

# Conservation

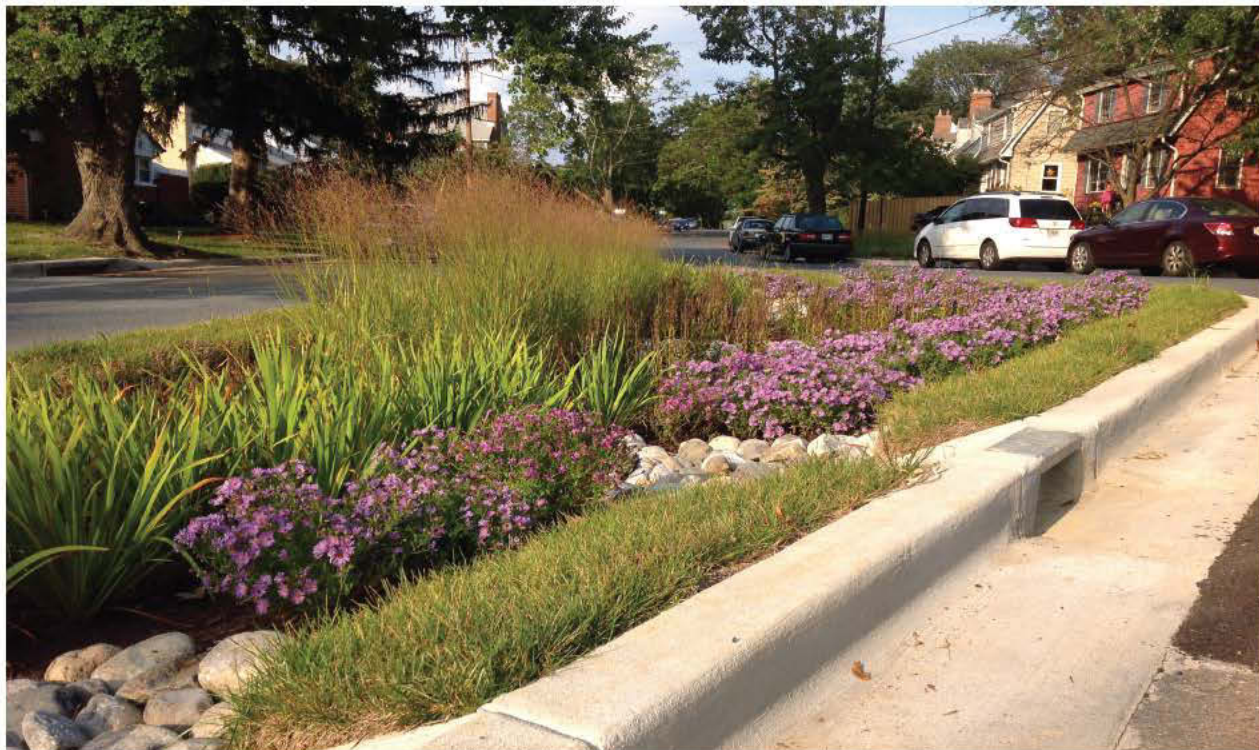


Photo by Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection

## Greener Streets and Cleaner Water –What You Can Do to Help

By Cathy Grubman

Want a greener, healthier street? One filled with plants, flowers, rain gardens, and permeable soils that will produce cleaner water and healthier environments for fish and other wildlife to live? Not to mention we, the people? The Audubon Naturalist Society and the Montgomery County Stormwater Partners Network are looking for you.

Maintaining healthy watersheds in the Washington, D.C., region is a priority for ANS. To meet this goal, ANS co-founded the Stormwater Partners Network, a group that studies polluted runoff from stormwater and provides solutions to improve the health of our watershed. Members of the Stormwater Partners Network include the Friends of Sligo Creek, the Potomac Conservancy, and the Sierra Club, among many other local, regional, and national environmental and community groups.

The network supports the Green Streets program, which is managed by the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Green Streets redesigns public roadways to reduce and improve stormwater runoff. The project helps the County meet Federal and State mandates to control and treat stormwater runoff under the Clean Water Act.

The street designs create facilities or “practices” that filter the water, which may be polluted from road grease, oil, trash, and toxic chemicals.

“Our neighborhood is about the most complicated the county has done,” said Kit Gage, President of the Friends of Sligo

Creek and resident of the Sligo Park Hills neighborhood.

“Narrow streets and big hills, and right up against the creek. So now, when there’s a one-inch rain, instead of a torrent running down the steep streets, it all gets absorbed in the bioswales and parking pads.

That keeps water volume, sediment and pollutants from shooting straight into the street. So fish and other beasts can live and reproduce and water quality can continue to improve.”

Green Streets has been around since 2009. “White Oak and Donnybrook were the first right-of-way projects,” said Ryan Zerbe, Watershed Outreach Planner at DEP. Since then, “we have completed over 400 individual projects.”

“There are so many environmental benefits,” said Eliza Cava, ANS’ Director of Conservation and Advocacy. “We want to encourage neighborhoods and our members to consider Green Streets.”

Green streets also create habitats for wildlife by incorporating native grasses, plants and trees. Another benefit is attractive streetscapes and public right-of-ways—which connect neighbors.

“Pretty much from the beginning, people were excited about the project,” said Gage.

### Take Action: Support Green Streets for Clean Streams in Montgomery County!

Contact [eliza.cava@anshome.org](mailto:eliza.cava@anshome.org) to learn how you, your neighborhood, or organization can become part of this important conservation effort.