



Jan. 23, 2009

## Glad to Have Restored Stream

To the [editor](#):

I would like to add my letter of support for the Reston stream restoration project to those that you have published recently.

Snakeden Branch flows behind my house. Prior to the stream restoration, Snakeden Branch was clearly an unhealthy stream. The stream channel was scoured. The bare dirt that comprised the banks was contributing to the heavy sediment loads that wash down the stream during storms and into Lake Audubon.

There were narrow bends on which the tall, old trees were barely hanging on. Most of their roots were dangling in midair, and it was only a matter of time until the stormwater eroded away the remnants of soil which held the trees in place.

Now, only a few months after the restoration work behind my house has been completed, the stream looks significantly improved. After a rain storm, the vegetation on the stream banks is flattened, but there are no longer any bare patches of dirt to contribute to the turbidity loads in the stormwater. The banks have been graded to allow stormwater to flow readily into the adjacent floodplain.

The bank segments susceptible to the greatest hydraulic forces during storm events have been lined with rocks to ensure the long-term stability of the stream channel. These rocks may not look like a natural stream bank, but we live in a densely developed setting that has more impervious surfaces than pervious surfaces. Because of our parking lots, roads, sidewalks, and houses, the majority of rain runs straight off into the streams without infiltrating into the ground. These conditions result in concentrated water flows through the channels that create significant stresses on the stream banks. The boulders are one way of protecting the stream channel from these forces.

Trees were cut down. Trees, however, will grow back. Stream channels do not grow back. They continue to degrade unless their channel configuration is altered to accommodate the stormwater runoff created by our impervious surfaces.

Yes, it is not the most pleasant of sights during construction, but the result is worth it. I, for one, am very glad that my house is along the stretch of stream that has been restored.

Cindy Crane

Reston