

Become Involved!

We invite you to join us as we enhance and protect the natural resources of our watershed.

Streambank restoration and reforestation projects are great opportunities for community service projects and scout badges, getting the family out working together, or bringing your community together to learn and work. They are always fun and well-planned. Each project is a one-day event that takes place in the spring or fall.

Longer-term involvement, of course, is always welcome. High school students can join the Watershed Association for a semester to fulfill their senior projects. Eagle scouts, gold award scouts or entire troops can adopt a project and oversee it from planning to maintenance. Individuals, families or neighborhood groups can also undertake their own streams with these projects.

The Mission of the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association is to enhance the quality of the natural environment in the area drained by Stony Brook and the Millstone River. It addresses key issues affecting water quality and land use, educates area residents about the ecology of the natural environment, and preserves open space by maintaining a 785-acre nature reserve and organic farm.

A Word About Native Plants

Non-native, invasive plant species have become a big problem in many parts of the country due to their high productivity and lack of natural controls. Native species, on the other hand, provide many benefits such as improved habitat value, biodiversity, and ease of maintenance culminating in natural systems that are healthy and self-sustaining. For this reason, the Watershed Association uses only native species, such as sassafras and blue flag iris, in their ecological restoration projects.



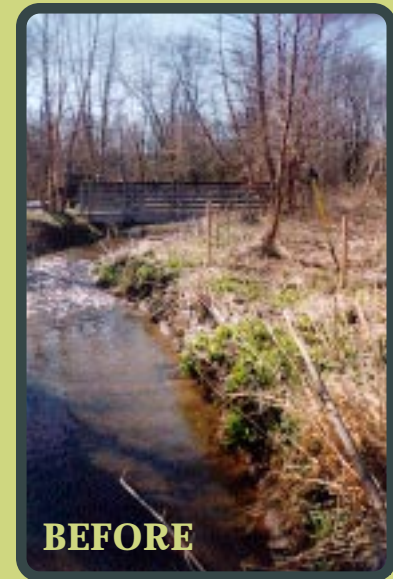
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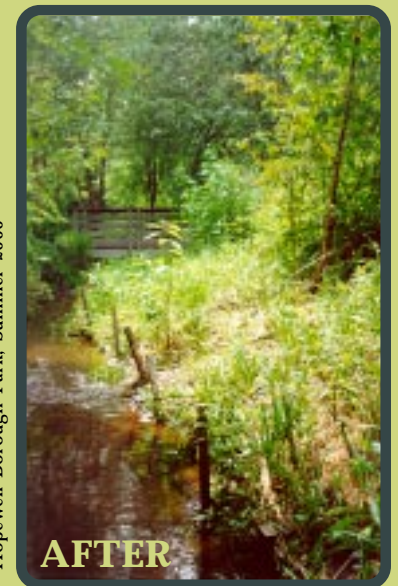
Web: www.thewatershed.org

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Hopewell Borough Park, Spring 2000

Streambank Restoration and Reforestation



Hopewell Borough Park, Summer 2000

Ecological Restoration

Restoration is the process of returning a damaged ecosystem to its condition prior to disturbance. The long-term goal is to reestablish an earlier natural, self-sustaining ecosystem that is in balance with the surrounding landscape.

What You Can Do

While improving the environment, ecological restoration can be fun. Join others for a wet and muddy one-day undertaking, working to restore the natural areas of our watershed. Volunteers meet in the morning, review the planned activity then dig in! From planting trees to laying erosion control matting, volunteers are crucial to getting the job done.

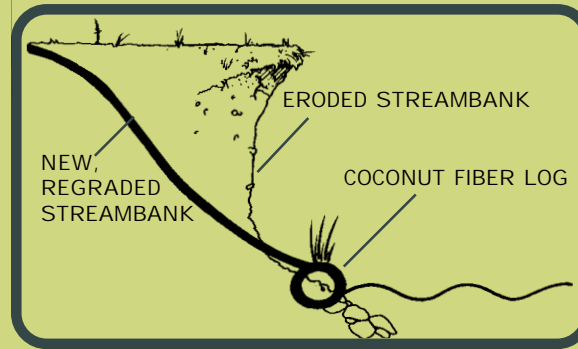
Restoration projects are conducted each spring and fall. We welcome your help, as a group or as an individual. If interested, please contact Steve Yergeau by e-mail at syergeau@thewatershed.org or by phone at (609) 737-3735.



Students from the Hun School roll a coconut-fiber “bio-log” into place. Once secured, the log will be planted with native flowers and grasses.

Streambank Restoration

Streams in urban and suburban areas endure considerable punishment. When it rains, oil, grease, and other pollutants wash off parking lots and streets, concentrating in nearby streams. As more land is covered with impervious surfaces such as asphalt, concrete and highly compacted soils, less rainwater soaks into the ground. Thus, even a minor storm can send torrents of water raging into what was previously a small stream, eroding streambanks and filling stream channels with silt and sediments.



Under stress, streambanks erode, causing banks to become vertical or caved in, as shown above. Streambank restoration—or bioengineering—is the use of plant material to provide ecologically-sound solutions to eroding storm flows. During restoration, streambanks are regraded to a gentle slope, and erosion-control material made of coconut fiber is carefully secured to the streambank. The bank is planted with native vegetation, chosen specifically for its ability to hold the graded streambank together and weather the elements. These same techniques are also used to restore lakes and ponds.

Reforestation

Due to the rapid pace of land development in our region, forested areas have been largely destroyed or fragmented.

Replenishing woodlands can substantially impact the health of our environment. Forests slow down rainfall and absorb runoff protecting our soils from erosion and watersways from flooding. They also filter pollutants, including excess fertilizers used on lawns and farms, and facilitate the recharge of our drinking water. In addition, trees moderate extreme temperatures, provide habitat for birds, insects, and other wildlife, add aesthetic value and clean our air.

