

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Stream Restoration Benefits Community

To the Editor:

In a recent edition of The Connection, there was a letter to the editor titled "Stream Project is Re-Design Not Restoration" in which the author tried to conclusively argue that Reston's Stream Restoration Project (Project) has progressed with little resident involvement. Actually, no Reston Association (RA) communitywide initiative, with the possible exception of the Nature House, has had more press and publicity for as long as the ongoing efforts to restore the many miles of stream channels in the Reston community.

Starting with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2003, the Project has been the subject of numerous news

SEE LETTERS. PAGE 10

## LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

letter and newspaper articles, Comcast cable spots and has had a continual presence on RA's Web site. At least 10 meetings have been held — all open to the public — to provide status reports to the RA board of directors and the Design Review Board (DRB). Since actual construction on Phase 1 of the Project began in February of this year, a community meeting has been held and there have been many "stream walks" led by staff from RA and the contractor, Wetland Studies and Solutions Inc. (WSSI).

RA has a long-standing and well-earned reputation as a committed steward of Reston's natural resources. By undertaking the development of a watershed management plan that quantified the severity of the stream erosion and water quality problems, Reston was uniquely positioned to take advantage of the opportunity to have many of its severely eroded stream channels restored to a stable, more ecologically diverse and aesthetically pleasing condition at no cost to the community. And, the cost is quite substantial

with estimates for construction at approximately \$900/linear foot. There are additional direct financial benefits to the community, such as close to \$3 million in new bridges, fees paid to RA and the Friends of Reston as stream credits are sold and the creation of a catastrophic event fund in the amount of \$5 million. Further, there will be a significant reduction in stream bank erosion as a result of the restoration; thus, providing the benefit of longer intervals between the dredging of each of our four lakes, which will save considerable dollars.

In addition to the direct financial benefits to the community, there will be many equally impressive benefits to the environment, both in Reston and downstream from Reston. One example of a benefit to the environment is the "by design" installation of wide and shallow streambeds in each reach. These designs simulate healthy and stable stream systems, which permit channel configurations that allow larger flood flows to once again be connected with the surrounding floodplain, slowing velocities and enabling vegeta-

tion to settle out and uptake pollutants. With the newly restored streams in place, the channel banks can and will vegetate, not only providing increased pollutant removal but also a significantly improved habitat that is virtually absent in the existing stream channels. All vegetation planted is native, including the trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants.

The Stream Restoration Project will be a multiyear effort that will eventually see many miles of stream channels in the Reston community returned to their natural state and fulfilling their naturally intended purpose. The completion of this Project is essential to the quality of life for all residents in Reston and paramount to the mission of the Reston Association, which is to protect and extend the life of the many environmental amenities in which it has been entrusted.

The Reston Association wants all residents of the community to monitor and be knowledgeable of this Project. However, for this to happen, the portrayal of the Project must be based on the facts. These facts are readily available and the staffs at RA and WSSI eagerly await your inquiries and other expressed interest in the Project. The next opportunity to meet and discuss the Project is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 2, starting at 7 p.m., in the Main Conference Room at the Reston Association's offices at 1930 Isaac Newton Square.

For all RA news, I encourage you to visit our Web site: [www.reston.org](http://www.reston.org) for updates on all our activities and to sign up for eNotices: [www.reston.org/enotices](http://www.reston.org/enotices).

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