

May 16, 2022

Restoring Bull Branch (RBB) Background

This effort was initiated by several College Hills 3 homeowners who formed a group called Restoring Bull Branch (RBB) to address erosion, flooding, and tree dieback along the stream. RBB has partnered with the Patapsco Heritage Greenway, (PHG) a non-profit. Together they successfully obtained a \$150K grant from the State of Maryland DNR to perform a comprehensive watershed assessment of Bull Branch from downtown Catonsville to the Patapsco River. This assessment will be conducted by the engineering firm Environmental Systems Analysis (ESA). Their staff will be collecting data and soil samples along Bull Branch. Homeowners whose property overlook Bull Branch may notice ESA staff working along the stream. Foxhall Farm, the other College Hills communities, the YMCA, CCBC, Catonsville Chamber of Commerce and others are stakeholders for this study. As stakeholders we will have access to the study results when it becomes available this summer.

Restoring Bull Branch Update

Mike Johnson attended a stakeholders meeting for the Restoring Bull Branch watershed assessment on January 26, 2022 (via Zoom).

- The contracted environmental engineering firm, ESA, Inc., has completed an initial physical inventory of the 984-acre Bull Run watershed. The team is now working on data entry and conceptual designs. A second stakeholder review meeting will be scheduled soon.
- The Patapsco Heritage Greenway (PHG) conducted a family-friendly Watershed Exploration Day in the Bull Branch stream on Saturday, April 23 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM where Bull Branch crosses Collegiate Dr. Led by the PHG educators, participants will work in groups to examine and assess the health of the stream and educate the participants. The focus was on collecting macroinvertebrate insects, which will indicate the health of the stream. In addition, observations about other organisms found in the area will be documented and water quality parameters like temperature and pH measured. Streamside, a modified BioBlitz where participants will identify and document all the animal and plant species within a selected area.



BULL BRANCH WATERSHED ASSESSMENT

A one-year pilot project aimed at assessing the reaches of the Bull Branch most in need of restoration, improvement, retrofits or other stormwater management solutions. Project facets include a Stormwater Management/BMP Assessment, Stream Assessment, and Forest Characterization.

SCOPE OF PROJECT

The stream will be assessed from its headwaters in downtown Catonsville to its output into Soapstone Branch, which feeds into the Patapsco River. All Bull Branch stream corridors will be walked, potential issues inventoried, and all stormwater assessed and modeled for proper drainage. The upland forest areas will also be inventoried for mature specimen trees.

PROJECT TEAM

- Environmental Systems Analysis, Inc. (ESA) and Gannett Fleming are the contractors performing the natural resources and stormwater assessment
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the funding source of the project and can provide additional technical expertise and resources
- Restoring Bull Branch (RBB) is the community group who identified the issue and sought to initiate a plan for improvement
- Patapsco Heritage Greenway (PHG) is the 501c3 nonprofit overseeing the grant execution and serves as the liaison between team members and stakeholders

MILESTONES

Exploring Bull Branch Family Day April 23, 2022 (9-11:30am)
Public Community Meetings (May and September 2022)
Project Final Product: Watershed Assessment Plan (October 2022)

Next Steps (Post October 2022): Implementation of certain solutions will be a separate project and contingent upon approval of the community and Baltimore County.

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