ChooseCleanWater COALITION

Polluted Runoff: Solutions

Montgomery County

Friends of Sligo Creek

Sligo Park Hills Green Neighborhood

mostcenter.org/casestories

Problem:

Sligo Park Hills, a neighborhood in Silver Spring, was experiencing severe flooding and erosion during rain events, with portions of speed bumps breaking away and washing down the street. Road debris, silt, and pollutants were washing into Sligo Creek, which feeds into the Anacostia River.

Solution:

The neighborhood's streets were scheduled to be repaired via conventional methods– a central drain pipe installed under the road. Following pressure from community residents to forge a more environmentally-friendly solution– one that mitigates stormwater flows rather than simply draining water to a buried pipe– the Maryland Department of the Environmental Protection and the Maryland Department of Transportation worked with the community to design a new plan. The result was the construction of a large bioretention area consisting of bioswales, tree boxes, and permeable pavement pads. The system is able to absorb the first inch of rainfall during a storm event, reducing pressure on the storm drain conveyance system.

Maintenance needs: In the first year, some plant replacement was needed in the bioswales. Following the first year, annual weeding and vacuuming silt from bioswales and parking pads was needed twice per year.

The Project under construction

The Sligo Creek Bioretention area that replaced the old central piping solution

Photo credit: Kit Gage, President of Friends of Silgo Creek

Key Project Facts

Location: Silver Spring, MD

Type of Project: Bioretention (bioswales, rain gardens, flow through planters etc.)

Scale: 80 projects— mostly bioswales, tree boxes and permeable pavement pads

Funding Sources: Stormwater Fees. Hundreds of volunteer hours

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What is Polluted Runoff?

The growth of our cities has resulted in too many paved surfaces, which prevent rain water from being absorbed by the ground. Instead, the water runs off streets and buildings, collecting trash and dangerous chemicals on its way. This contaminated water overflows into our streams and rivers, creating public health hazards and toxic waters.

Storm water projects create safe paths for polluted runoff to be captured and filtered before it reaches our waterways. They keep communities healthy and the environment clean.

When communities and their local governments work together to solve big problems like stormwater runoff, that's a story worth telling!