

## Stream Restoration Begins

Groundbreaking celebrates Reston's innovative spirit.  
Mirza Kurspahic, Reston Connection - February 13, 2008



Photo by Mirza Kurspahic/The Connection  
Digging from left, Larry Butler, Robin Smyers, Casey Veatch, Robert Simon,

Cathy Hudgins, Mike Rolband and Nicki Foremsky.

Community leaders, activists and residents joined Reston Association board and staff in celebrating a groundbreaking of a comprehensive stream restoration project in Reston on Tuesday morning, Feb. 12. The first reach of 14 miles of construction began with Reston founder Robert Simon and other community members digging shovels into the frozen ground.

"Reston is literally breaking ground in one of the most comprehensive stream restoration projects in an urban area," said Robin Smyers, RA director and vice president of the board. She thanked all those responsible for bringing the project to Reston and singled out long time Reston resident Chuck Veatch as the one who connected the right people with RA.

"It was a terrific stunt," said Reston founder Robert E. Simon, about Veatch's initiative to bring stream restoration to Reston without any cost to its residents.

"Reston is about innovation. When I looked into this project, I said this was

consistent," said Fairfax County Supervisor Catherine Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill). She invited other homeowner associations and community groups to investigate ways in which they could improve their streams and other environmental features.

RESTON RESIDENTS stand to gain approximately \$70 million from 14-mile Phase 1, approximately 14 miles, of stream restoration, at no cost to them. Casey Veatch, speaking on behalf of his father who could not attend the ceremony, said that even though the work had not even begun yet, more than \$250,000 had already been given to Reston Association in connection with the project.

The project is financed through a stream restoration bank. Developers who install impervious surfaces and create water runoffs pay money into the stream restoration bank to offset their impact. Localities and communities then vie for the funds and work for stream restoration in their area. Reston Association won the bid for the Northern Virginia Stream Restoration Bank. "People recognize the importance of this project," said Casey Veatch, speaking at the Feb. 12 groundbreaking ceremony. As a child growing up in Reston, he said he and his peers were always environmentally aware because of the community's strong environmental stewardship.

The restoration will impact water quality downstream in the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. Mike Rolband, founder of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. — the company responsible for carrying out the work of the restoration — said that although the construction work is yet to start, the company had been working on the project for almost the past four years. During that time, about 30,000 trees were surveyed, a number of easements were granted and applications were approved through county and state processes. Rolband said the biggest clients have been in the public sector, with Dulles Airport's Runway 4 contributing \$12.4 million to the Northern Virginia Stream Restoration Bank. In selling credits for the restoration, Rolband said the bank is helping fund the construction of Reston's Nature House. The work on the streams is helping collect data for further scientific study, he said. "It's been an amazing group of people in the public sector, private sector and community that made this possible," said Rolband.

Larry Butler, RA director of Parks and Recreation, said the project started eight years ago, when citizens serving on RA's Environmental Advisory Committee created a Watershed White Paper, which led to a Watershed Management Plan at the RA level. When the Northern Virginia Stream Restoration Bank selected from its bidders, Reston Association already had a plan in place for its water systems. "It was forward thinking based on input of our citizens," said Butler.

The construction phase of the project is expected to take about five years, followed by 10 years of monitoring and maintenance. The Phase 1 of the project includes restoration a part of Snakeden Branch Stream, Glade Run and Colvin Run. Trees will be cut for restoration purposes, but will be replanted as project allows. More information about the project, and its progress, is available at Reston Association's Web site at [www.reston.org/water](http://www.reston.org/water), Wetland Studies and Solution, Inc.'s, web site at [www.wetlandstudies.com](http://www.wetlandstudies.com) or by contacting RA Watershed Supervisor Nicki Foremsky at 703-435-6560 or [nicki@reston.org](mailto:nicki@reston.org)