

September 2, 2010-September 30, 2013

**Washington, D.C.
Department of Parks and Recreation**

**Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
(SCORP)**

September 2, 2010-September 30, 2013





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APPENDICES

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, District Elements, Chapter 8, Parks, Recreation and Open Space

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, Federal Elements, Parks and Open Space

“CapitalSpace,” Ideas to Achieve the Full Potential of Washington’s Parks and Open Spaces



A. Introduction

This Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), as based upon the Five-Year Agency Master Plan, represents the most comprehensive plan for the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and sets the stage for a new and exciting future for parks and recreation services and facilities serving residents of the Nation's Capital. The SCORP provides strategic directions through strategies and tasks that address the public's core issues, and improves the management and operations of DPR and its programs and facilities. The SCORP also provides an assessment of facilities that will give management a tool for prioritizing capital improvement projects related to the District's parklands and recreation centers. Finally, it provides a detailed assessment of parks and recreation needs in each of the 39 neighborhood clusters, giving management yet another tool for determining physical needs in the parks and recreation system.

B. History of Open Space in the District of Columbia

By choosing the confluence of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers as the site for the new capital of the United States, President George Washington provided the city's designer, Pierre Charles L'Enfant, with a varied topographic, 16-square mile, diamond-shaped site at the point at which the Coastal Plain gives way to the Piedmont. L'Enfant, inspired by Andre LeNotre's Versailles and eighteenth century Paris, laid out a baroque city of wide avenues and streets, the most important of which radiated from the Capitol and White House. Among numerous large reservations set aside for public uses were the Mall and today's Ellipse. This plan established a strong visual image for the Nation's Capital – wide avenues, ample open space, and a strong relationship to two rivers.

The McMillan Commission Plan of 1901 was drawn upon by the leading designers of the day, including Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to reinterpret and complete the L'Enfant Plan and to recommend a regional park system for the District of Columbia and surrounding states of Maryland and Virginia. In the center of the original L'Enfant City, the McMillan Plan called for the extension of the Mall and major groupings of public buildings. The plan also called for the development of a regional park system composed of the Rock Creek valley (acquired by act of Congress in 1890), river fill along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, and the string of former Civil War forts linked by a parkway. In addition, the Plan called for acquisition of major parcels along the encampment above the L'Enfant City for parks and other public uses. Beyond the boundaries of Washington, a parkway was proposed to link the capital with Mount Vernon. The McMillan Plan established the basis for the area's regional park system, and focused on the two riverfronts, stream valleys, areas of steep topography, and hilltops (many of which were former Civil War forts) to be interconnected with a system of parkways and drives.

Implementation of the regional park system proposed in the McMillan Plan accelerated with the establishment of the National Capital Park Commission in 1924 and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1927. The latter provided planning and park maintenance services to the two Maryland counties that abut the District of Columbia.



In 1930, Congress strengthened the ability of these agencies to implement the regional park system by passing the Capper-Cramton Act. This provided substantial federal funds to implement park plans in the region. The Capper-Cramton Act funded the George Washington Memorial Parkway on both the Virginia and Maryland sides of the Potomac River and the expansion of Rock Creek Park and the Anacostia Park system into Maryland. Because the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority was not established until the late 1950s, park development in the Virginia suburbs lagged far behind the Maryland suburbs and Washington, DC.

The addition of two greenways to the region in the 1970s was an important exception to this trend. The National Park Service dedicated the 185-mile Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, converting a 45-mile long abandoned railroad right-of-way in Virginia into the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Railroad Regional Park Trail.

The 1990s saw the creation of the Capital Crescent Trail, a hiker-biker trail, connecting the Georgetown waterfront to Bethesda, Maryland via refurbishment of an abandoned rail line.

