

Stormwater Control & Stream Restoration: What Works and What Does Not

V127

Rockville Science Day: April 21, 2024

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Photo by K. Bawer, 10/21/2021)

Full Disclosure

I have no direct or indirect financial interest in the practice of stormwater control or stream “restorations.”



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AGENDA

- Drivers of stormwater control:
 - non-regulatory & regulatory
- Types of stormwater control projects:
 - out-of-stream & in-stream
- In-stream projects: stream “restoration” examples
- What does the science say?
- Cost
- Summary
- What can you do?

Solitaire Court, Gaithersburg video (3:44)

<https://youtu.be/NvTvPnG6Qs8>

Fall 2021



(<https://youtu.be/NvTvPnG6Qs8>)



Solitaire Court, Gaithersburg video (3:44)



Solitaire Court, Gaithersburg video (3:44)



Solitaire Court, Gaithersburg video (3:44)



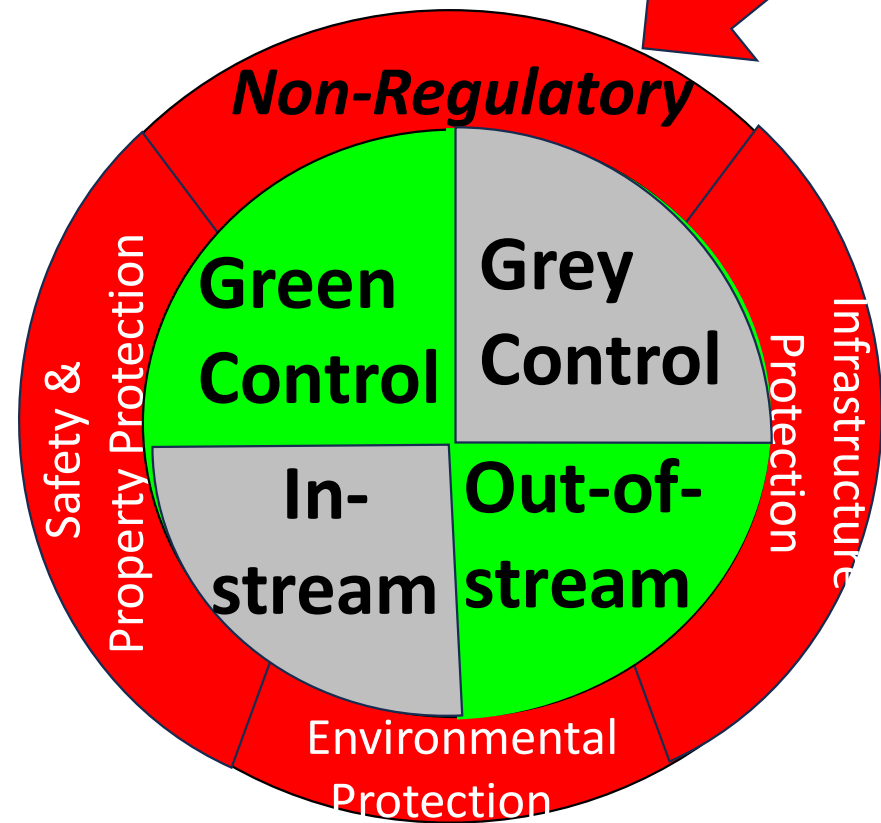
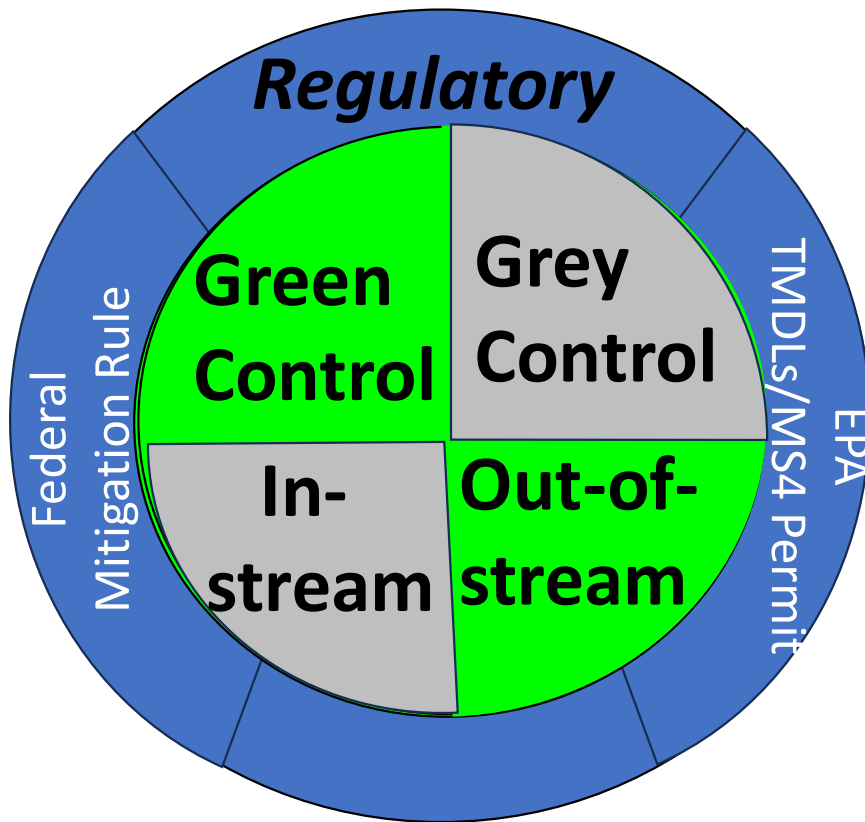
Solitaire Court, Gaithersburg video (3:44)



Solitaire Court, Gaithersburg video (3:44)



Drivers of stormwater control



The Need for Stormwater Control

Rock Creek Woods Apartments, 13205 Twinbrook Parkway, Rockville, 9/1/2021



(WUSA video)

The Need for Stormwater Control



The Need for Stormwater Control

Bedfordshire, Potomac, MD

Environmental
Damage



(By K. Bawer,
10/17/2023)

Urban tree
planting

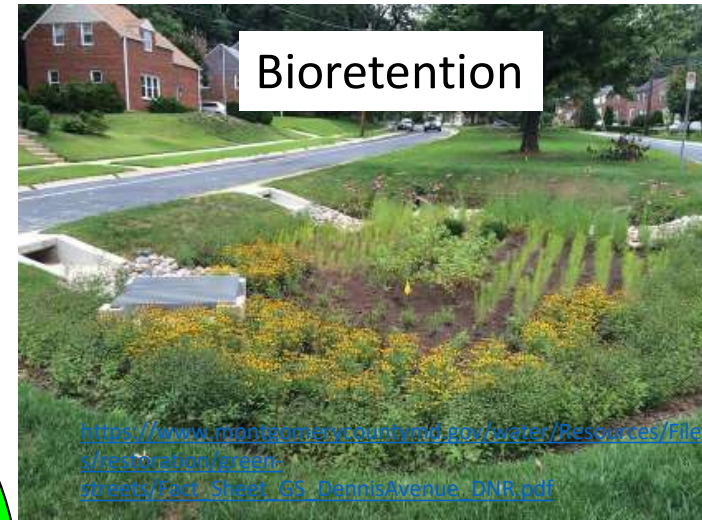


[Tree lined Street Neighborhood | Street lines, Tree line, Street](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/1000000000000000000/)
[pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/1000000000000000000/)

Types of stormwater control

Out-of- stream Stormwater Control

Bioretention



https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/water/Resources/Files/restoration/green-streets/Fact_Sheet_GS_DennisAvenue_DNR.pdf

Underground modular
stormwater storage



<https://www.fengsong-us.com/product/r-tank-1000000000000000000/>

Permeable pavement



(By permission of Ernest
Maier company)

