

Public Engagement on Urban Stream Restoration Projects

National Stream Restoration Conference 2023

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The Current Landscape

MD General Assembly – Environment and Transportation Committee

- **Bill HB0942 Summary**

- Proposed in February 2023
- Still under consideration by committee
- Would increase requirements for earning credits for stream restoration and incentivize upland BMPs

- **Committee Hearing Discussion**

- **Bill Opponents:**
 - The bill will disincentivize stream restoration as a best management practice and punish good designs
 - Opposition to stream restoration is not based in sound science
- **Bill Supporters:**
 - Need to use a “scalpel, not a machete”
 - MD should reduce or replace stream restoration projects with more upland BMPs



A video shown by bill supporters, demonstrating concerns about tree removal on a stream project. (Environment and Transportation Committee, 3/3/2023)

Success Story

College Lake Dam in Lynchburg, VA

c.a. 1940's



2019



c.a. 1970's



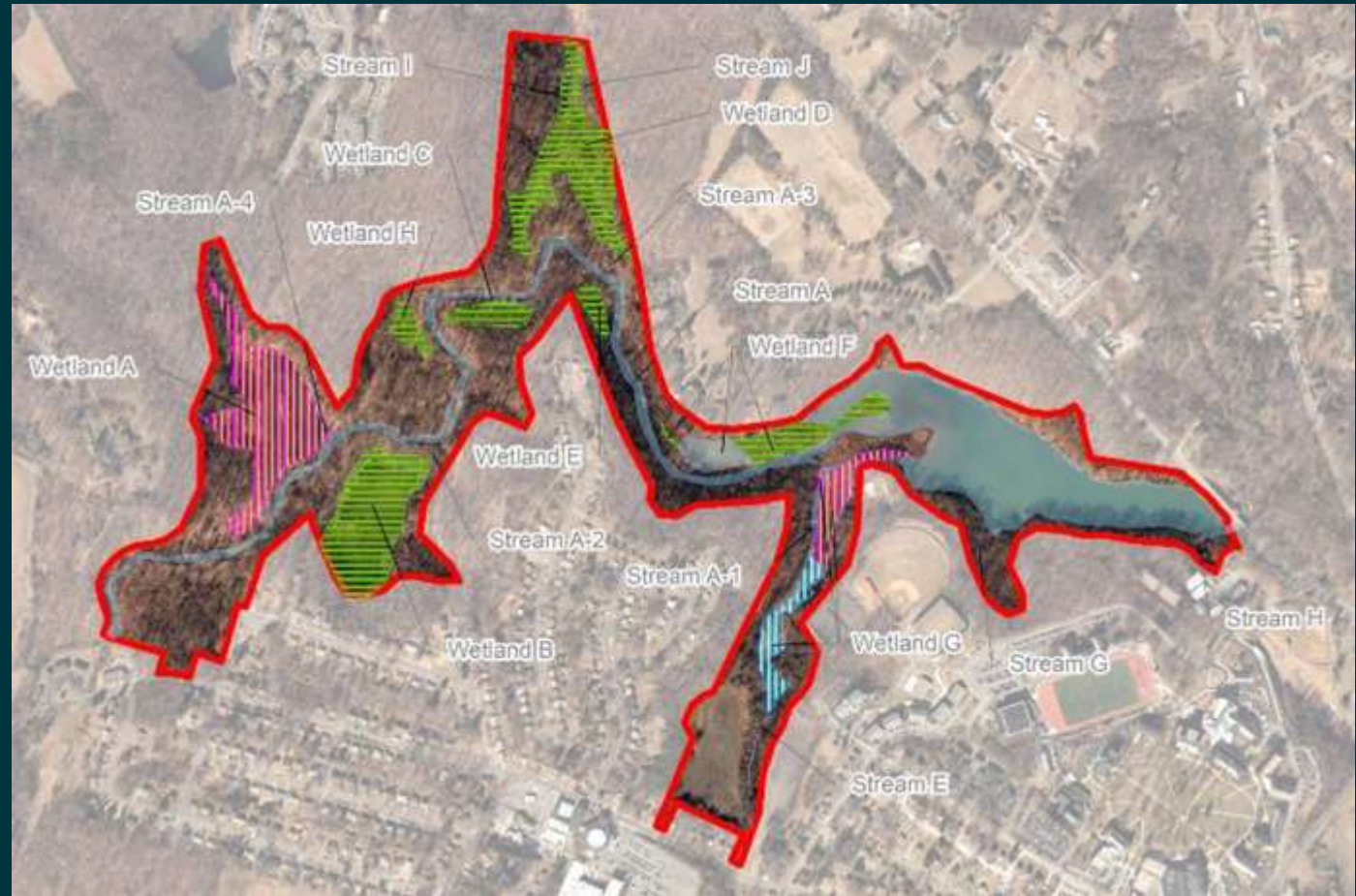
Initial Public Pushback

- Opponents of dam removal had concerns about:
 - Viewshed (aesthetic and historic)
 - Historic bridge preservation
 - Sentimental value
 - Environmental impact
- Initial survey of public concerns can tailor data collection to address those issues



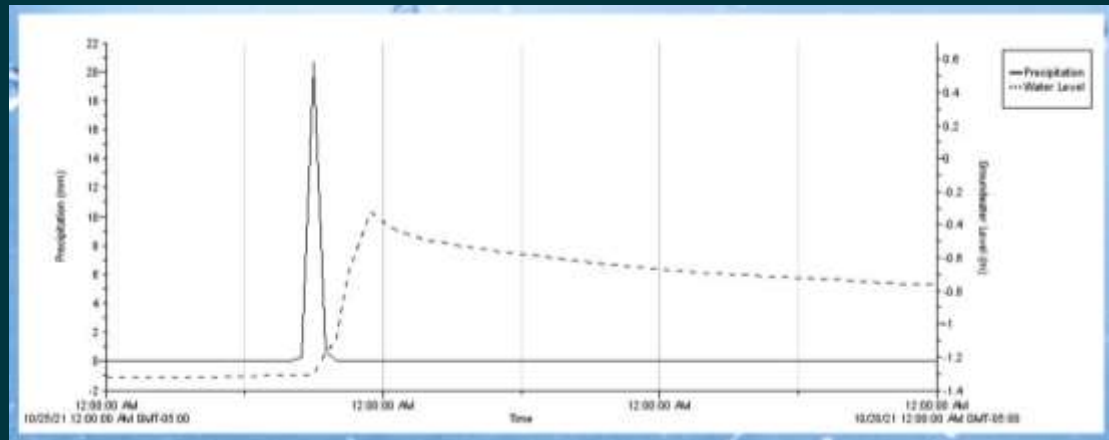
Design Backed by Science

- Extensive data collection
 - Geomorphic data
 - Rain gage and stream depths
 - Benthic Sampling
 - Sediment Sampling
 - Turbidity Monitoring
 - Dissolved Oxygen Monitoring
 - Trail Camera Footage
 - Viewshed studies



Wetland and stream map of area of interest

Rain fall vs peak groundwater level data collected for heavy, rainfall by Andrew Golladay, 2022