C. History of the Department of Parks and Recreation

DPR has a relatively short history compared to that of the Nation's Capital as a whole. Until the mid-1900's, the federal city's parks and recreation services were administered by the National Capital Park Commission (now the National Capital Planning Commission), a federal government agency. During these early years, a precedent was established of conserving and enhancing the park and open space system of the District. Parks, promenades, monuments, trails, and other recreational open spaces were established to provide environmental, recreational, and aesthetic value to residents and visitors. Recreation centers were constructed to serve the indoor recreational needs of residents. The District was envisioned as a hub of recreational activities with bicycle and pedestrian pathways connecting parks, schools, recreation centers, and the parklands of the surrounding communities.

In 1942, The District of Columbia Department of Recreation was created to administer neighborhood recreation programs and activities at parks and recreation centers. The Home Rule Act of 1973 resulted in the transfer of land from the Federal Government to the District of Columbia Department of Public Works (DPW). In 1988, the Department of Recreation became the Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP), and the jurisdiction of many of the park lands were transferred from DPW to DRP. In the year 2000, the department underwent another name change, this time to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and a corresponding shift in its mission, which increased the importance of land management.

DPR has been challenged with parkland maintenance and management issues and indoor recreation centers that primarily serve District residents, as well as maintaining a parks and recreation system that upholds the precedent set by planning efforts dating back as far as the McMillan Plan. This has been a difficult challenge to meet over the years. Continually rising operating costs, changing political tides, resulting in inconsistent departmental leadership, demographic changes, population growth, development



pressures, and shifting customer use patterns make this challenge even more difficult, and this planning effort especially important.

D. Purpose of Planning

The fundamental reason for the undertaking of a comprehensive park and recreation master plan is that park and recreation services are essential for the public health, welfare, and safety in the community. Planning for these services is necessary to create and maintain a healthy and desirable community in which people live, work, and play.

A park and recreation SCORP is intended to guide the ultimate development of the park and recreation system within a community. It must consider the future to ensure that the immediate and long-range decisions made are feasible, satisfy a broad range of needs, and benefit all members of the community. Furthermore, a master plan provides supporting rationale to the organization's program and services resulting in a competitive advantage when competing for funds with other agencies.



E. The Master Planning Process

The DPR SCORP is intended to provide an overview of park and recreation needs in DC, and provide a roadmap for operations and future development of the DC parks and recreation system. Specific goals for undertaking the planning process included:

- Provide information regarding recreation needs of District residents
- Provide information about customer usage and satisfaction
- Incorporate the community and DPR staff views
- Plan for the changing recreation needs of the economically, socially, and culturally diverse population of the District
- Develop service standards for parks, recreation services, and facilities
- Identify current and potential shortfalls in the supply of recreation facilities programs, parks, and open space
- Recommend strategies for overcoming shortfalls and identify where the District should acquire land or increase programming

The SCORP is based upon the DPR 5-Year Agency Master Plan. To develop the plan and accomplish the above goals, an extensive process was undertaken consisting of 13 planning components that are described in the following paragraphs.

Public Outreach

Public involvement in the planning process was carefully programmed to ensure input from a representative sample of DC residents. The methods included:

- DPR staff interviews
- stakeholder interviews
- mail surveys
- focus group interviews
- public meetings
- public review and comment period for the final recommendations, strategies, and policies

Early in the process, stakeholder interviews were conducted with groups of internal and external stakeholders. Results from the stakeholder interviews exposed several consistent themes, which were further explored in a mail survey. Survey recipients were randomly chosen using a stratified random sampling method, in which an equal number of addresses were chosen from each of the eight DC Wards. Demographics of survey respondents were compared to current DC demographics to identify specific groups that may have been underrepresented in the survey results. Three groups were identified: African-Americans, Latino-Hispanics, and youth. Special focus groups were organized and facilitated to represent these demographic groups. Concurrently, a series of public meetings were held in which residents participated and shared their reactions to the research results and

suggestions for the planning effort. These suggestions and comments were integrated into the Master Plan that was then placed before the public for final review and comments.

Demographic and Economic Analysis

An extensive analysis was conducted that included current residential demographics and development of five-year projections to determine future community and recreational user profiles. These projections were used to describe demand, and changes in demand, regarding need for parks, programs, and facilities across the District.