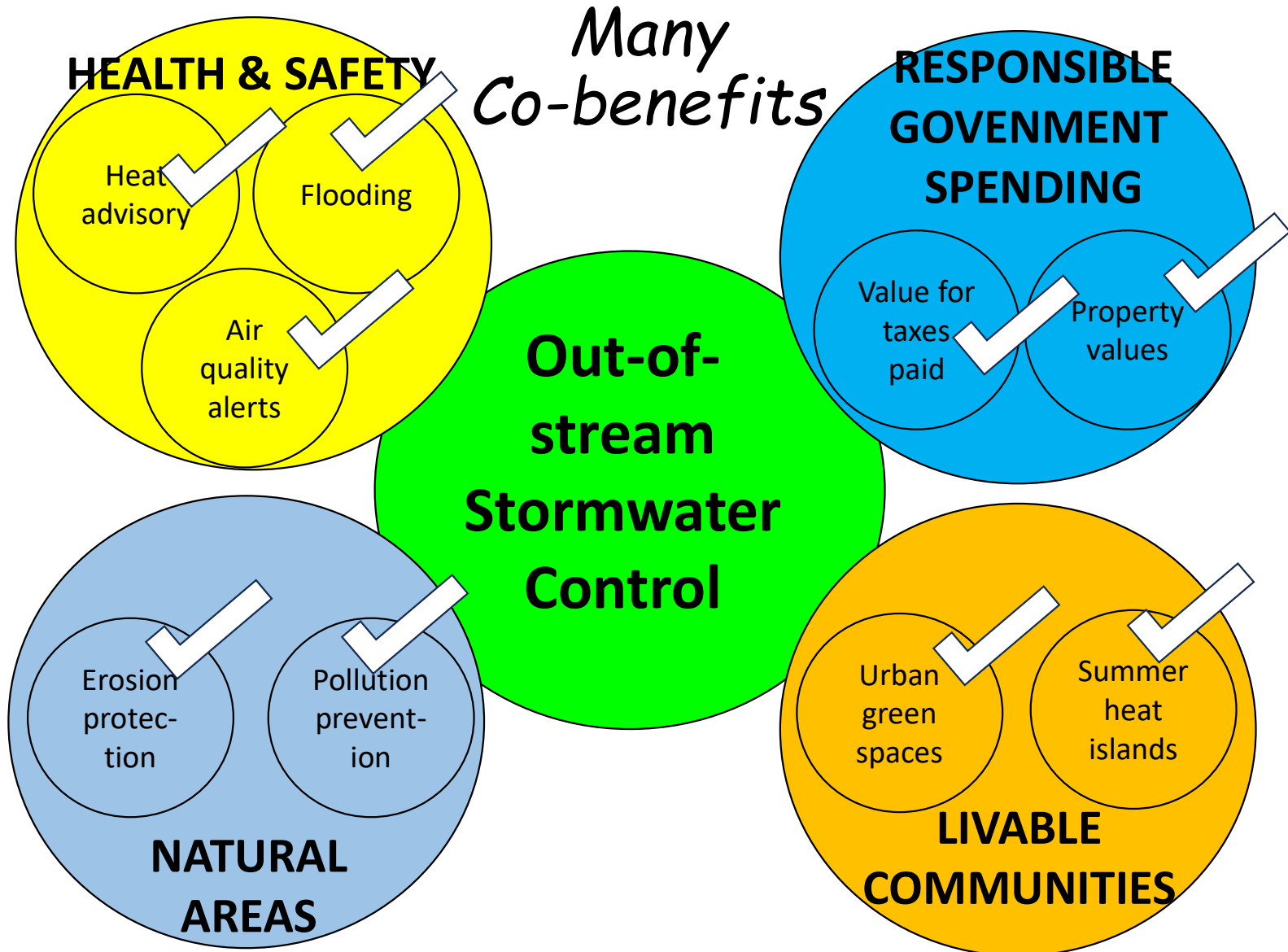
DC's Blue Plains, Anacostia, & Potomac River Tunnel Projects

<https://potomac.org/blog/4/1/2024-potomac-tunnel-updates>



**Out-of-stream
Stormwater
Control**

Alexandria's RiverRenew Tunnel Project



Types of stormwater control

In-stream Stormwater Control



Stream “restoration”

Watts Branch, Rockville



Stream “restoration”

Montgomery Park



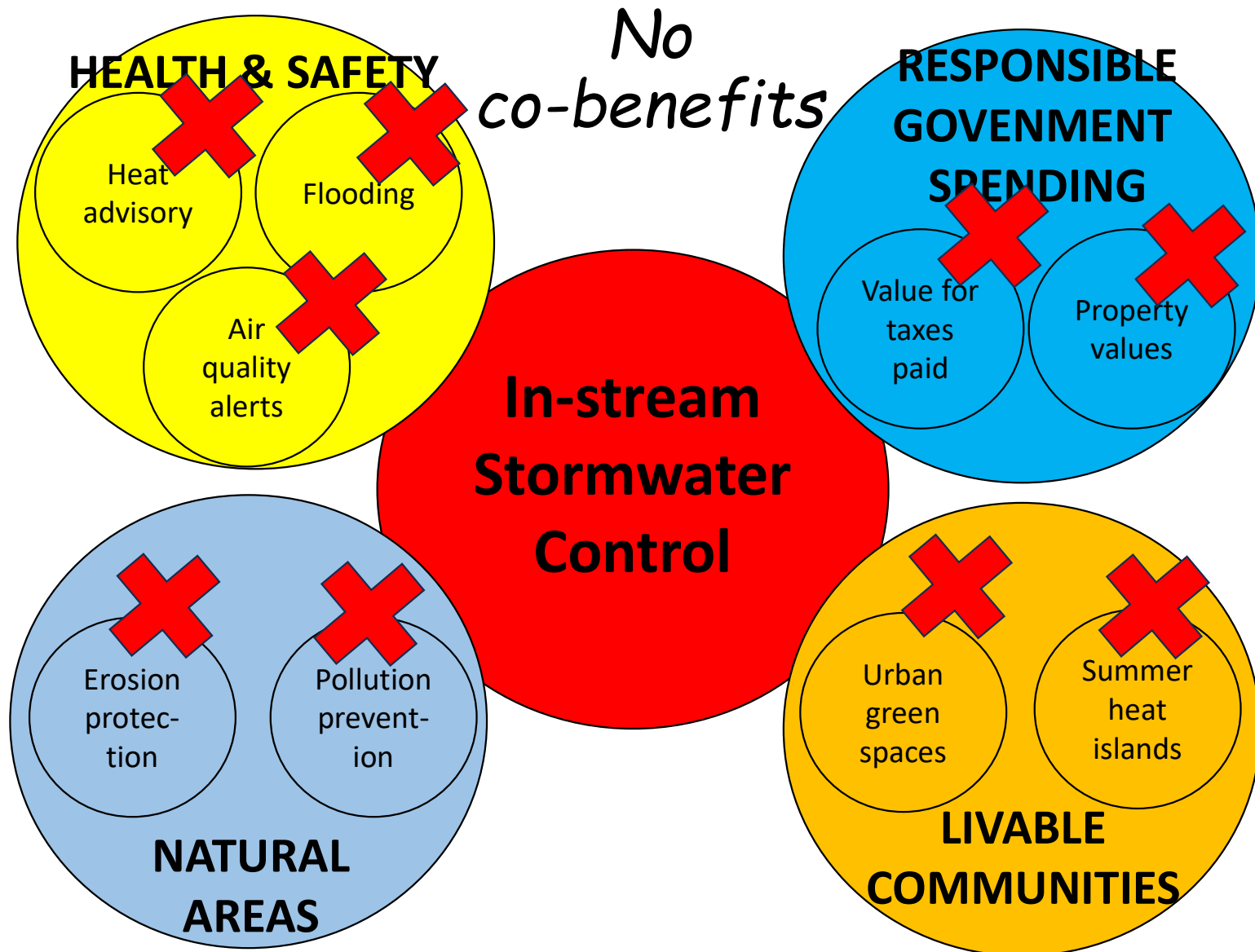
Howard County

Stream “restoration”

