sharing what we talk about
- **Have fun!**

B. Focus Group Supplemental Survey

Prince George's County Anacostia Watershed Messaging Supplemental Survey

Please complete this portion **before** the opening of the focus group

Meeting Date: _____

1. How did you hear about this meeting?

2. What is your age? _____
3. What is your observed gender? Male / Female / Other

4. What is your race (Check any that apply)?
____ African/African American/Black ____ Hispanic/Latino (Mexican, Salvadoran, Columbian, etc.)
____ Asian/South Asian ____ Native American ____ Pacific Islander
____ Middle Eastern or North African ____ White/Caucasian Additional: _____

5. Please share which issues are most and least important to you by ranking the items below 1 to 10, where 1 is the least important issue and 10 is the most important issue.
 - a. Education _____
 - b. Clean rivers & streams _____
 - c. Animal welfare _____
 - d. Employment _____
 - e. Litter _____
 - f. Crime & Safety _____
 - g. Health care _____
 - h. Housing _____
 - i. Recycling & Waste _____
 - j. Economic development _____

6. Of the activities listed below, which do you think you can do in Prince George's County? Circle all that apply.
 - a. Bike/ Ride trails
 - b. Visit winery/brewery
 - c. Bus Tour of sites/memorials
 - d. Boat ride/ Kayak/ Canoe
 - e. Art show or museum
 - f. Go to club/ dance
 - e. Shop at farmers market
 - h. Birdwatching/ wildlife viewing

7. Looking at the activities that you circled above, which of these activities do you think you can do within the Anacostia watershed? Why or why not?

Thank you for your participation!

1

8. Of the following, please check the top 3 sources where you tend to get MOST of your information about what is going on in the County. For each of your top 3 sources, **please write down your primary source for information to the right of the category.**

- Television (National/local news/public access)
- Local Newspapers
- Ethnic newspapers (e.g. Afro)
- Community newsletters or listservs
- Electronic newsletters (email)
- In the mail (brochures, flyers, etc.)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Text messaging
- Radio
- Word of mouth
- Other

9. How do you receive news regarding the County Department of the Environment or other related environmental news such as recycling/trash collection changes due to inclement weather, flooding, or stormwater practice rebates, to name a few?

*Please complete this portion **at the end** of the focus group*

1. Now that you are aware of where you work, live or play in relation to the Anacostia River, how has this information influenced your perceptions of the watershed?

2. Is there anything that you will do that is new or different related to the Anacostia watershed because of what you heard during the focus group? Please describe.

Thank you for your participation!

2

C. Focus Group Responses

The following table provides a summary of the Prince George’s County Focus Group discussions, per meeting. Focus Group #1 was held on October 23, 2018 and #2 held on October 24, 2018.

Question	Focus Group #1 Responses	Focus Group #2 Responses
1. Two favorite activities they have done in or along a waterway.	Fishing (3) Swimming (2) Kayaking Tubing Scuba Exploring nature Day dreaming Rowing/crew Family gatherings Canoeing Cycling Picnicking Paddle boarding Jet skiing	Swimming & waterslides (4) Kayaking (3); Cruising/boating (3) Fishing (2) Biking Jogging Whale watching/ nature watching Jet skiing Restaurants by the water Traveling Clean-up days Shopping
2. What are 2-3 words that describe your perception of your local waterways? <i>(responses groups by theme)</i>	Trashy, Polluted, Ugly, Dumping ground, Unappealing Inaccessible, Remote, A little scary when by yourself, Desolate, Isolated, Unsafe Beautiful, Abundant, Home, Neighborhood, Majestic Transportation Brackish, Sediment, Muddy, Wildlife	Dirty, Unappealing Lack of accessibility, Lack of attractions, Dull Important Divides geographies or locations
3. What are 2-3 words that describe your perception of the Anacostia River? <i>(responses groups by theme)</i>	Better than before, Improved, Potential, A project Hurting, Forgotten, Neglected, Underutilized Polluted Annual cleanups Vast	Potential, Cleaner than before, Some revitalization Old Dirty, Polluted, Dangerous, Dull, Infested
4. How are the words used to describe your local waterways the same/different from those you used to describe the Anacostia?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words are similar • Anacostia is less remote • Local waterway means Chesapeake Bay which stands for expensive real estate. • Local waterways feel more solvable as a problem, but the Anacostia feels huge! • Anacostia is more active, there is more care, maintenance and attention going towards it versus our local waterways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words are similar • There is better access to activities along the Anacostia.

