

Washington D.C. Area Schools Help Bring Back American Shad to the Potomac

For 11 years future conservationists and fisherman throughout the Washington D.C. area have been helping return the American shad to our river- the Potomac. Over 50 schools from Alexandria to Fairfax to Montgomery County and Washington D.C. have raised American shad in their schools and released them at sites below Great Falls and in the upper Anacostia. The program is planting the seeds of stewardship in area students that will last a lifetime.

This year 23 schools are raising shad in Fairfax, Montgomery, Charles and Baltimore Counties, the City of Alexandria and Washington D.C. The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin and Living Classrooms of the National Capital Area are coordinating the program. Students are building their tanks now and will get their shad eggs, collected with the help of the last commercial waterman in Fairfax County, VA, Louis Harley, on April 24. They will release their hatched shad fry five days later at Great Falls National Park and along the Anacostia River.

The exciting story of the students involvement in this project including their role in getting the fishway placed in the Little Falls Dam is the subject of a new book *Let the River Run Silver Again!* by local fisherwoman and author Sandy Burk. Chosen as the Izaak Walton League's Conservation Book of the Year for 2005, *Let the River Run Silver Again!* is spreading our city's conservation success story around the country as a message of hope that people really can make a difference for our rivers and fish.

Let the River Run Silver Again! tells the story of how Bethesda, Maryland's, Westbrook Elementary School together with over 50 other schools in the Washington D.C. area helped restore American shad to the Great Falls area of the Potomac River. This story follows student's involvement in the successful shad restocking program beginning in 1995 through eight subsequent years and the fishes return to Great Falls. It features an exciting adventure story told thru the eyes of students and their mentors as they help bring back the American shad and carry out projects such as tree plantings and rain gardens to help benefit the water quality of the Potomac River.

Let the river run silver again! was the rallying cry of students when they wrote letters to and visited their local politicians in Annapolis, MD and Congress to pressure the Corps of Engineers to put the fishway in Little Falls Dam in time for their returning shad to use it to return to Great Falls. The book provides useful information on how people, including fisherman, can help with or create their own exciting watershed restoration projects.

-Sandy Burk, Schools in Schools Shad Restoration Project, Sandyburk2@aol.com; 301-502-8833

For more information on *Let the River Run Silver Again!* visit www.mwpubco.com and for the Potomac river shad restoration project visit the Living Resources section of www.potomacriver.org