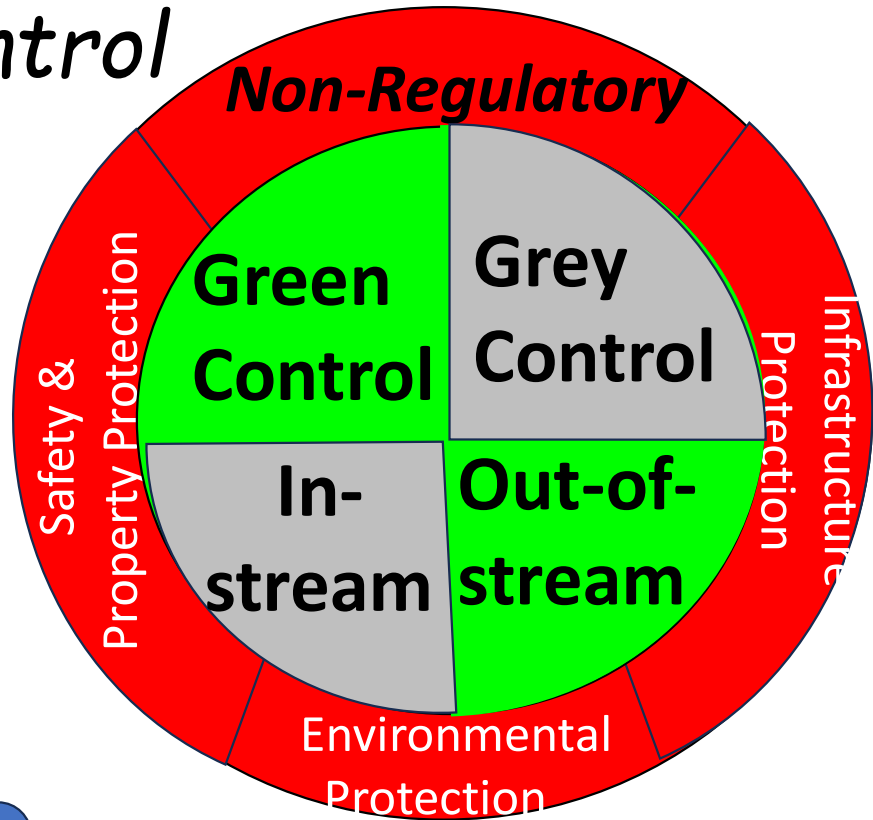
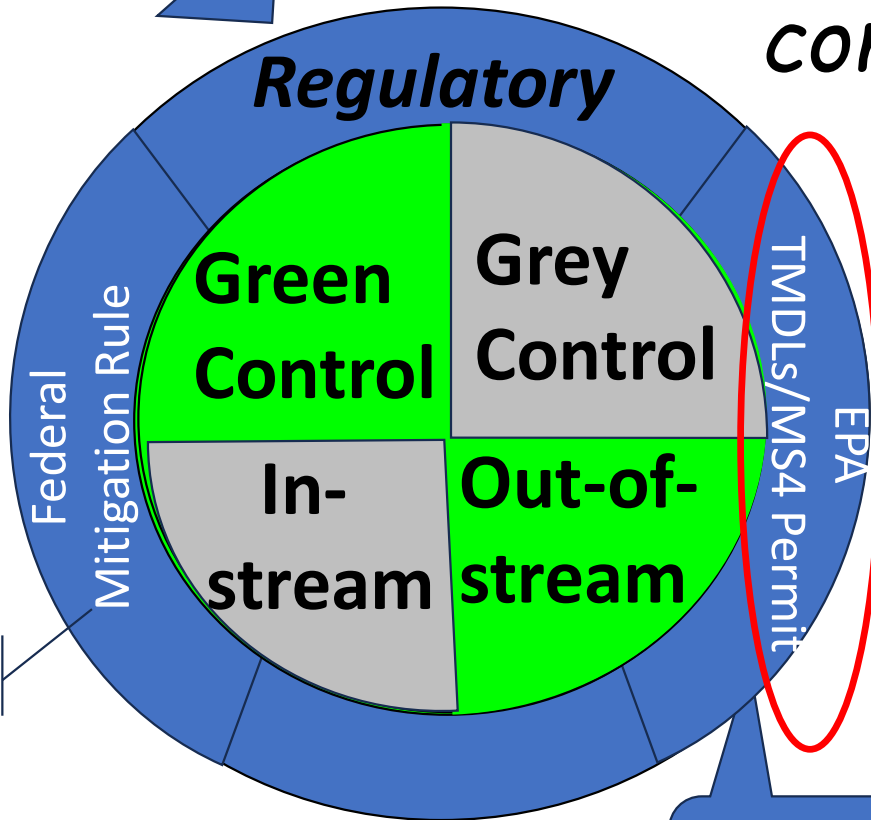
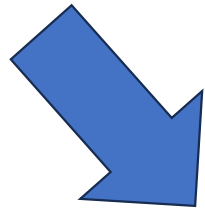


Solitaire Ct, Gaithersburg


Stream “restoration”



Drivers of stormwater control



Problem: excess nutrients and sediment in Bay



Solange Filoso

- Excess nutrients and sediment have degraded the Bay's water quality for decades, leading to the establishment of a total maximum daily load (TMDL) by the EPA in 2010

With TMDL as a regulatory driver, restoration projects have increasingly focused on reducing pollutant loads, especially TN, TP and suspended sediment (TSS).

14:14 / 1:05:15

("Stream Restoration: Is it Helping Our Streams and the Chesapeake Bay?" Solange Filoso, U MD, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, April, 21, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BowrQkMfaE>)

Direct Regulatory Drivers: MS4 Permits for urban/suburban areas

Montgomery
County

Montgomery
Parks

City of Rockville

City of
Gaithersburg

City of Takoma
Park

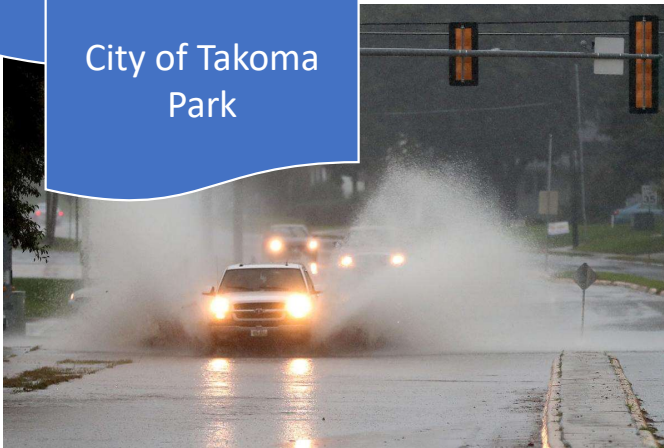


MARYLAND

Department of the Environment

Maryland's NPDES Municipal Separate
Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permits

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/StormwaterManagementProgram/Pages/MS4-Landing.aspx>)



N, P, S



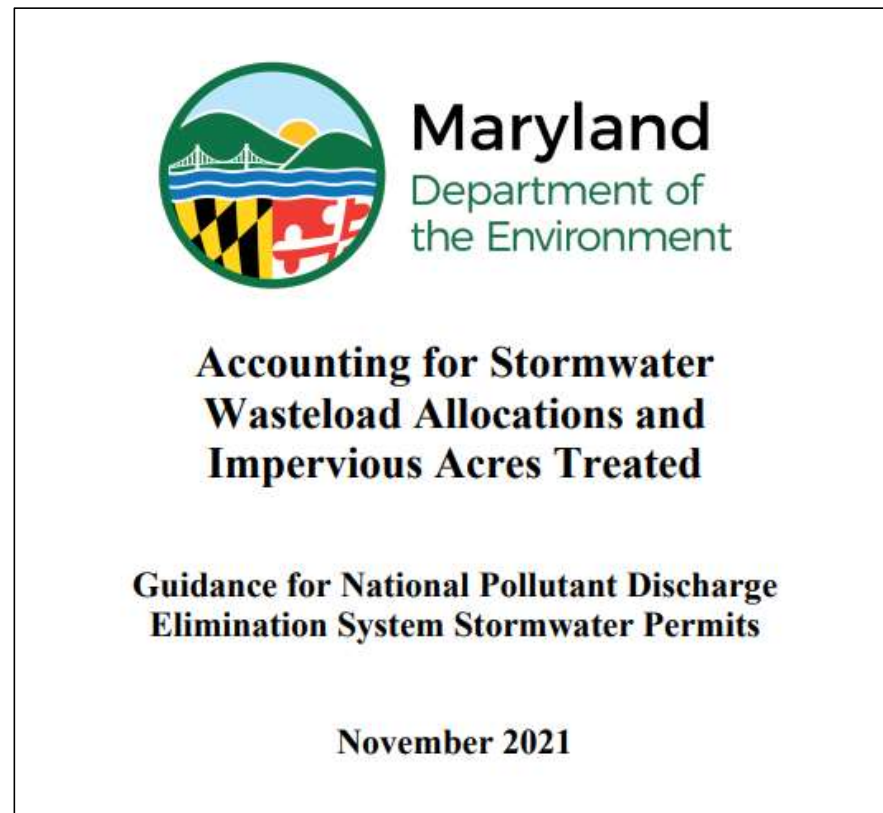
(From wfcourier.com)