Question	Focus Group #1 Responses	Focus Group #2 Responses
5. When you think of the Anacostia river system, where do you think it is?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DC • DMV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DC • Doesn't the Anacostia have tributaries that come into Prince George's County and up to 100 miles from the river itself?
6. Have you heard of the term watershed before? What do you think it is?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of participants said 'no' or that they had heard of the word but were not sure what it meant. • Watershed starts 50-100 miles from major waterway. • Watershed can get lost in translation between various languages that do not have a term for that word. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were some participants who shared a thorough understanding of the term 'watershed' and were actively engaged in waterway activities. • Other participants were not familiar with the word and relied on others with more understanding to share their knowledge of the term.
7. Are you surprised to learn that you live in the Anacostia watershed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many said they did not know that they lived in the Anacostia and some were surprised to learn they lived there. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who lived within the watershed had a mixture of responses from knowing they lived in the watershed, to not knowing and being surprised.
8. Do you think that living in the Anacostia watershed impacts your quality of life or regular activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, affects how much time I spend in water. If it was cleaner I would spend more time in the water. • Do not allow children in the water. • Love aesthetics of water, but I do not want to get in. • I would not jump into the water • Cleanliness of waterways affects business investments. • Yes! • No, I still do the activities that I do. • Limited in activities that I do. • Recently learned about kayaking. • Interest in a Mr. Trash Wheel to give the public the perception that people are trying to clean the river. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosquitoes outside are so bad that I cannot sit outside. • Litter causes standing water which leads to mosquito breeding. • The Anacostia is unappealing which affects property values. • There are no attractions or clean ups. • There is regular flooding that impacts recreational areas and attractions. • Sewage overflows are unappealing and unsanitary.
9. What motivates you to go visit local waterways or waterfronts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific events, Food, Entertainment, Other things to do like shopping or eating • Recreation, Access, Peace, Beauty • Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music, Entertainment, Advertisements, Restaurants, Happy hour • Scenery, Boating, Hiking, Calming, Transportation – on and along, Ease of access • Clean, Safe

Question	Focus Group #1 Responses	Focus Group #2 Responses
<p>10. What are the top 2-3 barriers that have kept you from visiting the water?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of events – none that are frequent and regularity • No promotion of what there is to do • Recreation equipment rental facilities • Lack of information • Handicap access • Few public dollars spent on watershed activities and infrastructure • Not knowing how to swim • Mosquitoes • Education on keeping waterways clean • Smells • Perception • Development that is inclusive of people who live there – equitable development • Lack of grassroots efforts and private/public partnerships • Perception that water activities are not for low-income communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of activities • Lack of Advertisement • Lack of Information • Transportation • Pollution/ litter • Environment/ Aesthetic • Mosquitoes • Weather • Perceptions • No desire
<p>11. Top 3 barriers to visiting the water?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and frequency of events • Lack of information about safety • No knowing what there is to do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation/access • Lack of advertisements/promotion • Environment/aesthetic
<p>12. What would you most like to preserve or improve about your local waterways?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its reputation as accurate and up to date to its current condition. Have perceptions align with reality. • Change in resident mindsets. • Places to go to the water and existing places in PGC. • Resident interest and involvement in local waterways. • Want waterways for local PGC folks. • What is great about PGC without commercializing it! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stormwater management – would like to see natural methods used. • Protect waterways and improve aesthetics. • Up-front incentives for rain gardens and other opportunities to protect waterways. • Have developers include green infrastructure for all new developments.
<p>13. What roles could residents have in protecting the watershed and its waterways?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take this conversation deeper into the watershed. • Don't litter • Have clean-up days with educational aspect • More education in local schools about how individual activities impact water quality and stormwater systems • Promote civic responsibility to protect local waterways and alternatives to polluting methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show up for local government meetings on water issues • Don't litter • Educate ourselves and each other • Be careful what goes down the drain • Educate and lift-up the Anacostia watershed • Importance of Anacostia watershed in PGC • Home stewardship • Community fork lift programs • River keeper volunteer programs • DC Sail • National Maritime Heritage Foundation

