

Third Rock Consultants and Restoration in the Little Laurel River

Third Rock Consultants, LLC, an environmental consulting firm located in Lexington, Kentucky, was established in the fall of 2000 in response to the increased need for innovative, yet professional environmental consulting services. Third Rock capabilities include a variety of environmental services such as engineering design and construction, biological surveys (macroinvertebrate, fish, mussel, bat and botanical surveys), environmental permitting and mitigation (stream and wetland restoration), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation, statistical data analysis and water quality services (watershed assessments, microbial source tracking, water quality sampling/ analysis and bacteriological analysis). Third Rock serves a wide range of private and public clients, including industry and government agencies, who are faced with challenges that demand environmental experience and technical expertise. Today Third Rock is recognized as a leading environmental firm in the region, achieving this distinction through a combination of superior technical skills and commitment to meeting clients' needs.

The company is a certified woman-owned business enterprise owned and managed by Molly Foree, president of Third Rock. Ms. Foree is a graduate of the University of Kentucky College of Law. Prior to entering the consulting business, she specialized in environmental law at a prominent Lexington law firm. Under Ms. Foree's leadership, Third Rock has achieved a reputation for providing quality environmental services in a challenging regulatory climate. In just under eight years, Third Rock has grown from a staff of 16 to 34 and was recently named on Inc. Magazine's 5000 fastest growing privately owned companies in America. Third Rock has been an affiliate of the Kentucky Academy of Science since 2003.

One of Third Rock's leading areas of service is water quality consulting. Third Rock's engineers, aquatic ecologists, wetland scientists, and data analysts combine to provide a level of excellence unique and unequalled in environmental consulting. The staff has years of diverse and collective experience in the areas of watershed assessment and planning, water quality and hydrologic modeling, stream and wetland restoration, and design and implementation of agricultural and stormwater best management practices. They utilize a watershed-scale approach to restoring waters to swimmable, fishable resources. Third Rock assists local groups (i.e. community governments, environmental advocacy groups) in developing and implementing watershed monitoring schemes, and subsequently watershed planning documents.

From 2003-2006, Third Rock studied the watershed of the Corbin City Reservoir to determine the sources of pollution causing impairment in the urban drinking water supply. With assistance from a Clean Water Act 319(h) grant, Third Rock was able to determine that the most significant source of silt, pathogens, and nutrients to the reservoir was the Little Laurel River; more specifically, runoff from the city of London. To solve these problems, Third Rock proposed the implementation of projects that would slow the runoff of rainfall in the urban areas and therefore reduce the concentration of pollutants

reaching the tributaries of the Little Laurel River and ultimately the Corbin City Reservoir. In February of 2008, after the award of a second 319(h) grant, the Restoration Action Initiative in the Little Laurel (RAILL) was formed by Third Rock to implement these water quality improvement projects and facilitate the development of green infrastructure in and around London and Laurel County. After months of planning and design by Third Rock biologist Tony Miller and environmental engineer Jennifer Shelby, a list of best management practices (BMPs) were proposed for the area.

Levi Jackson: A stormwater wetland is designed and slated for construction in fall 2008 at Levi Jackson State Park. This wetland will retain sediment, nutrients, and pathogens from the Little Laurel River after flooding events thereby reducing the downstream pollutant loadings. This wetland is also expected to alleviate some of the sedimentation problems in Mill Pond.

Rain gardens: Three rain gardens are currently being designed for the London area to capture runoff from impervious areas thereby promoting infiltration and an overall reduction in pollution to the tributaries of the Little Laurel River. Areas along Main Street in London are being targeted for rain gardens at businesses and private residences. In addition, one rain garden is being designed for a residential area adjacent to the Corbin City Reservoir.

Transfer Station: Design is near completion on a joint wetland and stream restoration project adjacent to the KY 192 garbage transfer station in London. The primary focus of the restoration is to stabilize the badly eroding stream and reconnect it to its adjacent wetland. This restoration will promote the reduction of downstream

pollutants by reducing streambank erosion and by capturing pollutants in the wetland during storm events where they will be naturally treated.

Smith/Little Property Restoration: The Smith/Little property is an 85-acre tract of prior-converted, bottomland forest wetland with a bisecting stream (Whitley Branch) between US-25 and KY-229. Decisions should be made in August regarding a Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund grant that would allow for purchase of the land for restoration. Design of the restoration would focus on re-establishing the site to pre-development bottomland forest with an emphasis on education. Specific tasks would include stabilization of the heavily incised stream, removing drainage features in the wetland, and replanting the site with native wetland vegetation. Additionally, walkways would be installed for educational tours of the wetland.

In addition to planning and designing BMPs, Third Rock efforts for RAILL include conducting public meetings to spread awareness and to encourage community interest and participation, developing a RAILL logo, the production of project newsletters, post card announcements for meetings and the development of a project specific website www.RAILL.org, which was designed to be a learning tool for visitors.

For more information regarding Third Rock services, please contact Tony Miller at 859.977.2000 or by email at tmiller@thirdrockconsultants.com.

Artist Rendering for Proposed Stormwater Wetland
Levi Jackson State Park