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwYk9x8ldw8>)

Stormwater Control Practices

- MS4 Permit “Accounting Guidance” document.
- Long list of practices that can be used to meet the MS4 Permit.

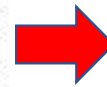


<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/StormwaterManagementProgram/Documents/Final%20Determination%20Dox%20N5%202021/MS4%20Accounting%20Guidance%20FINAL%2011%2005%202021.pdf>

Non-destructive, out-of-stream methods: all except one

Table 1. EIA_r and Load Reductions for Alternative BMPs

BMP	Load Reductions (lbs/unit/vr)			EIA _r
	TN	TP	TSS	
Advanced Sweeping				Per Mile Swept
1 pass/12 weeks	0.00	0.07	401	0.027
1 pass/8 weeks	0.26	0.14	802	0.059
1 pass/4 weeks	0.36	0.21	1,203	0.087
Spring 1 pass/1-2 weeks else monthly	0.36	0.28	1,404	0.106
Spring & Fall 1 pass/1-2 weeks else monthly	0.73	0.34	2,005	0.148
1 pass/2 weeks	0.73	0.34	2,206	0.156
1 pass/week	1.09	0.55	3,209	0.235
2 passes/week	1.46	0.69	4,211	0.304
Mechanical Broom Sweeping				Per Mile Swept
1 pass/4 weeks	0.00	0.00	20	0.001
1 pass/week	0.00	0.00	100	0.004
2 passes/week	0.00	0.00	201	0.008
Storm Drain Cleaning				Per Ton Removed
Organic	4.44	0.48	400	0.17
Inorganic	3.78	0.84	1,400	0.25
Floating Treatment Wetlands (% of pond wet surface area covered by FTW)				Per Impervious Acre
FTW1 (10%)	0.10	0.02	74	0.008
FTW2 (11-20%)	0.22	0.05	151	0.017
FTW3 (21-30%)	0.32	0.07	225	0.026
FTW4 (31-40%)	0.43	0.09	295	0.034
FTW5 (41-50%)	0.53	0.11	369	0.042
Land Cover Conversion				Per Acre of Land Cover Converted
Forest Planting	11.12	1.78	2,805	1.10
Riparian Forest Planting	14.34	2.50	4,411	1.50
Conservation Landscaping	5.24	0.53	0.00	0.37
Riparian Conservation Landscaping	6.75	0.74	0.00	0.50



BMP	Load Reductions (lbs/unit/vr)			EIA _r
	TN	TP	TSS	
<i>Table 1 Continued</i>				
Forest Conservation	10.57	1.10	2,465	0.46
Impervious Surface Reduction	6.96	0.45	5,241	0.71
Street Trees	3.10	0.76	1,404	0.40
Urban Tree Canopy Planting	3.20	0.50	206	0.28
Urban Soil Restoration of Compacted Pervious Surfaces (soil excavation depth in inches)				Per Acre of Soil Treatment
Level 1 (15 inches)	4.4	0.72	278	0.40
Level 2 (20 inches)	8.9	1.44	557	0.80
Urban Soil Restoration of Removed Impervious Surfaces (soil excavation depth in inches)				Per Acre of Soil Treatment
Level 1 (15 inches)	13.7	0.7	1,696	0.91
Level 2 (20 inches)	15.0	0.77	1,864	1.00
Septic ¹				Per System
Septic Pumping	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02
Septic Denitrification	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.16
Septic to WWTP Connection	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.23
Shoreline Management ² /Stream Restoration and Outfall Stabilization ³				Per Linear Foot
Shoreline Management (Default Rate)	0.173	0.122	328	0.04
Stream Restoration (Planning Rate)	0.075	0.068	248	0.02
Outfall Stabilization (Planning Rate)	0.075	0.068	248	0.02
Elimination of Discovered Nutrient Discharges from Grey Infrastructure ⁴				Per Discharge
Elimination of Eight Approved Discharge Types	Protocol	Protocol	0.00	Individually Calculated

The stream "restoration" loophole: Allows use of stream "restorations" as alternative to directly addressing stormwater pollution – gift to \$25B industry

Non-destructive, out-of-stream methods (continued)

Table 2. Stormwater BMPs for Upland Applications

Runoff Reduction (RR) Practices		Stormwater Treatment (ST) Practices	
Manual Reference	Practice	Manual Reference	Practice
Infiltration		Ponds	
M-3	Landscape Infiltration	P-1	Micro-Pool Extended Detention (ED)
M-4	Infiltration Berm	P-2	Wet Pond
M-5	Dry Well	P-3	Wet ED Pond
Filtering Systems¹		P-4	Multiple Pond
F-6	Bioretention	P-5	Pocket Pond
M-2	Submerged Gravel Wetland	Wetlands²	
M-6	Micro-Bioretention	W-1	Shallow Wetland
M-7	Rain Garden	W-2	ED Shallow Wetland
M-9	Enhanced Filter	W-3	Pond/Wetland System
Open Channel Systems		W-4	Pocket Wetland
O-1	Dry Swale	Infiltration¹	
M-8	Grass Swale	I-1	Infiltration Trench
M-8	Bio-Swale	I-2	Infiltration Basin
M-8	Wet Swale	Filtering Systems	
Alternative Surfaces		F-1	Surface Sand Filter
A-1	Green Roof	F-2	Underground Filter
A-2	Permeable Pavement	F-3	Perimeter Filter
A-3	Reinforced Turf	F-4	Organic Filter
Other Systems		F-5	Pocket Filter
M-1	Rainwater Harvesting		
<p>Notes:</p> <p>¹ A dry channel regenerative step pool stormwater conveyance system is considered a stormwater retrofit by the CBP Stream Restoration Expert Panel. This practice may use the BMP code SPSD and use the same pollutant load reductions as a filtering practice. The impervious area draining to these practices may be considered treated in accordance with the design rainfall depth treated (P_t) for crediting purposes.</p> <p>² Stormwater wetlands, infiltration trenches, and infiltration basins are ST practices unless designed according to Section VI.</p>			

(Copied from "Accounting Guidance" document)

Stream “restorations” don’t address the root cause

- Root cause of stream erosion: uncontrolled stormwater runoff from impervious upland surfaces (roofs, roads, parking lots, etc.)
- Firehoses into streams causing erosion.



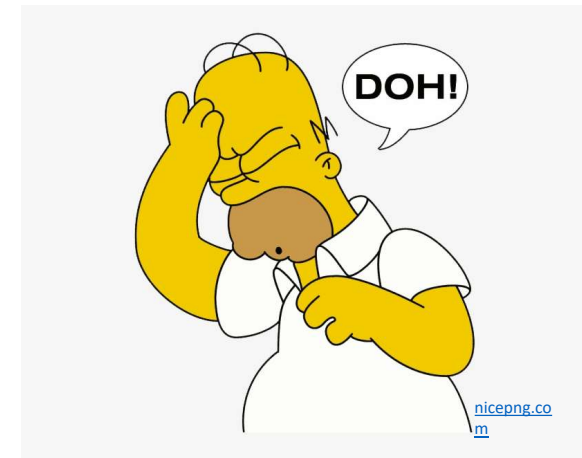
(From
wcfcourier.com)



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwYk9x8ldw8>)

The folly of stream “restorations”

Doing a stream “restoration” instead of controlling stormwater BEFORE it enters a stream is like...



