

## ***South Peachtree Creek, Medlock Park, DeKalb County, GA***

### ***Bioengineering: A Simple Approach for Urban Streams***

Many stream restoration projects being done in the country today involve millions of dollars of expenditure, large construction equipment, and dramatic changes to the stream channel. However, there are many less costly approaches to improving stream health which have been shown to have ecological benefits as well. In one neighborhood park just outside of Atlanta, GA, a simpler approach to stream restoration, bioengineering, has been a true social and ecological success.

#### **What was done and why?**

In 1993, DeKalb County Parks Department undertook a bank bioengineering project on South Peachtree Creek in Medlock Park. In this neighborhood park devoted to baseball and dog walking, the stream banks were bare and eroded, with occasional large trees struggling to stay in place against the high stormflows typical of an urban stream. Banks were regraded and covered with a geotextile fabric. Willow stakes were pounded into the new banks to add vegetative support. A variety of trees including river birch and green ash were planted all along the 1000 ft of streambank in the park. Because the park is very popular with dogwalkers, and the stream is very popular with the dogs, treeless access points were left along the banks and picnic tables were added.

#### **Who was involved?**

The bioengineering of South Peachtree Creek through Medlock Park cost \$15,000 funded by a grant from the EPA Section 319 Cleanwater program and DeKalb County Parks. Design and construction were done by the Parks Department in conjunction with DeKalb County Drainage and Roads Department, Southeast Waters AmeriCorps, and numerous other volunteers.

#### **Where can I see the results of this project?**

Visit Medlock Park in Decatur, GA.

#### **Why is this a model project?**

This project has been a great social success. The visitors to the park who are aware of the project greatly appreciate the change that has been made in their stream. Visitors to the park who have only seen the stream recently are frequently not aware that the project ever happened because the vegetation appears very natural. This project is not just a social success, however. In 2002-2003 a study done at the University of Georgia showed that this project had greatly increased available roots and wood habitat for macroinvertebrates, benefitting these important members of the aquatic food web.

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