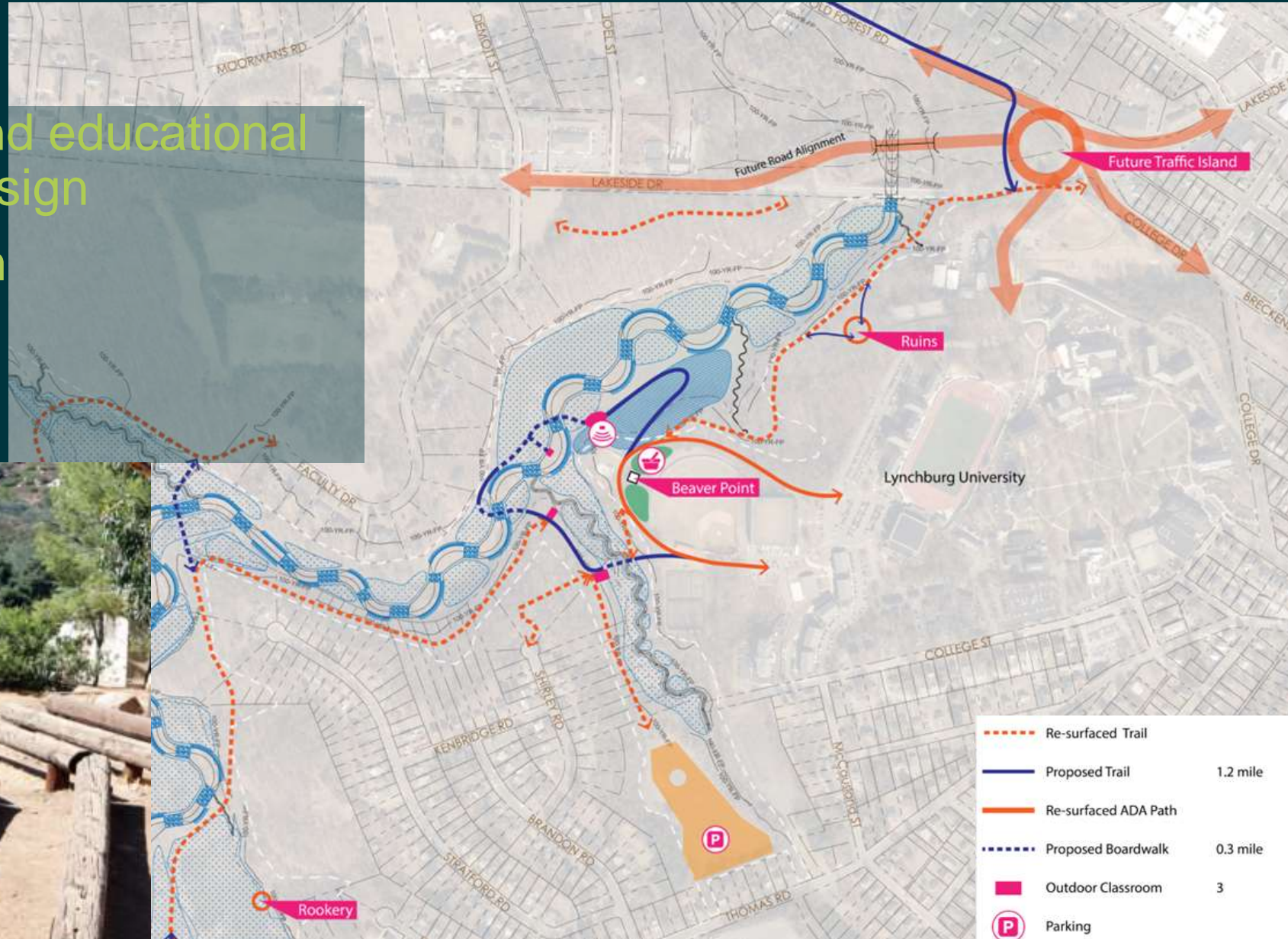
Monitoring Plan

- **Post- Construction Monitoring**
 - 5 years
 - Channel stability
 - Wetland hydrology
 - Invasive removal
 - Planting standards
- **Construction Monitoring**
 - Structure building
 - On-the-fly alterations
 - Sediment management
 - Turbidity monitoring



Public Amenities

- Include recreational and educational items as part of the design
- Emphasize ecotourism



Outreach

- Community meetings
- University Partnership
- Create your own news
- Document the decision process