(xxx)

...trying to repair water-damaged furniture while the roof is still leaking. 175

Examples of BAD stream “restorations”

...they are ALL bad

Stream “Restorations” Don’t Restore Streams

Nature Forward (formerly ANS), Chevy Chase



206

(3/26/2021. downstream from Jones Mill Rd. Photos by K. Bawer)

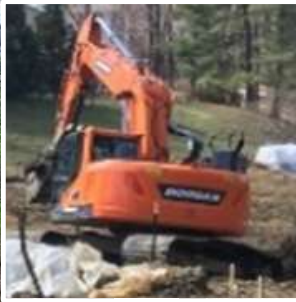
“Stream Restorations” don’t restore streams

Falls Reach, Potomac, MD

This is a bad
stream
“restoration” -
they are ALL
bad!



BEFORE



AFTER

Before Montgomery County DEP “stream restoration” on Falls Reach. (Photo by DEP)

After “stream restoration” on Falls Reach completely destroyed the forest community in its footprint. (Photo by K. Bawer on 3/19/2019)

Stream “Restorations” Don’t Restore Streams

Bedfordshire, Potomac, MD

Blocks aquatic wildlife from moving along the streams to hunt and breed.

This is a bad stream “restoration” - they are ALL bad!

Creates hazardous conditions for people.

(By K. Bawer,
10/17/2023)

Stream “Restorations” Don’t Restore Streams

Asbury Methodist Village, Montgomery County



Stream “Restorations” Don’t Restore Streams

Upper Watts Branch, Rockville



clipartbest.com

Stream “Restorations” Don’t Restore Streams

Whetstone Run, Gaithersburg

BEFORE



AFTER



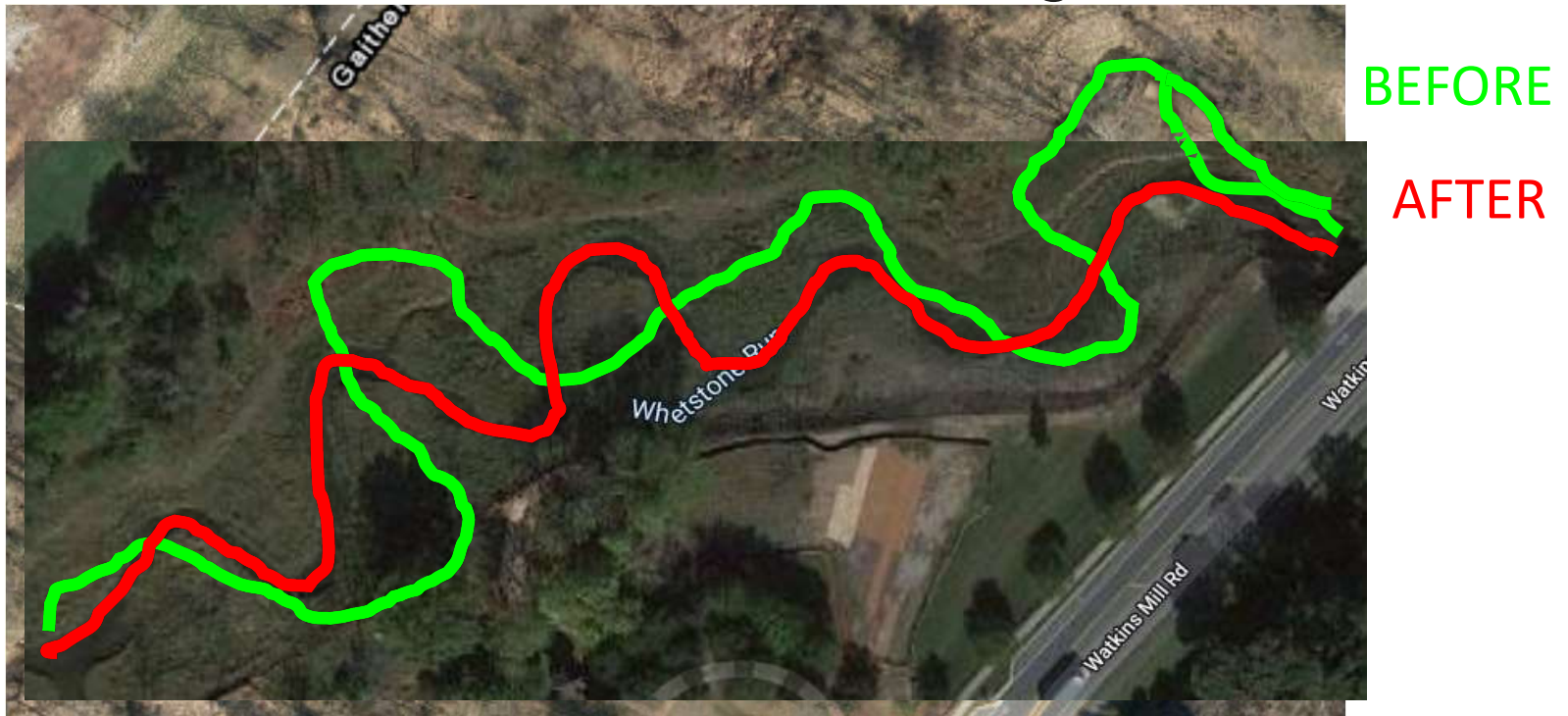
This is a bad stream "restoration" - they are ALL bad!



(Stream “restoration” in Blohm Park, Gaithersburg at Watkins Mill Rd. over Whetstone Run at the same location. Note the stream bank armor-plating on the right. (Left on 9/3/2020; right on 5/03/2021); by K.Bawer)

Stream “Restorations” Don’t Restore Streams

Whetstone Run, Gaithersburg



- Dug a whole new channel (red) and filled in the natural one (green).
- The more they engineer the stream, the longer the project, the more money they make. The jurisdiction also gets more MS4 permit credits.