Organizational Analysis

The organizational analysis provides a concise look at the operations and management of DPR from both an internal and external perspective. Respectively, internal and external viewpoints are based on staff interviews with DPR's personnel of all levels and stakeholders interviews with a very diverse group of persons who have vested interests in DPR. The findings are translated into strengths and weaknesses of the Department.

Benchmarking and Best Practices

A benchmarking analysis of urban park districts similar to Washington DC was conducted. In general, benchmarking consists of comparing the products or services of one entity to like products or services offered by another. The general types of comparisons made include park acreage, number of program offerings, and the number of recreational facilities. The findings of these comparisons are provided under their respective chapters. The following six benchmark cities were chosen for comparison:

- Boston
- Baltimore
- Chicago
- Minneapolis
- Oakland
- Philadelphia

Best practices in four specialty areas were also analyzed. These areas included environmental education, green spaces, open spaces, and cooperation with the National Park Service. Based on the best practices analysis, three additional cities were evaluated and include the following:

- San Francisco – based on coordination with the National Park Service
- Denver – based on greenspace initiatives
- Cincinnati – based on environmental education initiatives

The findings from these extensive research efforts were combined and synthesized to form the strategic and policy directives outlined in the Master Plan.

Property Analysis

This analysis included the evaluation of parks and recreational facilities with regards to both physical and operational conditions. One of two major components of this analysis is



the creation of a park classification system. Park classifications allow planners to identify and assess parklands relative to location, distribution, demographics, and accessibility, thus ensuring that neighborhoods are equally served by DPR facilities. Furthermore, it is a tool for management, programming, and maintenance of the park and open space system. The second important component of this analysis is the development of a facility assessment model based on life cycle renewal modeling to assess the physical condition of DPR's facilities, and derive an FCI for each recreation center. An FCI is a tool that can be utilized to compare the cost of updating and keeping a given facility with what it would cost to replace it with a new facility.

Program Analysis

An analysis of DPR programs was performed to determine the current state of recreation programming in the District as compared to the benchmark cities. The analysis evaluated the number and types of programs offered, the targeted age groups, and the fees charged.

Competitive Analysis

The competitive analysis determined the strengths and weaknesses of competitors providing leisure services within the Washington DC market and derived strategies that will provide DPR with a distinct advantage. This analysis allows DPR to determine where it fits in the competitive mix of the parks and recreation industry and assist the Department in determining areas of focus.

Financial Analysis

The purpose of the analysis of revenue sources is to match projected future funding needs, including maintenance, with projected future revenues, and to assure that DPR's programming needs and plans drive the capital investment process. This analysis examines DPR's current policies and procedures related to the dedication of existing revenues to support program and open space activities, as well as the potential for enhancement of revenues through the creation of public and private partnerships and exploring grant opportunities.

Public and Private Partnerships Analysis

Public and private partnerships are proliferating throughout the parks and recreation industry. For a variety of reasons, park partnerships are successful in combining assets of the public and private sectors in novel ways to create new and refurbished parks, greenways, trails, and other community assets in cities—often in the face of municipal budget constraints. This analysis is dedicated to defining partnerships, identifying the reasons why partnerships are attractive to both parks departments and their partners, identifying the types of partnerships that are mutually beneficial to the partners, and how these partnerships can contribute to the overall success of DPR's operations.

Service Standard Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to recommend Level of Service (LOS) standards for parks and facilities in Washington DC. These standards provide minimum guidelines for the DPR to plan and build parks and recreation facilities required to adequately serve the community based on their needs. LOS standards are intended to ensure that a balance of facilities and services are provided uniformly across DC. To determine the recommended



LOS standards for DC parks and facilities, a basic model was used to synthesize information and research conducted throughout the planning process. This model consists of the following four basic components, which were applied to each park or facility type to develop the recommended LOS standard:

- District of Columbia current LOS
- Benchmark cities average and highest LOS
- District of Columbia public involvement results
- District of Columbia population projections, demand, and trends

Parks and Facilities Gap Analysis

A gap analysis is a normative measurement of possible discrepancies between supply and demand; specifically, the quantity of DPR park and recreation facilities measured against the recommended LOS standards for each facility. The analysis was performed on three geographic levels; district, ward, and neighborhood cluster. A neighborhood cluster is comprised of three to five neighborhoods created by the District Department of Planning to develop Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAPs). There are 39 clusters in DC. Based on the outcomes of the assessments, recommendations are given to best meet or exceed the LOS standard or “fill in the gaps.”

