



MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Reston Residents

From: Mike Rolband – Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. (WSSI)
Larry Butler – Reston Association (RA)

Date: November 6, 2008

Re: Myths and Facts Regarding the Stream
Restoration Activities in Reston, Virginia
WSSI #20000 D

Some people are circulating inflammatory e-mails that contain misinformation regarding the ongoing stream restoration activities in Reston, Virginia.

This memo has been prepared to respond to these statements. Also, to put the ongoing construction in perspective, please take a look at the section that has been completed – Reaches 1-3 at Snakeden Branch. These four photographs show you both the current state of our streams due to uncontrolled runoff and the restoration progression.

Snakeden Branch – Reach 1



Pre-Construction



Construction

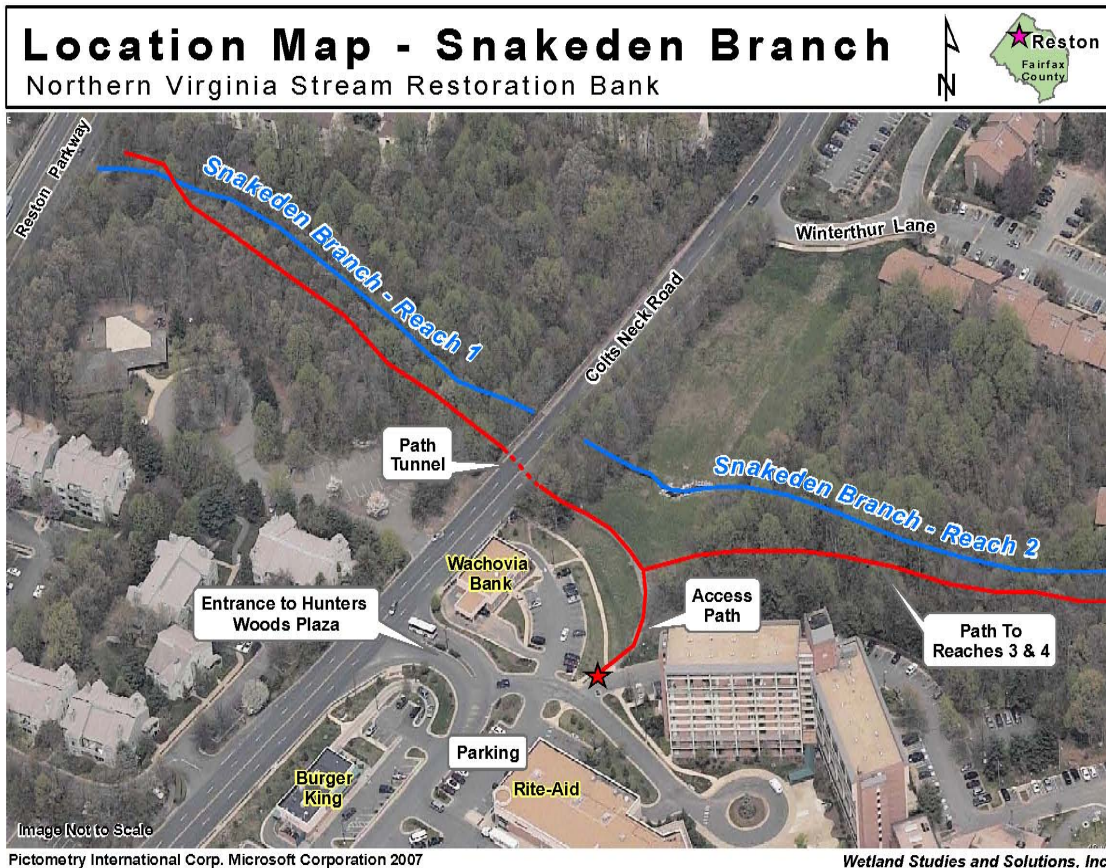


Post
Construction



4 Months After
Construction

The location of the completed Reaches of Snakeden Branch is shown below; parking is convenient at Hunter Woods Shopping Center.



Myth: There is no information on the Web regarding this project.

Fact: Visit <http://reston.wetlandstudies.com/> and http://www.reston.org/Nature/n_natural_resources.html.

Myth: Reston is not benefiting financially – not even from the sale of lumber.

Fact: The Reston Community *is* benefiting financially in many ways:

Bridges and Pathways:	\$3,000,000+ Every bridge is being replaced and designed to a much stronger standard, as well as to meet today's safety codes, with a projected 40+ years' life span. This will reduce Reston's liability (look at the railings) and future capital replacement and maintenance costs. Approximately 2.5 miles of pathway have been or will be
------------------------------	---

reconstructed through the process. In many cases, these pathways are reconstructed away from the stream channel that threatened them.

