

Four Mile Run Restoration Project e-Newsletter

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Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the Four Mile Run Restoration Project electronic newsletter! This bimonthly newsletter will provide information regarding the ongoing activities of the restoration project as well as meetings or events related to the project. This inaugural edition presents an overview of the restoration project and recent project efforts.

Restoration Project Overview

Through an exciting coincidence of effort and funds, residents and staff from Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, as well as Congressman Jim Moran, have worked together to develop a master plan to restore and revitalize the lower portions of Four Mile Run. The master plan proposes physical, ecological, and aesthetic improvements to the stream corridor, while preserving flood protection for the surrounding communities. As the plan moves towards implementation, a demonstration project is underway. Project partners have begun to secure funding for initiatives that include a pedestrian bridge, accompanying trails, and in-stream restoration efforts.

The lower portion of the Four Mile Run watershed, from I-395 at the upstream end to the mouth at Reagan National Airport, marks a rough boundary between Arlington County and the City of Alexandria. The upstream watershed consists of one of the most heavily urbanized drainage basins in Northern Virginia. Because of this urbanization, recurrent flooding inundated adjacent neighborhoods and industrial facilities until the 1970s, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, along with Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, built the existing flood control channel. Although the channel has successfully prevented flooding since the 1970s, the channel configuration diminished the stream's aesthetic and environmental qualities. Project partners intend to bring aquatic and community life back to Four Mile Run to enhance its worth as a local amenity.

Ongoing Project Efforts

Grant Awarded for Pedestrian-Cyclist Bridge – In July 2007, the Commonwealth of Virginia award \$400,000 to the project partners for designing a pedestrian-cyclist bridge over Four Mile Run. The bridge, which will serve as the focal point for the restoration project's initial demonstration project, will connect bicycle and walking routes on Commonwealth Avenue in Alexandria to those on South Eads Street in Arlington. The bridge project's first phase, scheduled to begin in late 2008, will include a design competition and the development of construction bid

documents. The grant award also provides funding for lighting, interpretive signs, and connecting trails. The project's second phase will include bridge construction, although funding for the second phase has not yet been secured.

Demonstration Project Moves Ahead – Project partners are applying for approximately \$1.5 million in EPA State and Tribal Assistance Grants earmarked by the Federal government for the design and construction of the demonstration project. This money, combined with local monies, will fund major in-stream components of the tidal portion of the project, which include: demolition of stream gabions and debris disposal, stream restoration and reforestation, wetland bars, litter control, site furnishings, an information kiosk, and signage.

Four Mile Run Bike Trail Connector – On October 20, 2007, Congressman Moran and numerous elected officials from Alexandria and Arlington broke ground on a bike trail connector under I-395 near Shirlington. Under the current arrangement, riders must traverse nearly a mile of on-street riding and potentially difficult road crossings in order to cross I-395. The new trail connector will join the east and west sides of I-395 with 3,000 feet of new bike path under I-395. The project will be completed by early 2009.

Corps of Engineers completes 60% feasibility stream channel designs

– In October, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers submitted stream channel designs for the non-tidal portion of the project to its restoration project partners in Alexandria and Arlington. The designs adhere to a natural stream function and from downstream of the Walter Reed Avenue Bridge to the Mt. Vernon Avenue Bridge.

Design Guidelines – This month, Alexandria, Arlington, and NVRC will procure consultant services to develop a set of uniform guidelines for the restoration project area. The guidelines will guide private developers and public facilities designers alike to ensure that all future projects confirm to the vision set forth by the master plan. More specifically, the design guidelines will provide parameters that shepherd the overall project vision through disparate projects and proposals. Project staff expect to complete this document by late 2008.

Additional Information

To subscribe to this newsletter, send an email to NVRC's Four Mile Run Manager, Bill Hicks, P.E., at bhicks@novaregion.org. To learn more about the restoration project, visit NVRC's website at <http://www.novaregion.org/restoration.htm>.



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