Strategic and Policy Directives

Policy is fundamentally important to an organization's governance. Fundamental decisions about an organization's future are ultimately driven by strategies and policies. Strategic and policy directives were developed for DPR based on key issues/recommendations brought forth in the master planning process with emphasis placed on those captured during public engagement venues. These issues were synthesized and translated into seven areas of focus where DPR can position itself strategically over the next five years to more successfully meet the needs of its

patrons. Each strategy contains several policy directives that provide steps to be taken in order for the desired outcome to be achieved. Accompanying each strategy is an action plan structuring the policies and tasks into division responsibility, priorities, time frame for implementation, and inter-dependencies between strategies.

F. Wetlands Protection as a Priority in the District of Columbia

The District of Columbia is committed to protecting its precious environmental resources. In recent years, District Government has taken considerable steps towards increasing environmental protection and regulation. Based on the 2005 National Wetlands Inventory, the District of Columbia has 342 acres of *Lacustrine* wetlands (inland, freshwater lakes and reservoirs), 165 acres of *Palustrine* wetlands (inland, nontidal) and 4,089 acres of *Riverine* wetlands (inland, nontidal flowing water).¹

Wetlands protection builds on the momentum created by establishing the District Department of the Environment and the passage of the Comprehensive Plan for the District Columbia in 2006. These actions solidified the District's commitment towards better stewardship of its land, water, air, energy and biological resources. The District

¹ See Figure 1: Map of Wetlands Inventory, 2005.



Department of the Environment's (DDOE) mission is to improve the District's environment and quality of human life by consolidating the administration and oversight of programs to protect the environment and conserve the natural resources of the District of Columbia into a single executive agency.

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital is the general policy document that provides overall guidance for future planning and development in the city. As a city agency, DPR supports and implements this plan as it relates to properties under DPR jurisdiction. The District Elements contain 11 citywide elements that provide goals, objectives and policies for land use issues impacting the whole city, including the environment. The Environmental Protection Element of the Comprehensive Plan identifies several major issues facing the District, including:

- Improving our rivers, streams and stream valleys
- Reducing erosion and stormwater run-off
- Sustaining plant and animal habitat

The overarching goal for environmental protection in the District of Columbia is to:

Protect, restore and enhance the natural and man-made environment in the District of Columbia, taking steps to improve environmental quality, prevent and reduce pollution, and conserve the values and functions of the District's natural resources and ecosystems.

The Comprehensive Plan states several major policies in the Environment Protection Element to give priority to wetlands protection focusing on:

- **River Conservation**
Improve environmental conditions along the Anacostia River and other water bodies, including shorelines, wetlands, islands, tributaries, and the rivers themselves. Particular attention should be given to eliminating toxic sediments, improving river edges to restore vegetation and reduce erosion, enhancing wetlands and wildlife habitat, creating new wetlands, and reducing litter.
- **Waterfront Habitat Restoration**
Undertake a range of environmental initiatives along the Anacostia River to eliminate combined sewer overflows, reduce urban runoff, restore wetlands and tributary streams, increase oxygen levels in the water, remediate toxins in the riverbed, clean and redevelop contaminated brownfield sites, and enhance natural habitat.
- **Retention of Environmentally Sensitive Areas as Open Space**
Retain environmentally fragile areas such as wetlands and riparian areas along the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers as open space or parkland. In areas under federal jurisdiction such as Rock Creek Park, work with the National Park Service to conserve and carefully manage such areas and to implement an effective "no net loss" policy.

