



WHAT IS AN ECOTOUR?

An EcoTour is a small, guided bicycle or walking tour—ranging from a few hours to several days—that creates a unique, interactive forum for community leaders and the public to discuss local environmental achievements and concerns. EcoTours are designed to educate participants about a community's local environment by highlighting its environmental challenges, accomplishments, and commitments. EcoTours are unique experiences that encourage individual and community stewardship by helping participants identify how they can protect their community's environment.

THE ECOTOUR PROGRAM

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Biopesticides and Pollution Prevention Division (BPPD), in affiliation with Wholeness for Humanity (WFH), developed the *EcoTour Program* to:

- Foster community partnerships of diverse groups, such as government agencies (particularly at the local level), businesses, universities, environmental organizations, and citizens;
- Showcase local environmental achievements;
- Raise awareness about local environmental challenges;
- Encourage the adoption of more environmentally responsible behaviors, such as sustainable lawn and landscaping practices; and
- Increase public understanding of pests and pesticide risk.

The *EcoTour Program* places specific emphasis on how implementing sustainable lawn and landscaping practices on residential and commercial properties can positively impact a community's local waterways. By showcasing a community's best management practices that mitigate pesticide loading into waterways, the *EcoTour Program* works to change community attitudes and behaviors, while inspiring individual and community action.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION IN PEST MANAGEMENT

EPA promotes environmental stewardship throughout the Nation to protect human health and the environment by reducing risks of pests and pesticides through public-private partnerships, education, and other non-regulatory efforts. Through these partnerships, EPA is:

- Increasing public understanding of pests and pesticide risk;
- Assisting partners to decrease pesticide risk by adopting Integrated Pest Management (IPM), increasing the use of biological pesticides ("biopesticides"), minimizing the use of higher-risk conventional pesticides, and promoting reduced-risk pest management practices; and
- Assisting pesticide users to respond to EPA decisions due to higher human health regulatory standards.

THE 2007 ANNAPOLIS ECOTOUR—A SUCCESS!

In the spring of 2007, WFH hosted the *2007 Annapolis EcoTour* in Annapolis, Maryland, with both start-up funding and staff support contributed by EPA. This kickoff EcoTour focused on local environmental achievements and partnerships between non-government organizations (NGOs) and the City of Annapolis. Attendees were able to see multiple demonstration projects that reduce non-point source pollution through rain gardens, living shorelines, and conservation easements—to name a few. More than 50 demonstration projects were included in the *Annapolis EcoTour*.

The Annapolis EcoTour Experience

People participated in the *2007 Annapolis EcoTour* in a variety of ways:

- In a guided city walk, Steve Carr—Special Assistant to Mayor Ellen Moyer—identified how history and modern construction practices have come together to create a sustainable community in which people both live and work.
- While enjoying a boat ride around the famous naval city, participants had the opportunity to ask the Mayor and local department heads questions, while engaging in an open discussion about the environmental issues facing the city.
- A 20-mile bike ride through Annapolis gave participants the opportunity to see many of the environmentally sustainable practices used in the city—from green roofs to utility rights-of-way using Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)—all while using clean transportation.
- Participants enjoyed a mayoral dinner at a local restaurant featuring live music. At the dinner, Brent Blackwelder of Friends of the Earth presented Mike Busch, the Maryland House of Delegates Speaker, with an Environmental



Advocacy Award. EPA presented Mayor Moyer with an award, naming the City of Annapolis a Chesapeake Bay Partner Community, recognizing its commitment to protecting and restoring the Bay and its tributaries.

Local Recognition

A popular feature of the *Annapolis EcoTour* was the recognition of local businesses and action groups that work to protect the waterways of Annapolis:

- The Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Clean Marina Initiative was recognized for its efforts in assisting dock operators and boat owners to work toward protecting the waters and coastlines of the city.
- Severn Bank, an *Annapolis EcoTour* partner, was recognized for its green roof, which reduces stormwater runoff.

