



# CITY OF HARRISONBURG PUBLIC WORKS

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For Immediate Release – May 3, 2023

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## Public Works reaches completion on Mountain View Stream Restoration

HARRISONBURG, Va. – A local stream is now healthier and area community members' properties are now better protected thanks to a Harrisonburg Public Works project.

The Harrisonburg Public Works Stormwater team is celebrating the completion of the Mountain View Stream Restoration project and the impacts it has made to our local stream water quality this week following completion of the approximately 10-year effort. The team began assessing Harrisonburg stream sites that were in need of restoration efforts in 2013, with the Mountain View restoration project being highly prioritized due to eroding stream banks and a wealth of exposed sewer, water and electric utility lines.

The project, officially completed earlier this year, restored 1,650 linear feet of the Siebert Creek tributary, a stream that flows to James Madison University's Newman Lake and joins Blacks Run in Purcell Park. The project's timeframe speaks to the amount of work necessary to complete a stream restoration project of this nature.

"Larger scale stream restoration projects require much collaboration and communication with all project contributors," Harrisonburg Public Works Sustainability and Environmental Manager Keith Thomas said. "At Harrisonburg Public Works, we understand the importance of thorough site evaluation, communication with residents about why it is necessary to do the restoration project, and delivering an end-product that benefits the health of our local urban ecosystem and our community. Monitoring and measuring project outcomes is important to us as we progress as a more environmentally-friendly city."

Once determining the project was necessary, Harrisonburg Public Works began communicating with property owners about property loss due to eroding streambanks, ultimately consulting with more than 20 property owners individually to grant the City of Harrisonburg easements to complete the project. The project continued with updating utilities and creating a design that redirected the stream channel to decrease water velocities and protect stream banks from erosion.



*(Top) A photo of the Mountain View stream location in 2013 displaying eroded stream banks and exposed utility pipes. (Bottom) A 2023 photo of the same Mountain View stream location displaying reconstructed banks, restored native vegetation with water-loving trees and plants.*

Installation of riffles, pools, bank armoring, and woody material were necessary as part of the restoration project, helping increase habitat for aquatic organisms. Finally, approximately 1,462 native trees and shrubs were planted, including water-loving species such as button bush, elderberry, red maple, river birch and sycamore. Native grasses and flowers were also installed, providing a wildlife corridor for pollinator species.

The City was able to capture 415 pounds of nitrogen, 145 pounds of phosphorus, and 50,000 pounds of sediment through this effort. The project resulted in reducing ongoing erosion issues on private property and facilitated protection of publicly owned utilities while improving the health of the stream in community members' backyards.

"This restoration project's goal is to improve stream health and the health of our local urban ecosystem. The project helps support the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System and the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load by reducing target nutrients and preventing erosion," Public Works Environmental Specialist Wes Runion explained. "Stream restoration projects such as these are one of the most effective best management practices to capture sediment and targeted nutrients in the Chesapeake watershed."

The stream restoration project was partially funded through the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Stormwater Local Assistance Fund Grant and also by the City's Stormwater Utility Fee Fund.

The Public Works Stormwater team continues to welcome the community to become more involved in stream cleanup efforts. For more information or to sign up for Small Group Stream Clean Ups, the City's Annual Blacks Run Clean Up Day event (occurring every April), or Volunteer Tree Planting events, visit [www.cleanstream.org](http://www.cleanstream.org).

If the public sees a Harrisonburg waterway pollution incident or stormwater related issue, they should contact Harrisonburg Public Works at 540-434-5928 or email [stormwater@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:stormwater@harrisonburgva.gov).

*The **City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 54,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).*

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