- **Identification, Protection and Restoration of Wetlands**

Identify and protect wetlands and riparian habitat on private and public land. Require official surveys when development is proposed in areas where wetlands are believed to be present to ensure that wetlands are preserved. Undertake wetlands restoration, enhancement, and creation projects to mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff and improve plant and animal habitat.

- **Wetland Buffers**

Maintain open space buffers around existing and restored wetlands in order to reduce the likelihood of environmental degradation from urban runoff and human activities.

Proposed updates to the Zoning Regulations are in place to aid in the implementation of several of the Comprehensive Plan policies. The Zoning Commission has provided conceptual approval to put in place environmental protection zones that create buffer requirements for steep slopes, streams and wetlands. The buffer is intended to restrict development patterns within floodplain areas to prevent future degradation of wetland resources. Details of allowed development patterns and the extent of buffers are being developed in conjunction with the District Department of the Environment. Final text for this proposal will be seen before the Zoning Commission by 2011.

Within the first decade of the 21st century, the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) played a pivotal role as the organizing element in restoring the Anacostia River and its environs, including wetlands. Through regional and inter-agency coordination and cooperation, a number of environmental actions have taken place and placed a premium on wetlands protection along the Anacostia River. Over the years, urban development destroyed more than 90 percent of the original tidal wetlands along the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The destruction of these wetlands contributed greatly towards the Anacostia River's current condition and their loss allows urban stormwater runoff to enter into the River directly. The AWI Plan and the Comprehensive Plan's Environmental Protection Element call for creating new stormwater wetlands and daylighting streams at Fort Dupont, Watts Branch, Stickfoot Creek, Fort Stanton, Fort Davis and Pope Branch.

The District, along with strong federal partners at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and United States Geological Survey (USGS), has initiated the Habitat Restoration Program at DDOE to construct several wetlands projects and has even more wetlands planned for construction. The River Fringe Wetland Project restored 17 acres of freshwater tidal wetlands along the shores of the Anacostia River adjacent to Kingman Island. The Kingman Lake Wetland Project restored over 40 acres of freshwater tidal wetlands in the Kingman Lake area in order to increase plant and animal diversity and improve the filtering capacity of the Anacostia. The Heritage Wetland project created six acres of high to mid freshwater marsh in Kingman Lake. The species of plants planted included a high percentage of shrubs such as Button Bush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), Swamp rose (*Rosa palustris*), Marsh mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) and other mid marsh species that are generally non-palatable to the high number of exotic, non-native resident Canada geese that reside in the area. An additional goal of this project was to create tidal guts adjacent to the wetland cells for fish and non-motorized watercraft passage. Ultimately, these



wetlands will increase the number of beneficial plants and fish in the river and will improve water quality of the Anacostia River.

Watts Branch, Pope Branch and Broad Branch are currently in the design phase of environmental restoration. The Watts Branch Restoration Project intends to restore the in-stream habitat and improve the water quality of Watts Branch, a tributary to the Anacostia running through Northeast DC. Restoration will be achieved by reconstructing stream sections that will better accommodate storm water flows and constructing Low Impact Development retrofits that will clean polluted stormwater runoff. DDOE is partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Chesapeake Bay Field Office for design assistance and the National Resource Conservation Service for construction management. The stream restoration is an integral component of other important efforts to revitalize the District owned park adjacent to the stream and plans to repair aging sanitary sewer infrastructure.

The Broad Branch Restoration Project will daylight a 1,600 foot portion of Broad Branch, a tributary to Rock Creek in Northwest DC. Daylighting this section of the Rock Creek watershed will improve water quality at the location and downstream water quality by exposing water to sunlight, air, soil, and vegetation, all of which help process and remove pollutants. Furthermore, its restoration will reduce nutrient and sediment pollution from erosion caused by fast flowing stormwater by creating meanders and floodplain wetlands, which will have wider cross-section and a greater channel depth than the pipe it will replace. Additional surface flow from adjacent streets and rooftops may be directed to the area by creating curb cuts and redirecting storm sewers to area further slowing, cooling, and filtering stormwater in the sub-watershed.

