URBANWATERS
FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP
Restoring Urban Waters, Revitalizing Communities

# East Capitol Urban Farm Project

*Anacostia Watershed (Washington, DC/Maryland); 2015–Present*

## Summary

The Anacostia Urban Waters Partnership collaborated to create the East Capitol Urban Farm in Ward 7 of the District across from the East Capitol Metro Station and Watts Branch, the largest tributary to the Anacostia River. The project transformed a three-acre vacant lot into the District's largest urban farm and innovative aquaponics facility.

*(Photo credit: University of the District of Columbia)*

## Federal Agency Partners include:

U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (HHS/ CDC)

## Non-Federal Partners include:

The University of the District of Columbia (UDC), the DC Housing Authority (DCHA), the Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE), DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, DC Building Industry Association, Bradley Site Design, Metropolitan National Church, Groundwork Anacostia River DC, and Walmart

## Goals

Many of the Ward's 71,000 residents struggle with food security, often lacking basic access to grocery stores and healthy food options. This farm takes a multi-pronged approach to address this problem, and related challenges, aiming to:

- Promote urban agriculture and community gardening,
- Improve food access and nutrition,
- Offer nutrition education,
- Create opportunities for entrepreneurship,
- Incorporate green infrastructure, and
- Improve stormwater management for the community.

## Major Actions to Date

Since 2015, the East Capitol Urban Farm has become a multi-functional community asset that continues to grow in scope and size. The work of many agencies and organizations, combined with active community engagement, has resulted in the creation of the following features:

- An urban farm with emphasis on diverse crops, a community garden, and pollinator gardens,
- An aquaponics facility, providing a "win-win" food production system – fish provide plants with nutrients to grow and plants act as a bio-filter to purify the water for fish,
- A community-centered farmers market to improve food access and nutrition, and
- Green infrastructure, including rain gardens, and other environmental practices.

In summary, the farm has served to successfully transform a vacant lot into a lively community space, empowering residents to grow their own food, improving food access and nutrition, and demonstrating environmental practices through green infrastructure.