

Reconnecting Communities with their Urban Waters:

*We can do this...
but only with your help!*

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Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- A federal government agency
- The mission of EPA is to protect human health and the environment
- Since 1970, EPA has been working for a cleaner, healthier environment for the American people
- EPA leads the nation's environmental science, research, education, and assessment efforts



EPA Administrator's Priorities Related to Urban Waters

- Cleaning Up Our Communities
- Protecting America's Waters
- Expanding the Conversation on Environmentalism and Working for Environmental Justice

"Environmentalism is about the place where you are."

– EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson



Why Urban Waters?

What We Learned from Communities

- Urban waters **impact** large populations and influence land-use decisions in an entire watershed. Urban areas can be visible showcases for innovative approaches.
- The urban environment has barriers to water access. When urban rivers, lakes, streams or wetlands become **accessible and improved**, the nearby residents experience them and view them as valuable community assets and worth restoring/protecting.
- When urban populations reap the potential economic, social, and environmental **benefits** of the resource, they **sustain their involvement** over a longer time horizon.
- Protecting and restoring urban waters is not just environmental protection, it's **human protection**. It's about safeguarding the places where we live, work, learn, and play.



EPA's Urban Waters Vision

Communities

- particularly underserved communities –
- reconnect with and revitalize their local urban waters



Link environmental and community benefits!



EPA is seeking to promote:

- Understanding of urban waters and their potential
- Connection to urban waters
- Public ownership of urban waters
- Protection and restoration of urban waters
- Community revitalization through urban waters



Community Benefits of Clean, Safe Accessible Urban Waters

- Increased recreational opportunities
- Increased economic incentives
 - Job creation
 - Market creation
 - Property value increases
- Increased interest in the restoring the community
- Reduced crime
- Improved mental functioning
- Improved appearance, odor, quality, and health of the water
- Sources for clean and safe drinking water
- Equity in access to waterways as an asset



Urban Waters and Marine Debris

- ▶ Urban areas are generally very densely populated, so the amount of trash and litter generated is often greater
- ▶ Higher amounts of waste are more likely to be mismanaged and blown or washed into storm drains or directly into waterways
- ▶ Upon reaching the waterways trash and litter become marine debris



Urban Waters / International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Connection

- Both the EPA's Urban Waters efforts and International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) engage communities in cleanup activities that help clean up the environment and more importantly help communities reconnect with and revitalize water environments.



ICC in Urban Areas

- Helps cleanup urban areas
- Helps engage a diverse community
- Helps highlight the issue of trash and litter in the watershed
 - Promotes an understanding of how trash travels
 - Provides education on marine debris prevention



EPA Urban Waters/ICC Events

- Two special EPA Urban Waters/ICC events on September 25, 2010
 - Washington, DC area
 - New York City area
- Events will include:
 - Guest speakers
 - Educational activities
 - Demonstrations
 - Promotional items
- Check EPA ICC Website for further details and exact locations
 - www.epa.gov/owow/oceans/debris/volunteer.html



Get Involved !

- Participate in the International Coastal Cleanup in an urban area
 - www.coastalcleanup.org
- Join EPA's Greenversations
 - www.blog.epa.gov/blog/
- Establish new partnerships & promote local participation in community events
- Stay tuned at epa.gov/urbanwaters/