Located in southeast Washington, DC, Pope Branch is a 1.6-mile first-order tributary of the Anacostia River. The entire stream lies within DC city boundaries. The primary land uses of the 250-acre watershed are parkland and residential lands. Pope Branch is listed on the 303-D List for bacteria, organics, and metals. The primary sources of pollutants are stormwater runoff from yards, streets, and parking lots as well as an aging sanitary sewer that runs along the stream.

This project has multiple components, all of which will work towards improving the water quality of Pope Branch. DDOE is working closely with WASA and DC Department of Parks and Recreation to replace an aging sanitary sewer line and restore a section of the stream from Texas Avenue to Minnesota Avenue. Additionally, DDOE has funded the construction of several LID storm water retrofits to begin addressing the issue of untreated storm water runoff in this sub-watershed. DDOE has worked with a small citizens group, the Pope Branch Alliance to help organize of neighborhood activities such as trash clean-ups.

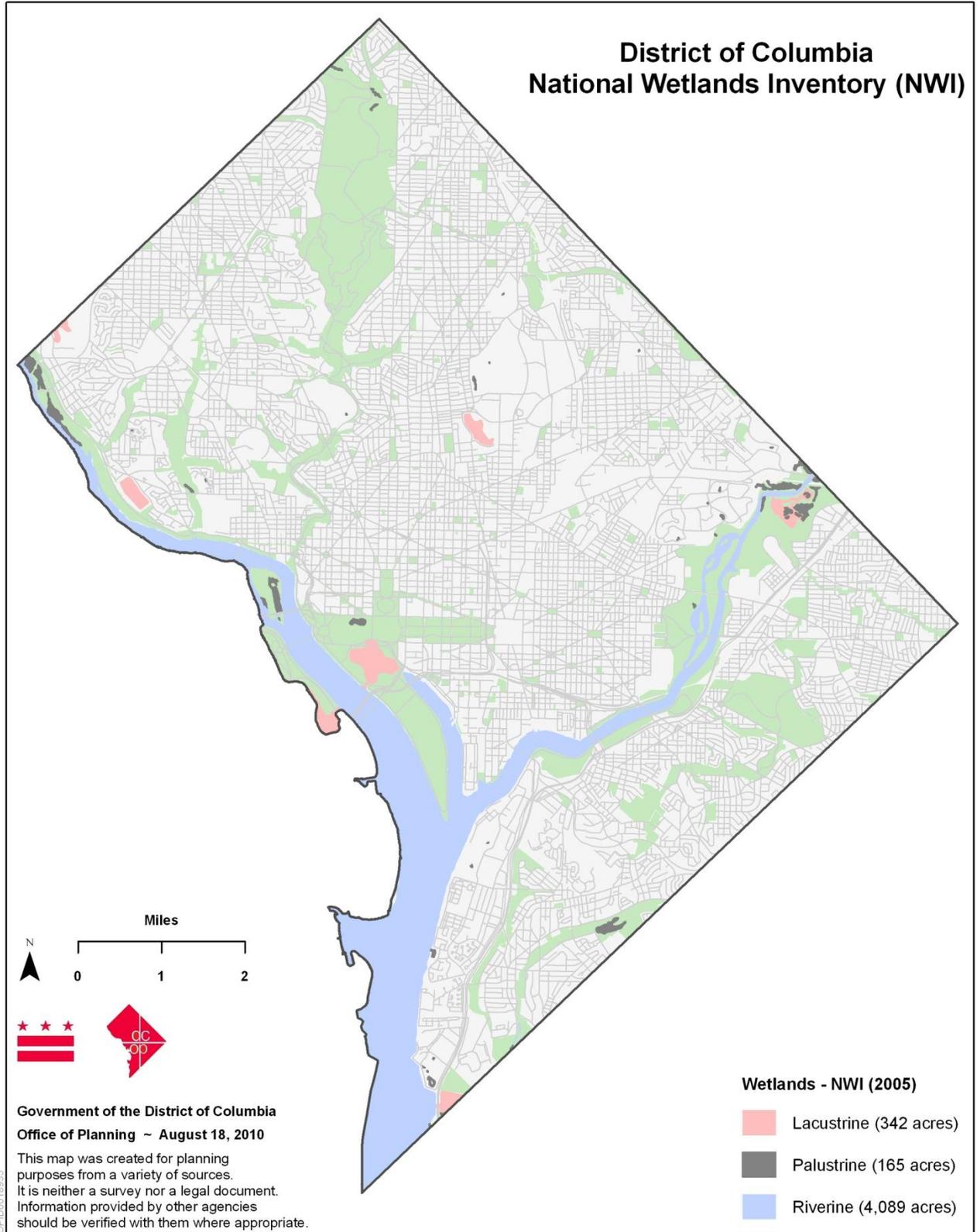
In addition to these direct mitigation efforts are number of initiatives are underway as interagency collaborations between the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), DDOE , DPR, and the DC Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water) to improve stormwater quantity and quality throughout the District. The District of Columbia is working to improve stormwater quality and quantity which may impact wetlands by developing LID retrofits in parks and other public spaces. This collaborative strategy of LID improvements is