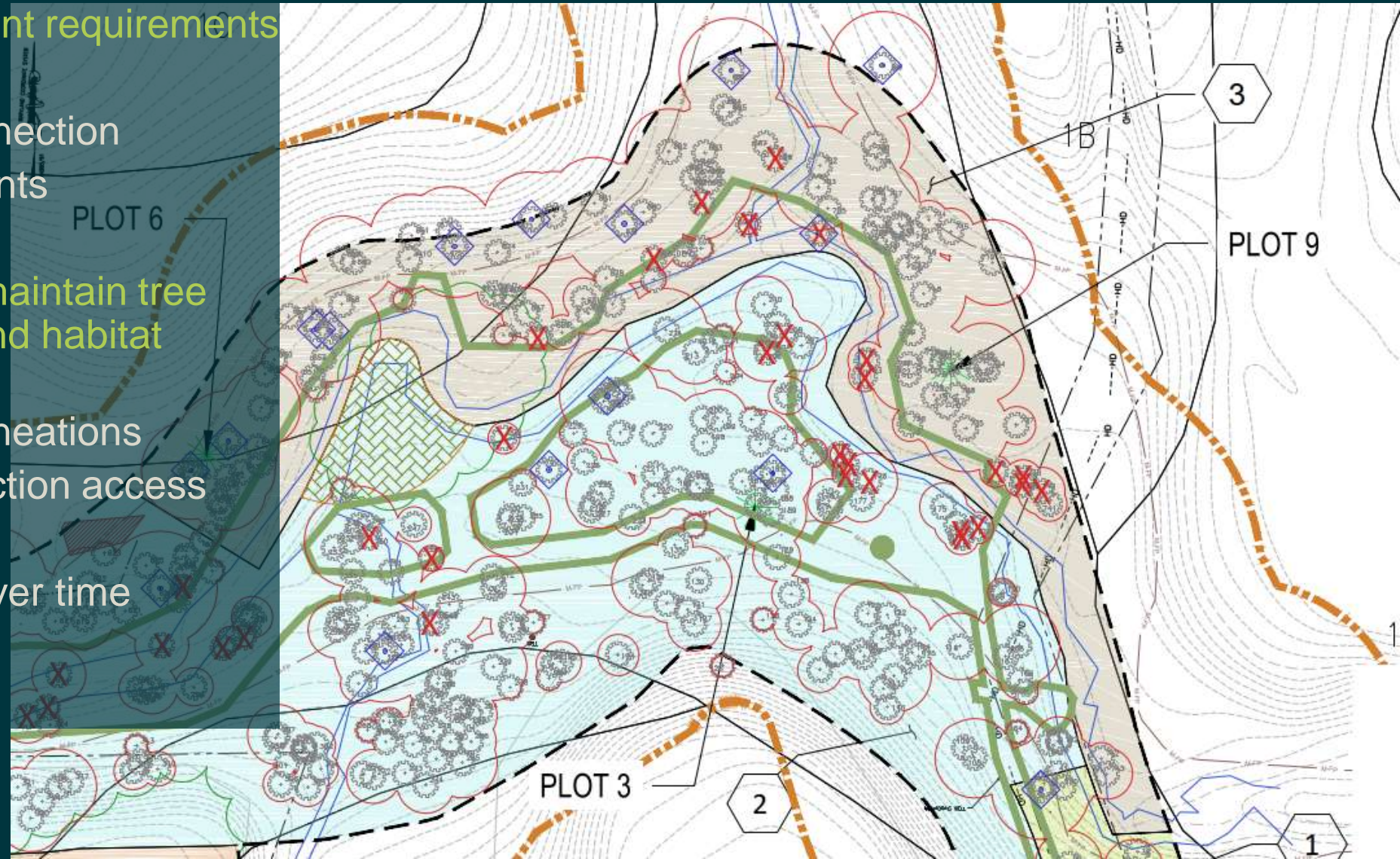




Addressing Common Concerns

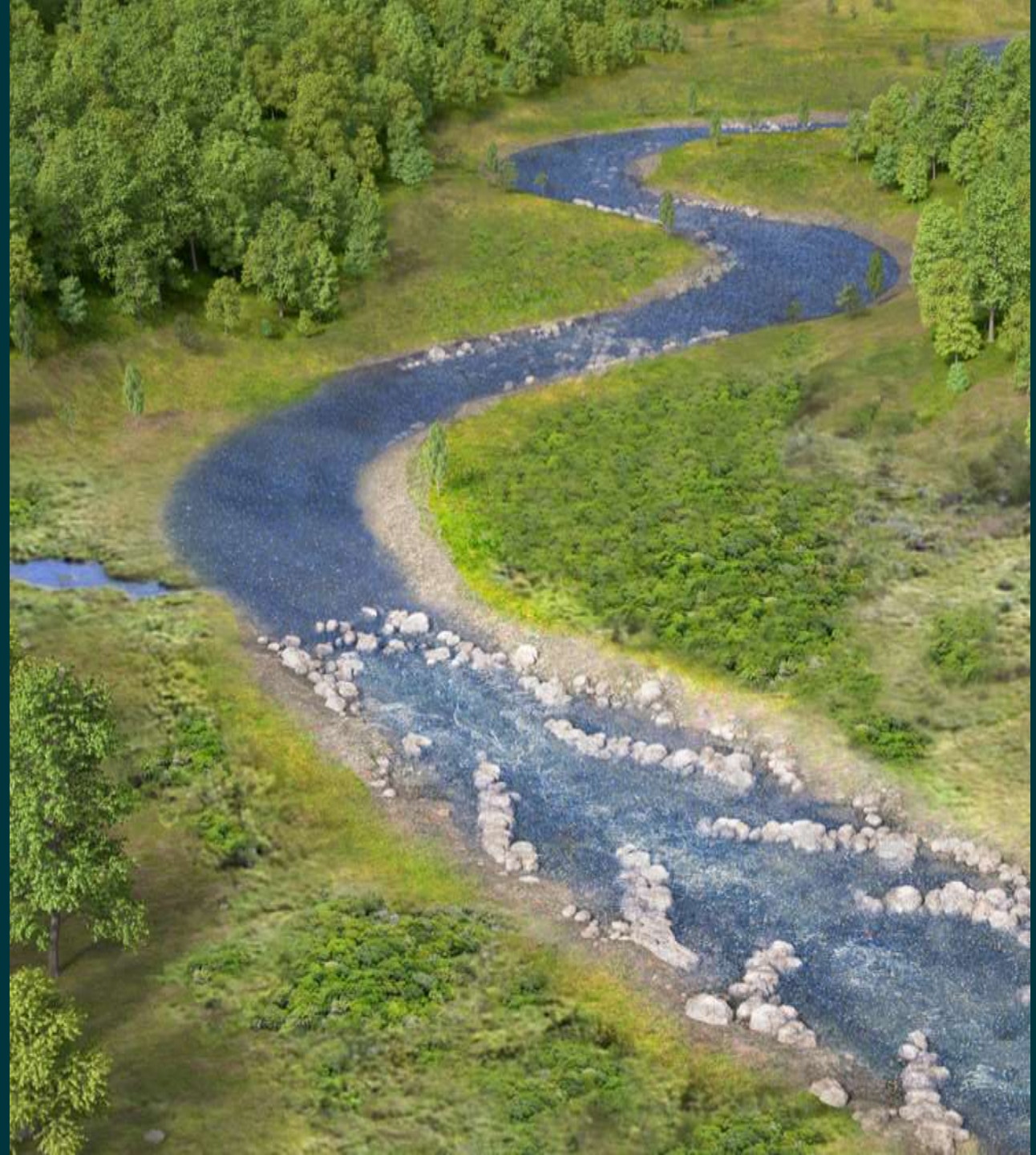
Common Concerns: Stream restoration removes too many trees

- Every project has different requirements
 - Soil remediation
 - Floodplain reconnection
 - FEMA requirements
- Demonstrate efforts to maintain tree cover and address upland habitat concerns
 - Forest stand delineations
 - 12'-wide construction access
 - Timber matting
 - Track tree loss over time



Common Concerns: Does stream restoration even work?

- Be clear about restoration goals and time to reach potential
- Create graphics that illustrate existing and proposed conditions
- When reviewing specific studies, make sure to pay attention to the methodology
- Offer to answer questions in an organized format – avoid back and forth arguments



Common Concerns: There aren't any problems with the existing stream

- Field trips
- Encourage public engagement as part of the data collection process
- Collect data in areas that address public concerns as part of preliminary design process



Questions?