

Saefern Environmental Stewards Get an Update on Saltworks Creek

By Sara Caldes

Pictures by Sara Caldes and Rob Muir

25 intrepid environmental stewards spent a cold winter Sunday learning about Saltworks Creek, stormwater challenges, the conditions that urban stormwater creates in our creek, and proposed solutions to put Saltworks Creek on a "pollution diet".



On a sunny but very cold Sunday morning, Rob and Patti Muir hosted a gathering to view a PowerPoint presentation by the Severn Riverkeeper Program. Presenters included Fred Kelly (Severn Riverkeeper), Sara Caldes, Pierre Henkart (Scientific Advisor),

and Keith Underwood (Ecosystem Restoration Specialist with Underwood and Associates). Also present in the gathering were many graduates and current participants in the Watershed Stewardship Academy at Arlington Echo and professionals who work in related environmental fields. The discussions from these various perspectives were spirited and well-informed. All agreed that we have significant

issues facing this creek and others and that extraordinary efforts will be necessary to ensure their long-term health.

The PowerPoint presentation set out visually the 55 recommendations from the Stream Ecologists in the recently com-

pleted Saltworks Creek Watershed Assessment and Action Plan.

The key component to this plan is the restoration of the Cabin Branch tributary to Saltworks Creek by using Regenerative Stormwater Conveyance (RSC) methods (similar to what was done at Carriage Hills). Over \$800,000 has been procured from various grant sources to start that restoration by building a Headwater RSC in the vicinity of Generals Highway and Bestgate roads, where a stormwater culvert from the mall parking lots empties directly into the upper reaches of the Cabin Branch stream



system. The Severn Riverkeeper Program is proceeding with design and permitting and easement negotiations and anticipates starting construction by late 2011.

The presentation also showed the many areas in the Epping Forest peninsula where stormwater inlets and outfalls flow

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directly into the unnamed streams which empty into tidal Saltworks Creek. In fact a large group bundled up to follow Keith Underwood into the wetland near the Luke's house to see first hand the sediment and erosion problems which plague our creeks. Those who were not totally frozen, then accompanied the Riverkeeper to Carriage Hills to see the RSC at the headwaters of Clements Creek completed by the Severn Riverkeeper Program in early 2010 with ARRA stimulus money.



Anyone who missed this, but would like to get an abbreviated presentation, can call or email Sara Caldes -- after all, Saltworks Creek is a place that we all have in common.