projected to have cumulative environmental benefits for the health of the District's wetlands.

The Wetlands Conservation Plan was created by the District in 1997 and since has received only minor updates. DDOE is currently updating the data with the hopes of identifying all wetlands in the District of Columbia. The updated Wetlands Conservation Plan is expected to be completed by Fall 2010.

The policies and actions of the District of Columbia are evidence of the strong, strategic commitment towards protecting our wetlands. Through construction of new wetlands, daylighting of streams and creating open space and buffer areas around our existing wetlands, the District of Columbia can reverse past negative impacts of urban development and restore the ecological balance.





G. The Land and Water Conservation Fund

The District of Columbia uses its DPR Five-Year Agency Master Plan as the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP is a requirement of the National Parks Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and must be submitted to the National Park Service (NPS) to be eligible for LWCF grant dollars. The intent of the SCORP is to identify recreation priorities and develop a plan to meet the implementation goals of District residents and elected officials. For more information on LWCF, please visit <http://www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/lwcf/>.

Washington, DC's SCORP has many tools that will allow the District to prioritize park projects. The SCORP provides an assessment of facilities that will give management a tool for prioritizing capital improvement projects related to the District's parklands and recreation centers, as well as a detailed assessment of parks and recreation needs in neighborhood clusters, giving the District another tool for determining physical needs in the parks and recreation system at a local level.

H. Time Period of SCORP

The District of Columbia will use this Plan as the District's SCORP through September 30, 2013. DPR anticipates applying for an LWCF grant for FY2012 to update this SCORP.

With funding no longer available through the National Park Service's Urban Park Recreation and Recovery (UPARR) grant program, DPR has applied for and received matching funds for a variety of projects throughout the District through the LWCF program. Projects have ranged in size from small park development for neighborhood ballfields, playgrounds and courts, to larger environmental rehabilitation projects. As is typical of most urban park systems, budgeting for capital projects is always a challenge. The matching funds provided through LWCF have helped DPR close the gap on the funding necessary for projects throughout the District.

<u>Land and Water Conservation Fund: Grant Allocations for Washington, DC, 2006 - 2010</u>	
FY 2010	\$87,170
FY 2009	\$62,005
FY 2008	\$52,754
FY 2007	\$63,947
FY 2006	\$63,947



With the Obama Administration's commitment to fully fund for the program by 2014, DPR anticipates additional coordination with other park partners in Washington, DC to provide grant money for projects and future initiatives. Other park-related agencies DPR will coordinate with include the District Department of the Environment (DDOE), the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and the DC Office of Planning (DCOP). Many of the recommendations for projects and their proposed implementation are discussed in the following section.