Question	Focus Group #1 Responses	Focus Group #2 Responses
<p>14. Have you heard of any restoration or conservation efforts in the Anacostia watershed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anacostia Watershed Society Alumni Association clean-up days Stormwater tax Generally, participants had not heard of any restoration efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean-up efforts DC Swimmable by 2025 Have heard of some organizations. Generally, participants had not heard of any restoration efforts.
<p>15. What would motivate you personally to support these activities?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More information readily available, easy to find and up-to-date See effort to steward from government, developers and regular maintenance on state level. More programs to support home stewardship. (e.x. leave pick up and street cleaning) Meetings held at times and places that work for working people See connections between river improvement and overall quality of life and community priorities Information on implications of actions Business involvement like employee clean-up days
<p>16. What resonates with you in the video?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick, sweet, now words Would like to see more Happy kids River and surroundings look clean A variety of activities were highlighted Informative Culturally resonate Bright, happy, uplifting Everything looks safe Instills local pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Looked safe to be on trails The music was terrible (Al Green – Take me to the river suggested) Videography was great Catches the attention of people who live in the area Change the color of the green word color so it stands out more Great video for social media Add map to show where features are in the watershed and “you are here”

Question	Focus Group #1 Responses	Focus Group #2 Responses
<p>17. What would you like to see that was not included in the video?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Night activities • Picnicking or BBQing • Jumping and swimming in the water • Park police or rangers • Yoga • Pets • People with different moving abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not look real • Would like to see people talking • Interest in building on each scene to develop further videos that delve deeper into how to access locations and what amenities each location has. • Boats, kayaks and paddleboards – on water activities • Rental equipment vendors • History of the watershed – including its contamination history and progress to cleaning it • Interest in a series of short videos that tell the story of the watershed • What is the ultimate intention of the video?
<p>18. What types of information would help to change the way you think about the Anacostia watershed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on the extent of watershed in PGC • Information on what residents can do (activities) in the watershed • Spreading the word that PGC residents live in the Anacostia watershed • More visible signs • Having more experiences in the watershed • More information generally • Youth-centered information • Scientific information • Comparison to other local waterways – how our watershed is doing compared to other places in the Chesapeake Bay • Positive stories • Knowing the watershed belongs to us – creating local pride • Tell the story of the river including historical information • Stewardship narrative • Intergenerational message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any information would be helpful • That the parks and places along the watershed are safe to go to • History of the watershed, including how it is improving. Its past and its future. • Less known areas for future recreation development so residents know what is available • How residents can pass along information • Signs to get to waterside areas from popular walk/bike paths • Information on preservation and conservation efforts • What activities and programs are available • How individual behaviors impact the watershed and how behaviors can be changed to support watershed restoration
<p>19. What resonates with you in the icons?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, participants liked the design of the icons and mentioned that they would be nice to see on maps and signs so that they knew what activities they could do at recreational areas. • The kiting icon did not resonate with participants as connected to playing • The hiking icon did not resonate with participants as connected to hiking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would prefer to have them in color • Can see how they would be helpful as signs to communicate what is available at each site • Hits every age group • Would like to see a different symbol for playing. • The symbols should be integrated into videos • Use a different icon for hiking/boots

Question	Focus Group #1 Responses	Focus Group #2 Responses
20. Did it make a difference when the words were included?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants preferred the icons with the words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants preferred the icons with the words.
21. Which icons would you like to see that aren't included?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dining Growing/ gardening Native vegetation Points of interest Maps & bathrooms Roller skating Trails Wildlife nature watching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrooms Restaurants Boats/Ferries Picnic Skate parks Pet areas Sport facilities Emergency area Garbage/ recycling
22. Icon responses: no words	<p>9 Grilling 9 Biking 8 Hiking 6 Paddling 6 Birding 5 Yoga 4 Swimming 4 Fishing 3 Playing 2 Golfing</p>	<p>6 Biking 5 Hiking 4 Yoga 4 Paddling 4 Fishing 2 Golfing 2 Swimming 2 Grilling 2 Birding 1 Playing</p>
23. Icon responses: with words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants did not fill out the handouts with words. Rather, participants spend a short amount of time looking at the icons with words and engaged in discussion about the various icons. 	<p>Participants did not fill out the handouts with words. Rather, participants spend a short amount of time looking at the icons with words and engaged in discussion about the various icons.</p>
24. What have you learned about the Anacostia River, its tributaries and the watershed that have impacted how you relate to the watershed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Anacostia is not just in DC It is part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed There are active conservation efforts The watershed is not a polluted as originally thought Positive information about the river and watershed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The types of activities that are available through the video That the Anacostia is getting cleaner