Stream “Restorations” Don’t Restore Streams

Solitaire Court, Gaithersburg



Stream “Restorations” Don’t Restore Streams

Solitaire Court stream “restoration”, Gaithersburg

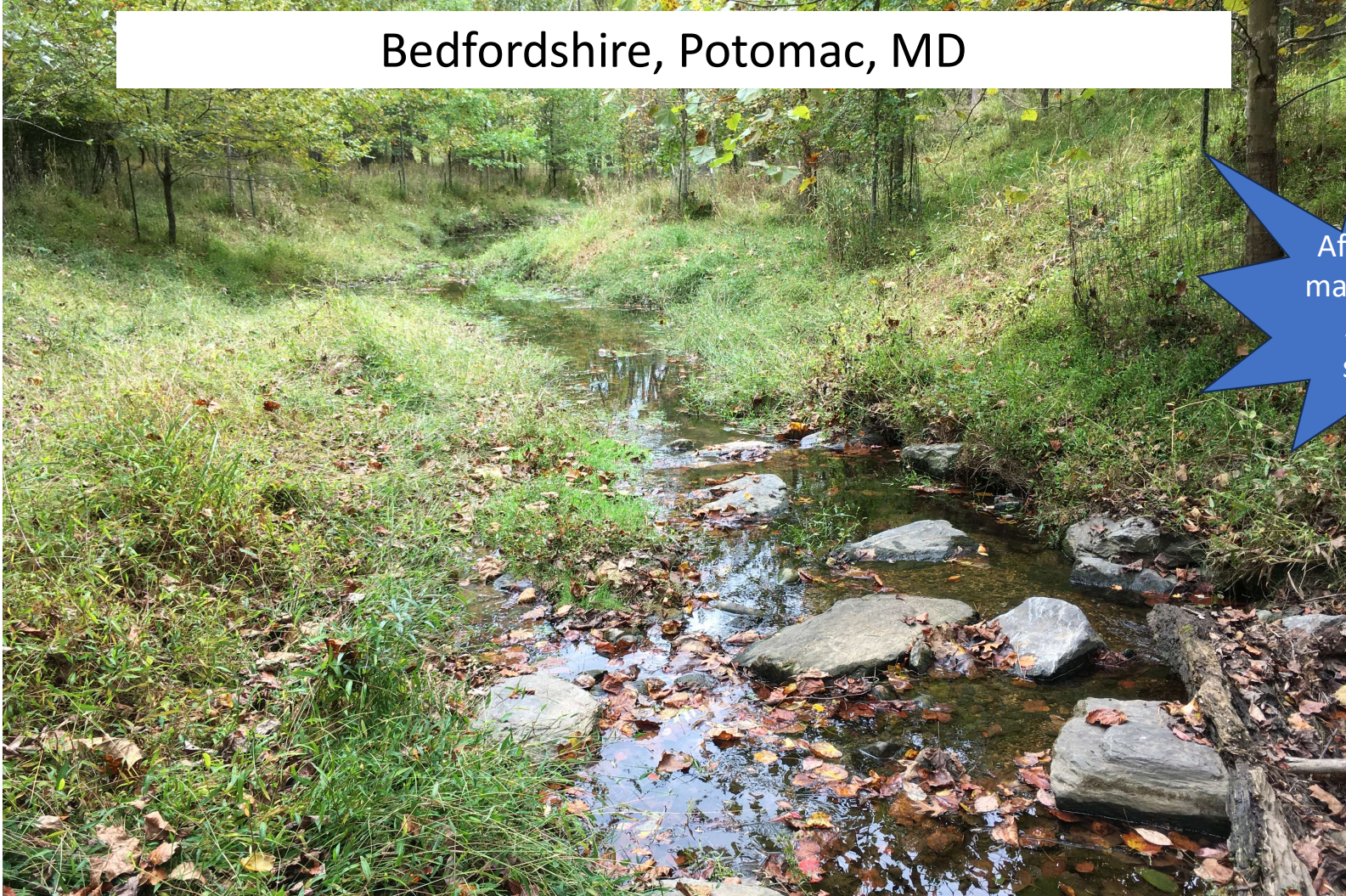
This is a bad
stream
“restoration” -
they are ALL
bad!



(<https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/government/projects-in-the-city/solitaire-court-stream-restoration-project>)

Impact of non-native invasive plants

Bedfordshire, Potomac, MD



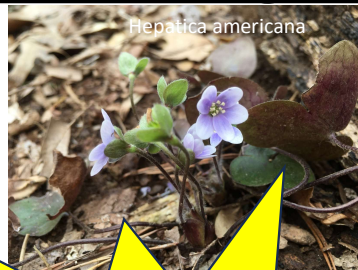
After 7 years,
mainly invasive
Japanese
stiltgrass!

(By K. Bawer, 10/17/2023)

Collateral damage: wildflowers & animals destroyed



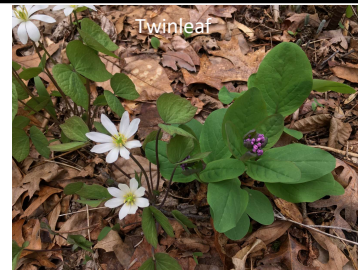
American toad



Hepatica americana



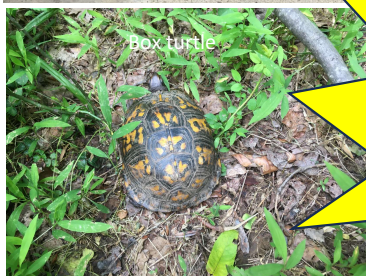
Blood root



Twinleaf



Toadshade trillium



Box turtle

This is what the greenwashing presentations don't talk about.



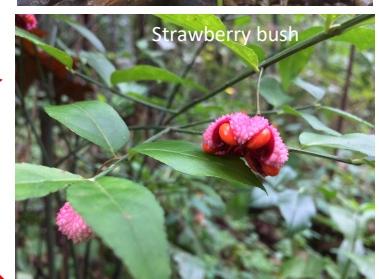
aviationpros.com



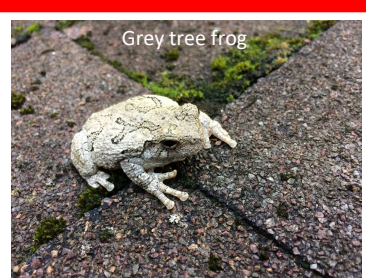
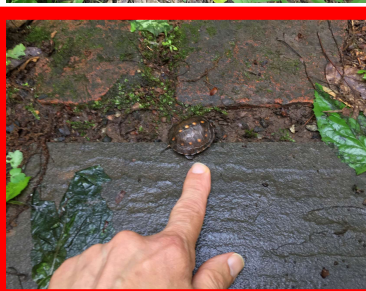
(By City of Rockville)



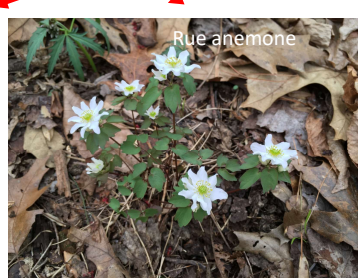
Crane fly orchid



Strawberry bush



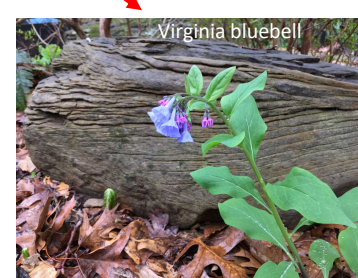
Grey tree frog



Rue anemone



Dutchman's breeches



Virginia bluebell



Wood frog

Collateral damage at Whetstone Run stream “restoration”

Trapped dead box turtle

(photo by R. Portonova, 6/10/2022)

What happens to aquatic life? See next slide

Inkart.net

https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/documents/Freshwater_Poster.pdf



Inland Fishes of Maryland

Brown Trout
MAX AGE 38 YRS, MAX SIZE 110 LBS (50 KG)
STATE RECORD: 18.3 LBS, 2001¹

Brook Trout
MAX AGE 24 YRS, MAX SIZE 21 LBS (9.4 KG)
STATE RECORD: 6.1 LBS, 1999¹

Hickory Shad
STATE RECORD: 4 LBS, 1972²

American Shad
MAX AGE 13 YRS, MAX SIZE 12 LBS (5.5 KG)
STATE RECORD: 8.1 LBS, 1975²

Common Carp
MAX AGE 38 YRS, MAX SIZE 88 LBS (40.1 KG)
STATE RECORD: 47.5 LBS, 1997¹
STATE RECORD: 44.4 LBS, 1978²

White Catfish
MAX AGE 14 YRS, MAX SIZE 21.6 LBS (9.8 KG)
STATE RECORD: 9.6 LBS, 2018²

Channel Catfish
MAX AGE 24 YRS, MAX SIZE 58.0 LBS (26.3 KG)
STATE RECORD: 27.1 LBS, 2004¹
STATE RECORD: 29.6 LBS, 1997²

Brown Bullhead
MAX AGE 9 YRS, MAX SIZE 6.04 LBS (2.7 KG)
STATE RECORD: 3.38 LBS, 2007¹

Largemouth Bass
MAX AGE 23 YRS, MAX SIZE 22 LBS (10.1 KG)
STATE RECORD: 11.6 LBS, 2013¹
STATE RECORD: 11.2 LBS, 2008²

Smallmouth Bass
MAX AGE 26 YRS, MAX SIZE 12 LBS (5.4 KG)
STATE RECORD: 9.3 LBS, 1974¹
STATE RECORD: 6.0 LBS, 1971²

White Crappie
MAX AGE 10 YRS, MAX SIZE 5.2 LBS (2.4 KG)
STATE RECORD: 4.4 LBS, 2006¹
STATE RECORD: 4.0 LBS, 2007²

Black Crappie
MAX AGE 15 YRS, MAX SIZE 6.0 LBS (2.7 KG)
STATE RECORD: 4.4 LBS, 2006¹
STATE RECORD: 4.0 LBS, 2007²


Redear Sunfish
MAX AGE 7 YRS
STATE RECORD: 2.3 LBS, 1985¹

Pumpkinseed
MAX AGE 12 YRS, MAX SIZE 1.4 LBS (0.6 KG)

