

For Immediate Release

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**MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION RESTORES
STREAM IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Project is part of Intercounty Connector Environmental Mitigation and Stewardship

(February 15, 2010) – **The** Maryland Department of Transportation’s State Highway Administration (SHA) recently approved Environmental Quality Resources, LLC of Arbutus to restore nearly 3.36 miles of the Northwest Branch in Montgomery County. The Intercounty Connector (ICC) Project is partnering with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) in the \$5.3 million project, which is part of the ICC’s Environmental Mitigation and Stewardship Program.

Beginning mid-February, crews will start work along approximately 18,000 linear feet of the stream in the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park. Over the years, uncontrolled runoff caused the stream to degrade and lose many of its natural characteristics. The project includes innovative features and structures designed to improve and enhance the Northwest Branch’s ecosystem by reducing stream bank erosion and reconnecting the stream channel to its original floodplain. Unlike typical restoration efforts using rock to stabilize stream banks, this project is unique in that large tree trunks harvested from the ICC right-of-way will be carefully placed along the banks to restore the stream’s natural character. Recycling harvested trees promotes the biological health of the stream system. Once complete, this project will improve the water quality and aquatic habitat within the Northwest Branch. Construction will take approximately two years.

“This is exactly the type of project we envisioned to help protect and enhance the Anacostia River watershed when we created the ICC’s Environmental Stewardship and Mitigation Program,” said ICC Project Director Melinda Peters. “SHA is pleased to partner with M-NCPPC on this project to improve Northwest Branch and to replenish the stream’s function and habitat.”

The ICC includes \$370 million for environmental projects - 15 percent of the overall \$2.5 billion budget. Embedded in the mainline of the highway project is \$270 million of environmental features and innovations, while an additional \$100 million is earmarked for mitigation and stewardship projects such as stream restoration.

“Protecting and improving the environment is a commitment that is integrated into everything SHA builds and the ICC is an excellent example of that promise,” states ICC Environmental Manager Robert Shreeve.

For more information on the Intercounty Connector, please call toll-free at 866-462-0020, or visit www.iccproject.com.

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