Parker Jones, an Annapolis community member, owns a local bicycle shop. Parker not only volunteered to provide logistical support for the *Annapolis EcoTour*, but he also supplied EcoTour participants with bicycle equipment from his shop. The experience inspired him to start his own outdoor social-networking group that emphasizes living by the principles demonstrated in the *EcoTour Program*.

A Success!

The *Annapolis EcoTour* is now a self-sustaining program and is being used as a model for planning EcoTours in communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. It successfully demonstrated that the unique experiences created by EcoTours can encourage individual and community stewardship by not only helping participants identify how they can protect their community's environment, but also inspiring them to take action. EPA and WFH will continue to be a partner in promoting future *Annapolis EcoTours*.

ST. MICHAELS ECOTOUR

Sponsored by Potomac Pedalers Touring Club, 185 participants attended the three-day *St. Michaels EcoTour* in St. Michaels, Maryland. Kicking off Earth Week 2008, participants enjoyed many events, including:

- Attending Bay Days (hosted by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum);
- Touring a private residence on 100 acres of waterfront property to demonstrate environmentally preferable landscaping;
- Touring the Audubon Pickering Refuge;
- Joining a guided tour of Blackwater Wildlife Refuge by Tom Horton, noted author of many books about the Chesapeake Bay; and
- Hiking, canoeing, and bird watching during a guided tour of the Jean Ellen DuPont Shehan Audubon Sanctuary.

The *St. Michaels EcoTour* provided an opportunity for participants to experience the local environment and gain a better appreciation of the importance of protecting natural resources and open spaces. Participants thoroughly enjoyed the weekend; they greatly appreciated the brochures that were distributed to educate participants about RainScaping and public health pests (such as mosquitoes and ticks). The *St. Michaels EcoTour* was such a success that plans to expand next year's event are already underway.

2008 CHERRY BLOSSOM ECOTOUR

As part of the year-long *Anacostia EcoTour Program*, the *2008 Cherry Blossom EcoTour* took participants on a 15-mile bike ride through Southeast Washington D.C., demonstrating the Capital's growing environmental achievements and citizen awareness. The *Cherry Blossom EcoTour* proudly hosted several of the Capital's regional dignitaries, including:

- Larry Silverman – Chairman of Montgomery County Water Quality Advisory Group
- Steve Carr – Noted journalist and Special Assistant to the Mayor of Annapolis
- Barbara Klieforth – Vice President of Washington Area Bicycle Association and Senior Scientist at EPA
- Larry Lesko – Assistant Director of the Fire and Aviation Management-National Fire Plan Office for the U.S. Forest Service

One particularly memorable highlight of the EcoTour was the 90-minute walking tour of National's Park, the newly-constructed home of the Nationals Major League Baseball team. The stadium is equipped with modern environmental innovations, such as an underground water filtration system, energy-efficient stadium lights, and a 6,300 square-foot green roof. Nationals Park is working toward becoming the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certified Major League ballpark in the country. Tommy Wells, elected Councilman for the D.C.'s WARD 6, met the group at the new baseball stadium to discuss recently passed environmental legislation regarding the stadium and the Southeast riverfront development.

Other *Cherry Blossom EcoTour* stops that generated a great deal of interest among participants included:

- A tour of a privately owned solar home in Southeast D.C.;
- A visit to an Anacostia River cleanup site;
- A trip to the Student Conservation Association's Urban Tree House in Anacostia Park;
- A beautiful ride through D.C.'s Southeast neighborhoods;
- A stop at the plaque honoring Lady Bird Johnson, a leading advocate in environmental stewardship and a strong supporter of Keep America Beautiful;
- A ride past the only hydrogen fuel station in the D.C. metropolitan area; and
- A tour of the conversation areas located on Kingman Island.

After reconvening at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Headquarters Building, EcoTour participants enjoyed a lively discussion about their experience and about the new environmental achievements and trends in D.C.

