

# Reston restores streams

By Claire Compton

**Reston's streams have taken a beating since development took off in the 1960s. More buildings and parking lots mean more impermeable surfaces, which force more water into the nearly 19 miles of streams in Reston.**

The increased flow in the streams has meant steady erosion over the decades. Typical of the interconnectedness of ecological systems, the stream erosion has affected Reston's four lakes, as they have born the brunt of an increase in sediment deposits.

After a collaborative effort among the county, the Reston Association and a private company, a plan to restore the streams and prevent further erosion launched on Tuesday at the United Christian Church sanctuary at Hunters Woods. The project is being undertaken by Northern Virginia Stream Restoration LLC, a subsidiary of Wetland Studies and Solutions Inc.

The price tag for the anticipated five-year restoration period is estimated at \$65 million to \$70 million, but Reston residents will not have to pay for any of it.

The funds for the project will come from companies that buy stream mitigation credits from the federally coordinated stream mitigation bank. Companies that affect stream resources in Northern Virginia will buy credits from the Northern Virginia Stream Restoration Bank in Reston, which was approved in February 2006.

One of the biggest clients so far as been Washington Dulles International Airport, which bought credits when it was constructing a runway.

Mike Rolband, who founded WSSI, said the company has surveyed more than 30,000 trees in the past three years and surveyed the 14 miles of streams that will be restored. He cautioned that the construction phase may not belie what the final product will look like.

"We have to cut a bunch of trees down. Once it grows in, it's really amazing, but it's a little messy while we're doing it," he said.

Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill) said she was excited about the project both as Reston's representative and a Reston homeowner.

"This makes sure that what we see in the community is what we saw as a child. This is consistent with who we are as Restonians," she said.

Hudgins also thanked the Reston Association's staff and environmental volunteers for the hours they've dedicated to the project.

That has primarily been through education and outreach to residents and clusters. Parts of the streams targeted for restoration required coordination with cluster associations, which RA staff sought tirelessly, said RA Director of Parks and Recreation Larry Butler. Watershed Supervisor Nicki Foremsky especially "sunk her teeth into this," he said.

"They've really done a good job educating people, including our board, about the benefits of this project," Butler said.

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