



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Chesapeake Bay Field Office
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
<http://www.fws.gov/chesapeakebay>

News Release May 21, 2012

Mark Secrist 410/573-4551; cell 443/591-4506
Genevieve LaRouche 410/573-4573; cell 202/341-5882

Restored Watts Branch is Model for America's Great Outdoors Rivers Initiative

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today identified river projects in 11 Southeast and Mid-Atlantic States and the District of Columbia to serve as models of the America's Great Outdoors River Initiative to conserve and restore key rivers across the nation, expand outdoor recreational opportunities and support jobs in local communities. The river projects are part of a list of 51 ongoing projects that the Secretary is highlighting nationwide.

"Across the country, we are working hand in hand with states, tribes, local communities and other partners to revitalize our nation's rivers and expand the opportunities for people to fish, swim, boat, and otherwise connect with the natural world," Salazar said.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Chesapeake Bay Field Office, District of Columbia's Department of the Environment, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service formed a partnership to restore Watts Branch, a severely degraded stream in the Anacostia River watershed.

Piped and concrete-lined storm drains altered Watts Branch, making it unstable and causing severe erosion. In-stream structures were installed to improve in-channel habitat and reduce bank erosion. The floodplain was recreated allowing for the floodwater storage; improving nutrient uptake, and increasing stability. A streamside corridor of native grasses, shrubs, and trees was planted, providing long-term bank stability and valuable habitat for wildlife.

"The reduction in bank erosion on Watts Branch will improve water quality and habitat for local fish as well as for American eel, alewife, American shad, Atlantic sturgeon and striped bass downstream in the Anacostia River," noted Genevieve LaRouche, Chesapeake Bay Field Office Supervisor. The restored streamside forest and floodplain will provide food and nesting areas for birds such as prothonotary warbler, wood thrush, red-eyed vireo, northern parula, and yellow warbler."

The America's Great Outdoors Rivers Initiative is working with communities across the country to establish a 21st century conservation ethic, reconnect people, especially young people, to the natural world, and promote the outdoor recreation economy.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

-FWS-