Anacostia River “Splash” Event Rescheduled

WASHINGTON, DC - While water quality in the Anacostia River has improved significantly thanks to the District government’s commitment and major investments as well as the dedicated support of environmental advocates, the District Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE), who permits events like “Splash,” regrets to inform an energized community of swimmers and splashers that the July 8, 2023 Splash event will be rescheduled.

In parts of the District, a combined sewer system collects rainwater runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater into one pipe. Historically, heavy rains could lead to combined sewer overflows (CSOs) where the amount of rainwater runoff exceeds the system’s capacity. This summer, DC’s Water’s Clean River Project will complete a large tunnel system designed to control CSOs on the Anacostia, which DOEE expects will lead to continued improvements in water quality.

“Recently, we have had several intense short duration rain events, which caused two small CSO discharges to the Anacostia River. Unfortunately, the Splash event needs to be postponed out of an abundance of caution,” said Jeff Seltzer, Deputy Director of DOEE’s Natural Resources Administration.

“Despite the environmental issues still facing the Anacostia River, water quality has significantly improved over the past few decades. We are as close as we have ever been to the possibility of bringing back a swimmable Anacostia. Anacostia Riverkeeper (ARK) is looking forward to working with DOEE to find another date for Splash this fall, after the Clean Rivers work has been successfully completed for the Anacostia River,” said ARK President and Founding Board Member Suzy Kelly.

The postponed event will be held at the Kingman Island dock next to the Benning Road Bridge. ARK will release updated information HERE for previously registered and new swimmers.

As a reminder, currently, residents are only allowed to swim in the District’s waterways during special events permitted by DOEE. To obtain a permit for a sanctioned swimming event, visit HERE.

To learn more about the work of the water quality monitoring program, visit HERE.

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