Catastrophic Event Fund:	\$5,000,000 plus interest 5% of all sale proceeds are placed in interest bearing escrow accounts to be turned over upon completion of 10 years of monitoring and maintenance by NVSR to provide funds <i>in case</i> a storm event occurs that causes damages requiring repairs. Currently, <i>no funds</i> are available for such issues unless paid for by RA dues.
Fees to Friends of Reston	\$950,000 NVSR's financial partner donated \$250,000 to Nature House and a fee is paid as credits are sold, which are projected to yield almost a million dollars (fee increases over time).
Reston Association Fees:	\$450,000 Paid as credits are sold with \$450,000 projected over time.
Reduced Dredging and Bridge Maintenance:	RA has dredged Lake Audubon every six to eight years since owning the lake. Approximately 10,000 cubic yards are removed each time, with the last dredging costing approximately \$500,000, or an annualized cost (seven years) of \$71,000. Post restoration, the frequency will be reduced; and if the schedule is every 12–16 years, the annualized cost will be half (in constant dollars).

To put these financial benefits in perspective with the claim that RA is not being compensated for the value of the timber - the value of the timber harvested in Snakeden Branch is approximately \$7,500 (\$150 / truckload).

Myth: The proposed stream restoration will be damaged in 5-year storm events.

Fact: The completed sections of Snakeden Branch have already been tested by a 10-year event in April *and a 100-year event* (visit <http://reston.wetlandstudies.com/>). It is a resilient ecological system designed to accommodate these events – and as the vegetation grows, this bioengineered system will gain strength.

Myth: No one regulates this project.

Fact: The operation of the mitigation bank is regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation also inspects the project.

Myth: The new bridge's foundation will wash away, as did one 5-year old bridge in The Glade recently.

Fact: This project is constructing bridges that are wider and better protected than the current bridges in Reston and designed to withstand the impact of a 100-year storm. Historically, to save money, bridge widths were constricted. As you can see in the first 7 bridges we have built for this stream project, they span bank to bank without constriction and showed no stress from the recent 100-year storm – confirming the robust design.

Myth: No one will make sure we correctly maintain the stream during its 10-year monitoring period and NVSR will walk away once they finish construction.

Fact: 15% of all sale proceeds are placed in Escrow. Only after each annual monitoring report showing that the success criteria are met and all needed maintenance activities completed with approval from the Chair of the Mitigation Bank Review Team (the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), will the Escrow Agent release 1/10 of these funds each year. These **+\$15 million funds** provide the financial assurance that the work will be done correctly and appropriately monitored and maintained.

Myth: It is cheaper to do nothing.

Fact: The stream erosion – due to a lack of proper stormwater treatments – is exposing sewers (which then break) and other utility lines, washing out bridges and trails, causing trees to fall as the stream widens, and exporting sediments, phosphorus, and nitrogen that require significant dredging costs and cause downstream water quality degradation. The bulk of sediments entering Lakes Audubon, Anne, Thoreau, and Newport are the direct result of stream channel erosion.

RA staff (construction and repair, arborist, resource staff, etc.) has spent considerable time doing band-aid fixes to many stream related problems, as mentioned just above. There will be time and material savings in not having to do these often temporary fixes protecting infrastructure or removing safety hazards.

Myth: The streams need to be even bigger unless Reston builds stormwater ponds.

Fact: The stream widths and cross-sectional areas are sized for the current level of imperviousness in the watershed. Future redevelopment that increases stormwater flows is now required by Fairfax County to provide stormwater management so flows will not increase – and citizen involvement can make sure that this does happen.

Truth: The streams could be smaller if we build stormwater facilities throughout Reston or reduce impervious areas to original conditions.

Reality Check: Who will allow their lands to be used for the numerous stormwater facilities to reduce the flow rates to forested conditions? Who will pay for those facilities (at a planning level cost estimate of \$50,000/acre [which many say is too low]) or over \$300 million?

Myth: There has been no public discussion of this project.

Fact: The concept of stream restoration in Reston was first developed by RA's citizen Ecology and Environment Committee and described in a white paper in July 2000. This led to a watershed plan funded by RA and developed in conjunction with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, Fairfax County's Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, and Reston's Watershed Action Group (RESWAG). Over ten (10) public meetings were part of this watershed planning process.

RA was only able to raise funds for less than 1,000 feet in the ensuing years – leading Restonians, such as Robert E. Simon and Chuck Veatch, to search for funding options.

The result was an agreement in 2003 that was discussed in public meetings by the RA Board prior to approval and recordation. There have been numerous public updates at the RA Board meetings and DRB meetings, and citizen tours. Information has been posted on the RA Web site, and broadcast on the Comcast cable shows and public service announcements, as well as in RA's newsletters. The project was also the subject of numerous articles in local papers, beginning in 2003 with the signing of the MOA. In fact, with the possible exception of Nature House, no RA project has received more exposure in the past decade.

In fact, this project is *The Result* of over 10 years of public involvement.