UPCOMING ECOTOUR EVENTS

2008 Anacostia EcoTour Program

Launched on January 21, 2008, the *Anacostia EcoTour Program* has many events scheduled throughout the year. The *Anacostia EcoTour Program* partners with local community leaders and citizens to organize EcoTours based on the partners' goals. The *Anacostia EcoTour Program* has compiled a list of more than 40 potential EcoTour stops from which partners can tailor their tour. Each EcoTour stop has been carefully selected to help participants discover Anacostia while showcasing D.C.'s strides toward environmental stewardship and sustainable development. The *2008 Cherry Blossom EcoTour*, part of the *Anacostia EcoTour Program*, was held at the beginning of April, just as D.C.'s cherry blossom trees were in full bloom. It was a huge success, earning praise from participants and a promise to be apart of future *Anacostia EcoTour Programs*.

The 2009 Grand EcoTour

In the fall of 2009, EPA and WFH will co-host a *Grand EcoTour*. The *Grand EcoTour* will bring participants on a 710-mile EcoTour throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. EcoTour stops will range from the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed in upstate New York to the southeastern shores of Virginia—where the Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean. The *Grand EcoTour* will:

- Focus on connecting local communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, emphasizing how individuals working with local government can affect both the neighborhood environment and the Bay;
- Raise awareness that there is a “dead zone”—where the water is so polluted, neither plants nor animals can live—that appears regularly every summer in the Bay; and
- Offer the theatrical performance, “Whatever Happened to the Dead Zone,” an environmental adaptation of Charles Dickens’s “A Christmas Carol” by Travelling Players.

Collaborative partners will raise awareness about how landscaping and other practices impact local watersheds, including the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and its many tributaries. The *2009 Grand EcoTour* will provide a forum for each community to showcase its best practices that mitigate pesticide loading into the Bay’s watershed. At each destination community this experience will include:

- Town hall meetings
- School visits
- Environmental-themed performances
- Small EcoTours throughout each destination community
- Recognition events for local environmental achievements

Please join us for this momentous event! You can participate in the entire *Grand EcoTour*, individual legs of the *Grand EcoTour*, small destination community EcoTours, and other destination community events using various modes of clean transportation—biking, biodiesel vehicles,

THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITIES WILL BE VISITED DURING THE GRAND ECOTOUR:

- COOPERSTOWN, NY
- ONEONTA, NY
- SCRANTON, PA
- WILKES-BARRE, PA
- HAZELTON, PA
- POTTSVILLE, PA
- HARRISBURG, PA
- LANCASTER, PA
- BALTIMORE, MD
- WASHINGTON, DC
- ANNAPOLIS, MD
- SALISBURY, MD
- CAPE CHARLES, VA
- VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

TERMS OFTEN HEARD ON AN ECOTOUR

RAINSCAPING is an environmental management technique that creates a natural ecosystem to help soil capture and filter rain water, conserving natural resources and reducing stormwater runoff. Examples include rain gardens; green roofs; pervious pavers; tree and riparian buffers; and rain barrels.

INTEGRATED VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (IVM) is the practice of promoting desirable, stable, low-growing plant communities—that will resist invasion by tall growing tree species—through the use of appropriate, environmentally-sound, and cost-effective control methods. These methods can include a combination of chemical, biological, cultural, mechanical, and/or manual treatments.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM) programs use current, comprehensive information regarding the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment. IPM strategies make use of this information in combination with available pest control technologies (including the judicious and careful use of pesticides, when necessary) to manage pests economically, and with the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment.

PARTNER WITH US

We are looking for collaborative partners—community leaders, citizens, and local businesses—who are interested in participating in an EcoTour or organizing an EcoTour in their community. Through our partnerships and awareness building efforts (such as distributing public health pest awareness brochures and handouts), we will build common measures of success for the *EcoTour Program* by increasing community knowledge, which will ultimately change behaviors and safeguard the environment.

For more information about these upcoming events or to partner with EPA, WFH, and Regional IPM Centers for the *EcoTour Program*, contact:

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