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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 4, 2015

## **First Anacostia River Festival to Conclude 2015 National Cherry Blossom Festival**

*Presented by the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park and the National Park Service as an official premier event of the National Cherry Blossom Festival – working together to celebrate nature and communities east of the river*

**WASHINGTON**— The first-ever Anacostia River Festival will celebrate the history, ecology and communities along the banks of the Anacostia River. The 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park and the National Park Service present the event, which will offer free kayaking and canoeing, musical performances, fishing and water filtration workshops, live birds of prey demonstration, a photography exhibition and a bike parade. The Anacostia River Festival is a premier event and official closing of the 2015 National Cherry Blossom Festival.

**WHEN:** Sunday, April 12, 2015, noon – 4 p.m.

**WHERE:** National Park Service's Anacostia Park. Good Hope Road and Anacostia Drive SE

**COST:** Free – Family Friendly Event

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** [www.bridgepark.org/anacostia-river-festival](http://www.bridgepark.org/anacostia-river-festival)

“We are so excited to be a part of this year’s National Cherry Blossom Festival and look forward to the positive exposure it will bring to East of the River neighborhoods as well as the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park,” said Scott Kratz, director of the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park, a collaborative project of the D.C. City Government and non-profit Building Bridges Across the River at THEARC transforming an old freeway into a new civic space scheduled to open in 2018. “The Anacostia River is a stunning, but often forgotten,

natural resource hiding in plain sight and, by collaborating with a number of existing groups, we aim to re-engage residents with this amazing urban watershed.”

The event will bring people from across the city and throughout the region to participate in hands-on art workshops, dragon boat rides, a community sing along, urban archaeology, community bicycle rides, boating and other fun activities to connect families with the natural world.

“The Anacostia is poised for a renaissance,” National Park Service Superintendent Gopaul Noojibail said. “The National Park Service is committed to helping people discover the beauty, fun and possibilities in Anacostia Park, and I hope that events like the River Festival inspire people – especially young people – to visit and get involved.”

Held in Anacostia Park, one of America’s national parks, and steps away from the future 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park, the event is free of charge and is a new premier offering that culminates the 2015 National Cherry Blossom Festival.

“We look forward to spreading the springtime celebration and gift of trees beyond the Tidal Basin with the new Anacostia River Festival,” said Diana Mayhew, president of the National Cherry Blossom Festival. “At its heart, the Festival is about community, and we are thrilled to expand its roots with this annual event East of the River.”

The Anacostia River Festival is supported by the 11th Street Bridge Park and the National Park Service in partnership with the National Cherry Blossom Festival, with additional funds from Bloomberg. Other supporters include the Anacostia BID, ARCH Development Corporation, City First Bank of DC, National Park Conservation Association and Kendra Rubinfeld PR. Programming partners include: Anacostia Community Boathouse Association, Anacostia Riverkeeper, Anacostia Watershed Society, ARCH Development Corporation, ArtReach at THEARC, Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, DC Water, District Department of the Environment, Earth Conservation Corps, Groundwork Anacostia River DC, Historic Anacostia Boating Association, Illumination Coalition, Levine Music, National Museum of the United States Navy, National Parks Conservation Association, The Nature Conservancy, Pearl Coalition, The Phillips Collection, Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, University of Maryland, University of the District of Columbia, U.S. Coast Guard, Ward 8 Arts & Culture Council, Washington Area Bicyclist Association and Washington Performing Arts.

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### About the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park

As the old 11<sup>th</sup> Street traffic bridges that connect Washington, D.C.'s Capitol Hill and historic Anacostia neighborhoods have aged out, the District government and a local nonprofit organization, Building Bridges Across the River, are transforming this old infrastructure into the city's first elevated park: a new venue for healthy recreation, environmental education and the arts.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park will be a place unlike any other in Washington, D.C. – one that supports the community's physical, environmental, cultural and economic health. After a seven month design competition informed by more than 450 community meetings, the design team of OMA+OLIN was selected in October 2014. With the design in place, Bridge Park staff has launched a capital campaign to construct this new civic space. The D.C. City Government has committed \$14.5 million. For more information and to see the OMA+OLIN renderings, visit [www.bridgepark.org](http://www.bridgepark.org). Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

### About the National Park Service

More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 405 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Visit us at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov), on Facebook [www.facebook.com/nationalparkservice](http://www.facebook.com/nationalparkservice), Twitter [www.twitter.com/natl parkservice](http://www.twitter.com/natl parkservice), and YouTube [www.youtube.com/nationalparkservice](http://www.youtube.com/nationalparkservice).

The National Park Service is working to make Anacostia Park a signature urban park that improves people's lives and protects the quality and resiliency of the Anacostia River ecosystem. The park provides inspirational natural spaces easily accessible to area residents and visitors and offers a wide range of recreational and educational opportunities. To learn more about Anacostia Park visit [www.nps.gov/anac](http://www.nps.gov/anac).

### About the National Cherry Blossom Festival

The National Cherry Blossom Festival is the nation's greatest springtime celebration. The 2015 Festival, March 20 – April 12, includes three spectacular weeks and four weekends of events featuring diverse and creative programming promoting traditional and contemporary arts and culture, natural beauty, and community spirit. Visit [nationalcherryblossomfestival.org](http://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org) for more information, and find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).