Bluegill
MAX AGE 10 YRS, MAX SIZE 4.7 LBS (2.1 KG)
STATE RECORD: 3.4 LBS, 1998¹

Warmouth
MAX SIZE 2.4 LBS (1.1 KG)
STATE RECORD: 0.6 LBS, 2009¹

Rock Bass
MAX SIZE 2.4 LBS (1.1 KG)
STATE RECORD: 1.5 LBS, 2010¹
STATE RECORD: 1.3 LBS, 1997²



Amphibians of Maryland

RED SALAMANDER
Notropis virgatus

NORTHERN TWO-LINED SALAMANDER
Eurycea bicinctus

CARPENTER FROG
Lithobates catesbeianus

AMERICAN GREEN TREE FROG
Dryophytes cinerea

PINE BARRENS TREE FROG
Dryophytes auduboni

GRAY TREEFROG
Dryophytes sylvaticus

PICKEREL FROG
Lithobates palustris

AMERICAN BULLFROG
Lithobates catesbeianus

AMERICAN

gmfreescotland.blogspot.com

Pulverized by the pumps

“Aquatic life would either be prevented from passing the project reach or pulverized by the pumps.” (“Stream Restoration Design”, USDA National Engineering Handbook)



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4u8fJ5KtaA>)

Bear Branch Stream Restoration, PG Co. – pump-around operations

Why Stream “Restorations” Fail

- They do not eliminate the cause of stream erosion
- Uncontrolled stormwater from impervious surfaces (roads, roofs, parking lots, etc.) firehosing into streams.



[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Stream “Restoration” Failures Examples

- Local jurisdictions conveniently neglect to tell the public that these projects fail.
 - Failure of physical stability.
 - Failure to improve water quality.
 - Failure to improve the stream biology
- Some examples of physical failures...



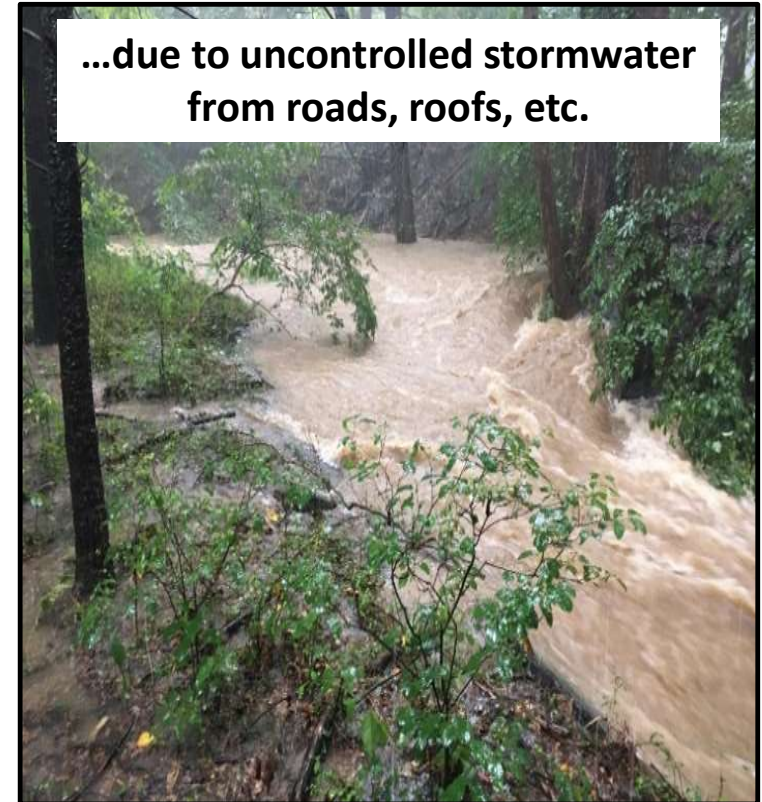
Clipart-library.com

Stream “restorations” fail...

Josephs Branch, Kensington



Joseph's Branch Stream (by K. Bawer,)



**...due to uncontrolled stormwater
from roads, roofs, etc.**

Joseph's Branch during rainstorm (Photo by K. Bawer)

Stream “restorations” fail



Cabin Branch Stream in Cabin John Regional Park (by K. Bawer, 3/19/2021)

Stream “restoration” fail

Long Branch, Takoma Park, Md



Long Branch, Takoma Park, 10/2/2021 (Photo by K. Bawer)

Stream “restoration” failures

Snakeden Branch, Potomac, MD



Stream “restoration” failures

Bedfordshire, Potomac, MD

Post stream
“restoration”
stream bank
erosion



(By K. Bawer,
10/17/2023)

Stream “restoration” failures

Old Farm Creek Tributary, North Bethesda

Current Stream Condition



Scheduled to
be repaired in
2024 for
\$800K

Stream “restoration” failures

Grosvenor Luxmanor Stream “Restoration,” North Bethesda, Mo Co

Existing Photos

Current Stream Condition



Existing Photos

Current Stream Condition



Scheduled to
be repaired in
2024 for
\$4.8M

Wildwood Manor, south of I-270

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/water/Resources/Files/restoration/streams/grosvenor-presentation-wildwood-manor.pdf>

Stream “restoration” failures

Lower Booze Creek, Potomac, MD
Two different locations.

\$700K for
original
“stream
restoration”



Lower Booze Creek - Erosion downstream of
imbricated wall structure from original stream
restoration.

\$3.6M
repair



THE SCIENCE

Scientific Evidence that Stream “Restorations” Don’t Work

Scientific Evidence that Stream “Restorations” Don’t Work

Analysis of 644 projects by M. Palmer et al., University of MD:

Streambank stability does not improve more than a coin toss

- Page 259, Paragraph 2: “Stability was also assessed at the reach scale (N = 38; Table 2) primarily for projects that involved large-scale hydromorphic restoration actions that included channel reconfiguration. Less than half of these projects showed improvements in channel stability compared with prerestoration regardless of how stability was measured and even though many of the projects involved the use of large boulders or other materials to hold the banks in place.” [emphasis added]
- Page 262, Section 5, Paragraph 1: “We show that a major emphasis remains on the use of dramatic structural interventions, such as completely reshaping a channel, despite growing scientific evidence that such approaches do not enhance ecological recovery, and the data we assembled (Table 2) suggest they are often ineffective in stabilizing channels when stability is the primary goal.” [emphasis added]

Palmer, M. A., K. L. Hondula, and B. J. Koch, University of MD, 2014, “Ecological Restoration of Streams and Rivers: Shifting Strategies and Shifting Goals,” Annu. Rev. Ecol. Evol. Syst. 2014. 45:247-269.

