

Small Stream, Big Challenges

Josh Burch

District Department of Energy and Environment, Washington, DC, USA

The District Department of Energy & Environment executed an award-winning design-build stream restoration in SE Washington, DC that involved community planning, conflict, compromise, and collaboration. This 500ft stream restoration project transformed the stream and surrounding park to a vibrant urban space that was previously unused and unknown to much of the surrounding neighborhood. This presentation will examine the outreach and engagement work during the pre-bid, design, construction, and maintenance phases of the project. Despite being a small restoration project, the community engagement components of the projects had as many points of success and agreement as it did points of disagreement and acrimony.

The presentation will examine DOEE's historical relationship in the community, its work to reach out to every neighbor, and how early community engagement efforts exposed signs of dissension. Once the construction vehicles arrived at the site feelings of antipathy from a small group of passionate neighbors came to the forefront. DOEE will examine multiple points of conflict and discuss where DOEE could make compromises and where it could not. DOEE will provide key community engagement lessons learned from the project and offer a set of strategies for managing community expectations throughout the design, build, and maintenance process.

Contact Information: Josh Burch, Environmental Protection Specialist, District Department of Energy and Environment, 1200 1st St. NE 5th Floor., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 734-9527; josh.burch@dc.gov