Question	Focus Group #1 Responses	Focus Group #2 Responses
<p>25. How would having the watershed that you want impact your life?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would be more active • I would visit it more • I would spend more money near the watershed • I would stay here to do outdoor activities • I would have more positive examples of the watershed and water-related activities • I would want to keep it clean • If it is pretty I would want to keep it pretty • It would be something that I and my community would have pride in • Interest would snowball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be less mosquitoes • I would utilize it more • It would improve the scenery in the area where I live • I would play where I stay • It would increase my values for personal health and wellbeing • It would change my perception of the Anacostia River & watershed • It would increase the value of my property • It would create a sense of pride • It would bring the community together • It would attract business and tax revenue • It would increase civic engagement and involvement • It would encourage visitors

D. Post-Survey Written Responses

Participants provided the following written responses on the supplemental survey completed at the end of the focus group discussions.

Survey Question	Focus Group #1 Responses	Focus Group #2 Responses
<p>1. Now that you are aware of where you live, work and play in relation to the Anacostia River, how has this information influenced your perceptions of the watershed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am aware of the location of the Anacostia River and activities associated with the locations. • I will be more aware of what I'm doing to the watershed. Make me more active. • It has encouraged me to seek out more of the history and current condition of the river. • It has inspired me to want to do more on a personal level and within my home to hopefully inspire others. • My perceptions have improved. I didn't realize that the Anacostia watershed spanned a wide area and I didn't know there are current efforts to clean and improve the area. • That the Anacostia watershed is much larger than I originally believed and that the grade is D-. • Identified the vastness of the watershed. • It has motivated me to become more involved and active. • It helped me to think broader perception of the river. • It's a lot closer to me in geography than I thought. • I now will consider exploring the Anacostia River. I learned that it is improving and learned where the Anacostia watershed is. • I learned a lot about the specific location and potential of the river. I will want to look more into the history and possibilities of the watershed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This information has given me hope that the Anacostia River is going to be changing for the better. • It was very insightful to learn where I live, how the river flows and what's being done. • That someone is actually working on making the watershed better. • More positive, seeing more potential in maximizing. • I am more hopeful about the future of the river and I would like to visit and get involved. I also learned more about how to help clean up efforts. • A great deal, makes me more aware of my area. • There is do much to do! • I learned a lot of activities that are occurring in my area so when my family come visit I now know some things to do. • I am more aware the Anacostia is my watershed even though I am in Capitol Heights. • That it is cleaner and you can go kayaking.
<p>2. Is there anything that you will do that is new or different related to the Anacostia watershed because of what you heard during the focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more mindful of my personal waste. • Be more active and conscious of what I'm doing and putting in the water. • Try to find a group or opportunity to participate in at least once a year. • Be more involved on a personal level, for example, with grass roots focus groups. • Yes, I will try to check out the area and help with clean up efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will look for activities in and around the river. I will also try to use the permeable paver and rain gardens rebates. • I will be more aware and informative of the watershed. I will look up what's next and how to be more involved in the development.

Survey Question	Focus Group #1 Responses	Focus Group #2 Responses
<p>group? Please describe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly visit more. • Try to be more involved. • Yes to look for opportunities to contribute and promote the watershed. • I want to do more activities in the community. • I am now impressed in what the Anacostia has to offer. I will look up where in PG I could explore. • I will look at the Anacostia River things to do. • I will research events about volunteering and further enjoying the watershed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will continue to advocate for the improvement of the watershed and identify officials involved. • Expand clean up to green up. • Yes, I learned how to prevent pollution and flooding after storms (rain garden, etc.). I also learned about the recreation activities. • Educate myself. • I'd like to fish in PG County instead of going to Anne Arundel County. • Advertisement in different media forms like newspaper for the wise ones, social media for the young, local schools and businesses and emails. • Now that I am aware activities are happening, I will make more efforts to attend. • Look into where kayaking is available and visit more parks.