(<https://akottkam.github.io/publications/Palmerpublications/Palmer2014a.pdf>)

Scientific Evidence that Stream “Restorations” Don’t Work

Analysis of 644 projects by M. Palmer et al., University of MD:

- “Improvements in the five metrics within the water quality category were found for only 7% of the channel reconfiguration projects and for none of the in-stream channel projects (Table 2).”
Water quality does not improve
- “Unfortunately, recovery of biodiversity was rare for the vast majority of stream restoration projects.”
Biology does not improve
- “We show that a major emphasis remains on the use of dramatic structural interventions, such as completely reshaping a channel, despite growing scientific evidence that such approaches do not enhance ecological recovery, and the data we assembled (Table 2) suggest they are often ineffective in stabilizing channels when stability is the primary goal.”
Ecology does not improve
Erosion does not stop

Palmer, M. A., K. L. Hondula, and B. J. Koch, University of MD, 2014, “Ecological Restoration of Streams and Rivers: Shifting Strategies and Shifting Goals,” Annu. Rev. Ecol. Evol. Syst. 2014. 45:247-269. (<https://akotkam.github.io/publications/Palmerpublications/Palmer2014a.pdf>)

Scientific Evidence that Stream “Restorations” Don’t Work

Analysis of 40 projects by Robert Hilderbrand, University of MD:

Ecology does not improve

“There simply were few ecological differences between restored and unrestored sites. In fact, the unrestored sections upstream [from the restoration sites] were often ecologically better than the restored sections or those downstream of restorations.” Hilderbrand, Robert H., et. al., 2020,

“Quantifying the ecological uplift and effectiveness of differing stream restoration approaches in Maryland,” Final Report Submitted to the Chesapeake Bay Trust for Grant #13141, (https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Hilderbrand-et-al_Quantifying-the-Ecological-Uplift.pdf)

“...restorations usually end up with no better, and often worse, benthic macroinvertebrate responses [which is an industry-standard for measuring in-stream biology] than were the stream left alone.”

Personal communication on 3/6/2023

Scientific Evidence that Stream “Restorations” Don’t Work

Analysis of 11 streams by Southerland et. al. that were converted to RSCs (regenerative stormwater conveyances), a type of stream “restoration”

Biology does not improve

- “...fish diversity in RSCs [a type of stream “restoration”] was lower than in high-quality sites....”
- “Fish indices of biotic integrity (IBIs) [an industry-standard for measuring in-stream biology] were also lower in RSCs than in high-quality sites....”

Southerland, Mark, et. al., 2021, “Vertebrate Community Response to Regenerative Stream Conveyance (RSC) Restoration as a Resource Trade-Off,” Award: 18002 CBT Restoration Research Grant to Tetra Tech and UMCES-Chesapeake Biological Laboratory; <https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-Report-for-18002-Tetra-Tech-CBL-CBT-RR-Vertebrates-in-RSCs-30SEP2021-Submitted-to-CBT.pdf>

Scientific Evidence that Stream “Restorations” Don’t Work

Analysis of 30 projects by Carr et. al., Drexel University:

Ecology does not improve

“Our analysis of the differences between the ecological condition of restored sites and their paired reference reaches showed that the restored sites consistently scored lower in riparian habitat quality as well as the biotic integrity of both periphyton (i.e., attached algae) and benthic macroinvertebrate assemblages. These results clearly demonstrate that at the present time these stream reaches continue to exhibit the types of impaired conditions that originally made them candidates for restoration.”

Carr, J., Hart, D., McNair, J., 2006, “Compilation and Evaluation of Stream Restoration Projects: Learning from Past Projects to Improve Future Success,” The Patrick Center for Environmental Research, The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Report Submitted to the William Penn Foundation. <https://ansp.org/research/environmental-research/projects/restoration/>

Mo Co DEP ecological results of stream “restorations”



Department of Environmental Protection

“We have not seen benthic
[macroinvertebrate or BMI] improvement in
any of our stream restorations.”*



Clipart-library.com

*(1/16/2024 DEP presentation to Stormwater Partners Network

(BMIs are an industry standard measure of stream health.)

COST:

Out-of-stream stormwater control
vs.
Stream “restorations”

Cost: MDE Annual Report on Financial Assurance Plans



Maryland
Department of
the Environment

Annual Report on Financial Assurance Plans and the Watershed Protection and Restoration Program -2022-

Prepared by:
Water and Science Administration

Prepared for:
Governor Larry Hogan

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/StormwaterManagementProgram/Pages/WPRPFinancialAssurancePlans.aspx>

1. Green Roof, Extensive
2. Rainwater Harvesting
3. Dry Well
4. Shallow Wetland
5. Pocket Wetland
6. Surface Sand Filter
7. Dry Swale
8. Other
9. Redevelopment
10. Forestation on Pervious Urban (i.e., Forest Planting)
11. Riparian Forest Planting
12. Urban Tree Canopy
13. Septic Denitrification
14. Septic Connections to WWTP
15. Shoreline Management
16. Catch Basin Cleaning (i.e., Storm Drain Cleaning)
17. Mechanical Street Sweeping
18. Regenerative/Vacuum Street Sweeping (i.e., Advanced Street Sweeping)
19. Nutrient Credits [Trading]
20. Septic Pumping

**20 different
practices for MS4
Permits are MORE
cost effective than
stream
“restorations.”**

SUMMARY – Reasons to incentivize out-of-stream stormwater control

1. They address a whole list of residents' concerns such as flooding, reducing heat islands, property values, urban green spaces, protecting natural areas.



(Photos by Montgomery County DEP)

2. The alternative - stream restorations – don't do the above. Direct observations and science say they don't work to either stabilize streams or improve the ecology. Even MoCo DEP admits that none of their projects improved stream ecology.*



(Photo by City of Rockville)

*DEP presentation about Grosvenor stream “restoration” to Stormwater Partners Network on Jan. 16, 2024 in response to question.

SUMMARY, continued

3. There are 20 out-of-stream stormwater control practices that are less expensive than stream restorations

4. Fix problem at the source: out-of-stream stormwater control is done in areas already disturbed – don't destroy natural areas.



**Annual Report on Financial Assurance Plans and the
Watershed Protection and Restoration Program
-2022-**

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Photo by K. Bawer, 10/21/2021)

What Can You Do?

- Make your opinion known:
- To your elected representatives (state & local) regarding legislation to incentivize out-of-stream stormwater control.
- To County Executive & County Council on the use of stream “restorations.”
- To County Council on FY25 Capital budget before May vote: should funds be transferred from stream “restorations” to out-of-stream projects?

Questions?



("Stream restoration" in Upper Watts Branch, Rockville; photo by City of Rockville)

Contact Ken Bawer: kbawer@msn.com

BACKUP: Industry objections

- It is urgent that we fix the eroded gullies



(<https://www.cwp.org/th-e-self-recovery-of-stream-channel-stability-in-urban-watersheds/>)

Let eroded gullies & stream banks self-recover

- "It is expected that, with the reduced hydraulics [from erosive flows] within the catchment, these banks will continue a trajectory toward stability as indicated by reduced bank angles and vegetation establishment."* [\(https://www.cwp.org/the-self-recovery-of-stream-channel-stability-in-urban-watersheds/\)](https://www.cwp.org/the-self-recovery-of-stream-channel-stability-in-urban-watersheds/)

"The Self-Recovery of Stream Channel Stability in Urban Watersheds due to BMP Implementation," by Lisa Fraley McNeal, Bill Stack, et. al.



**Self-recovery
or
Natural
stream
healing**

(<https://www.cwp.org/the-self-recovery-of-stream-channel-stability-in-urban-watersheds/>)



“The Self-Recovery of Stream Channel Stability in Urban Watersheds”

“ It is expected that, with the reduced hydraulics within the catchment, these banks will continue a trajectory toward stability as indicated by reduced bank angles and vegetation establishment.”

<https://cwp.org/the-self-recovery-of-stream-channel-stability-in-urban-watersheds/>

Reference

“The Self-Recovery of Stream Channel Stability in Urban Watersheds due to BMP Implementation” by Lisa Fraley McNeal, Bill Stack, et. al. <https://cwp.org/the-self-recovery-of-stream-channel-stability-in-urban-watersheds/> and [https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Self Recovery of Stream Channel Stability Final Draft 03-23-21.pdf](https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Self_Recovery_of_Stream_Channel_Stability_Final_Draft_03-23-21.pdf)

- ... “[stormwater BMP] retrofits reduce the magnitude, duration and frequency of erosive flow rates.” (p. 48)
- “...there is strong evidence that the channels below the treatment sites will stabilize and adjust as the frequency of erosive flows diminishes. This will likely translate to corresponding decreases in sediment erosion. (p. 52)
- “..., it is likely the channels are on a trajectory leading towards stabilization as anecdotal evidence (which includes photographs)....” (p. 52)

Legislation Ideas, not used yet