

# DC WATER - PINEY BRANCH TUNNEL **RESCHEDULED** - COMMUNITY MEETING

Wednesday, July 16, 2025



Join DC Water **Wednesday, July 16, 2025**, at the Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood Library for a community conversation about the upcoming **Piney Branch Tunnel Project**. DC Water's staff will talk about what's being built, how it will help make our local waterways cleaner and healthier, and what neighbors can expect during construction. It's your chance to ask questions and learn how we're working to protect our local streams and waterways.



**DATE:** July 16, 2025  
**TIME:** 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.



**MEETING LOCATION:**  
Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood Library  
3160 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW.

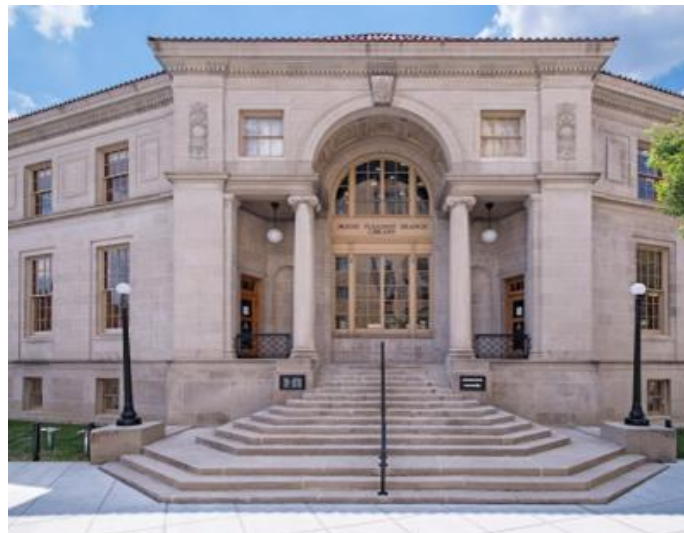
## PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION

**Project Email:**  
[dcpineybranch@dcwater.com](mailto:dcpineybranch@dcwater.com)

**Project Website:**  
[dcwater.com/pbs](http://dcwater.com/pbs)

**Public Outreach:**  
202-787-4148

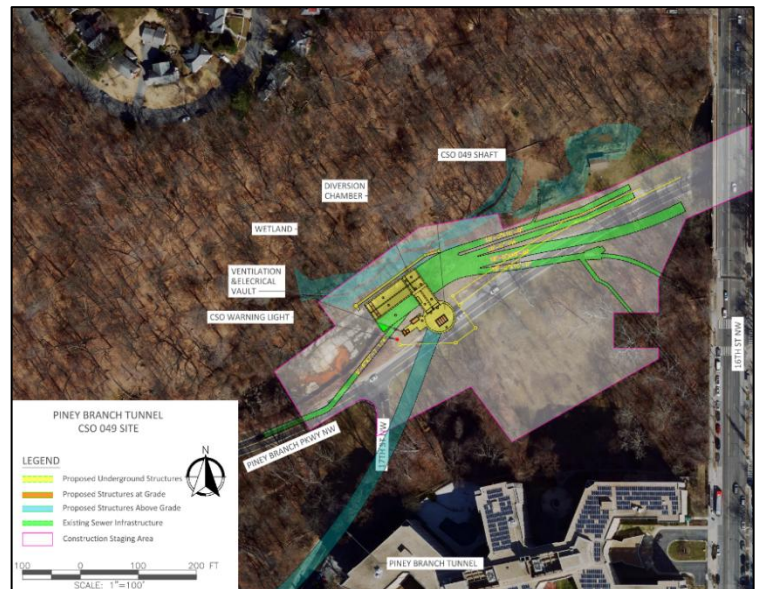
**DC Water 24-hour Emergency:**  
202-612-3400





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## BACKGROUND

DC Water is preparing to start construction on the Piney Branch Tunnel Project in Rock Creek Park, located in Northwest Washington, DC. The tunnel is part of the larger DC Clean Rivers Project to help make our local waterways cleaner and healthier. Right now, during heavy rains, the sewer system can exceed its capacity. If the system can't handle all the water, the overflow of stormwater and sewage may be released into Piney Branch.

Once completed, the tunnel is expected to cut these overflows by about 96% in an average rainfall year. That means instead of overflow events happening around 25 times a year, it might only happen once in a typical year. This work is important because those overflows pollute the Potomac River and, eventually, Chesapeake Bay. It's also part of a 2005 Federal Consent Decree entered by DC Water, the District of Columbia, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the US Dept. of Justice, as amended in January 2016.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT PINEY BRANCH

There are 23 locations in Piney Branch where these overflows happen, eventually draining into Rock Creek. The largest one (CSO 049) is near Piney Branch Parkway between Park Road and 16<sup>th</sup> Street Northwest. These overflows can raise bacteria levels, lower oxygen in the water (which harms fish and other wildlife), and add trash to the stream. On average, about 40 million gallons of untreated water (a mix of sewage and stormwater) spill into Piney Branch from this location every year. That's a big reason why Piney Branch is listed by the EPA as an impaired waterbody under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

To address this, DC Water is building a large tunnel deep underground able to hold over four million gallons of sewage and stormwater overflows during heavy storms. When the system is overwhelmed, the water will be diverted into the tunnel instead of spilling into Piney Branch. Later, when the sewer system has room again, the water in the tunnel will be sent to DC Water's Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant before being treated and then safely released into the Potomac River. Some trees will need to be removed to build the tunnel, but DC Water has worked with the National Park Service on a plan to plant new ones. Construction is expected to start in late 2025.