FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
Michael Hiller
412-371-8779 x114
mike@upstreampgh.org

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Healthy ecology, healthy community

UPSTREAMPGH AND U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO STUDY REHABILITATION OF FERN HOLLOW CREEK

PITTSBURGH, PA (June 10, 2024) — On Wednesday, June 12, 2024, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and Upstream Pittsburgh are set to sign a historic formal agreement to study potential improvements to the Fern Hollow Creek Ecological Area. The signing will take place at 11:00 am at the Forbes and Braddock pavilion in Frick Park.

In January 2022, the bridge spanning Fern Hollow Creek collapsed, highlighting the nation's infrastructure issues and significantly impacting transit, ecology, and recreation in the area. Concurrent with the design and construction of the new Fern Hollow Bridge, UpstreamPgh and a coalition of community organizations and nonprofits launched Restore Fern Hollow, a community-led visioning process to ensure the valley below the Fern Hollow Bridge is restored in a way that is ecologically sound, environmentally focused, and accessible. UpstreamPgh announced human-focused intervention plans earlier this year while working simultaneously with the Army Corps on details for an ecological restoration study.

"Like the award-winning restoration of Nine Mile Run over twenty years ago, this work in partnership with the Army Corps will provide much-needed support to ensure a functional, thriving Fern Hollow Creek watershed ecosystem in the future," said Mike Hiller, UptreamPgh's Executive Director. "We can't wait to investigate what connecting our legacy Nine Mile Run restoration project to this new and significant restoration opportunity could look like."

"Past restoration efforts in Frick Park have been a success, and we look forward to working with UpstreamPgh to develop an action plan to restore flow and function to the Fern Hollow Creek watershed," said Kaitlyn Kiehart, Community Planner, with the U.S. Army Corps. UpstreamPgh, formerly Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, last worked with the U.S. Army Corps in the early 2000's on the three-year, $7.7 million restoration of the Nine Mile Run stream in Frick Park. UpstreamPgh has stewarded that stream, and many other green stormwater infrastructure sites in the region over its 23-year history.

The agreement outlines the planning effort, which will be completed under the USACE Planning Assistance to States program, and includes: scenario planning, identifying high-priority projects, stream flow data collection and complete hydraulic and hydrologic watershed modeling, identifying opportunities for ecosystem improvement and creating a water resources master plan, including an action plan. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers is providing technical support via the time and talent of

its experts, totaling $212,440. UpstreamPgh is matching this support with $212,440 of its own resources.

“Our hope is that this project results in achievable plans for a continuously flowing, healthy Fern Hollow Creek that is home to a diverse array of native flora and fauna and adds even more vitality to the urban forest that is Frick Park,” Hiller added, “That would really show how to turn a calamity like a bridge collapse into an opportunity for change.”

A signing ceremony will be held on June 12th, 2024 at 11:00 am at the Forbes and Braddock pavilion in Frick Park. Local, state, and federal officials have been invited to attend. Media are welcome.

ABOUT UpstreamPgh

MISSION
UpstreamPgh restores and protects our watershed ecosystem, while working regionally to support and implement resilient solutions for a healthy urban environment.

VISION
UpstreamPgh envisions a region with clean water accessible to all, healthy and resilient communities, and ecosystems restored to their natural functions.

STRATEGY
We build capacity for community members to become the stewards of, and advocates for, watersheds.

We advocate regionally for policies and funding for sustainable water management strategies that prioritize clean water for all in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

We implement green infrastructure projects throughout our watershed, while working to educate public officials, community members and young people.

PROGRAM AREAS

engage

We work to connect people with nature for a positive impact on the environment. From schoolchildren to municipal leaders, scientists to citizens, volunteers to homeowners, a healthy community starts with education, outreach and engagement.

advocate

Our watershed, our stream, our urban tree canopy, our ecosystem. They all deserve a voice. We work to advance new ideas that create change by advocating for policies and practices that further the health of our environment.

plan/build

As a regional leader in stormwater management, we work with municipalities, homeowners, private organizations and public entities on services and infrastructure projects that are effective, environmentally responsible and yes, beautiful.

More At: Upstreampgh.org

upstreampgh
321 Pennwood Avenue, Suite 202 | Pittsburgh, PA 15221
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