



August 31, 2020

Via email

Mr. Mark Schwartz  
Manager, Arlington County  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 318  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Schwartz,

At a time of severe Covid-induced budget shortfalls in Virginia, it is more important than ever that capital improvement projects in Arlington be as cost-effective as possible. Projects such as the Donaldson Run stream restoration project should take advantage of the best current design and environmental management methods to use County resources as efficiently as possible.

For this reason, we are writing to call your attention to the fact that the Donaldson Run (Tributary B) project is based on outdated methods and, as a result, is far more expensive than it needs to be. The current proposed design is based on Rosgen's "natural channel" approach, which averages a cost of nearly \$2,000 per linear foot (\$2.6 million over 1300 feet). Redesigning the project using a state of the art "regenerative" stream restoration approach could cost less than half the price. The resulting stream stabilization and repair would achieve Chesapeake Bay credits. The attachments to this letter provide details on the methods and costs.

Moreover, a state-of-the art approach will result in the destruction of far fewer trees which, if the benefits of trees are appropriately accounted for, will show the cost-effectiveness of a regenerative design to be even greater. Using a new technique that maximizes wood-based methods will allow the use of some materials sourced from the site thereby eliminating the costly and environmentally damaging hauling of large amounts of stone.

As a steward of Arlington taxpayer resources, we ask you to immediately pause the Donaldson Run Tributary B project and reevaluate it using state of the art methods. We have stream restoration experts already familiar with Donaldson Run who can hold informational briefings on these updated techniques with County staff as soon as can be scheduled. Also, the Arlington Tree Action Group (ATAG) which numbers among its members, environmental and landscape design professionals with decades of experience, will be glad to help you with this effort.



ATAG is a movement of citizens working to preserve and grow Arlington, Virginia's urban forest. Our mission is to keep Arlington green and fulfill the vision for a *"sustainable urban forest that contributes to the livability of our urban community"* in the County's Urban Forest Master Plan.

Respectfully,

Mary Glass  
Alisa Cowen  
Angela Dickey  
Bill Roos  
Eric Ackerman  
Liz Grossman  
Kit Norland  
Ann Bodine  
Rod Simmons  
Suzanne Sundberg  
Natasha Atkins  
Elaine Simmons  
Carol Rakatansky  
Stefan Fink  
Ann Marie Thro  
Edward M. Barrows, Ph.D., Professor of Biology, Georgetown University

Cc: Arlington County Board  
Greg Emanuel, Department of Environmental Services  
Jane Rudolph, Parks and Recreation Department

Attachments: Berg Webinar wood stream restoration  
Regenerative stream management highlights  
Why Natural Channel Design Projects are Incompatible with Natural Resource Protection