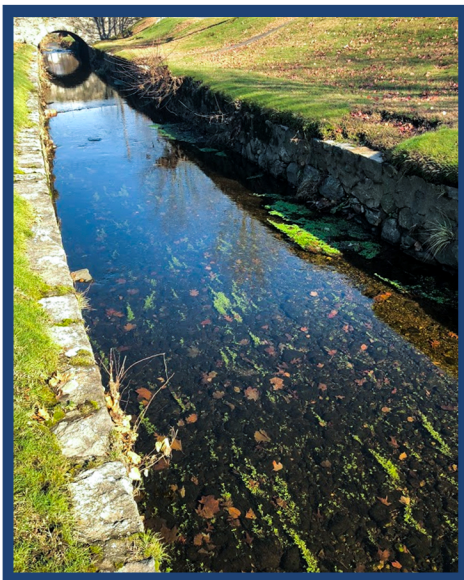
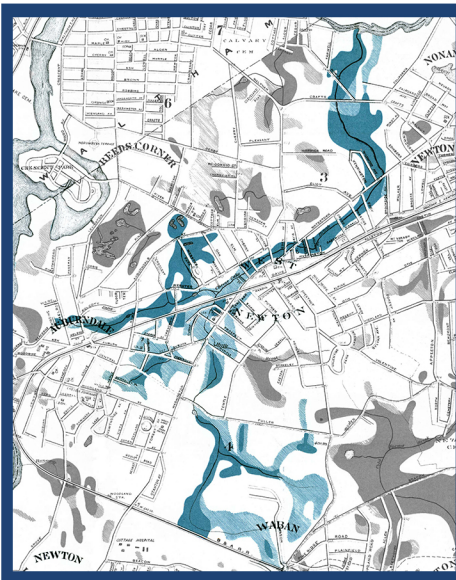


Cheesecake Brook Restoration

A Vision Plan



The Albemarle Field portion of Cheesecake Brook observed on November 26, 2020.



A historical map of the Cheesecake Brook watershed from 1892 and areas highlighted for possible drainage.



Severe flooding of Cheesecake Brook and Albemarle Road observed on June 28, 2020.

An Introduction to Cheesecake Brook

Cheesecake Brook is **an urbanized stream and tributary of the Charles River** located in Newton, MA. It flows from its headwaters near the Brae Burn Country Club, through a culvert under the Mass Pike, by Ablemarle Field, and into the Charles River near the Blue Heron Bridge. The downstream reach of the Brook flows through neighborhoods within a channel and is bounded by Albemarle Road on both sides.

A Brook Altered

Human intervention has drastically changed the character and quality of Cheesecake Brook. In the interest of maximizing land for development, Cheesecake Brook and its surrounding wetlands were reduced to a narrow contained channel. In the region near Albemarle Road, Cheesecake Brook is straightened and the banks were reinforced with stone and concrete, removing the natural meandering of the stream. Vegetation on the banks is limited and is mainly composed of mowed grass. These conditions **have degraded water quality and habitat** for aquatic and wetland species. There are also **major problems with flooding** around Cheesecake Brook during heavy rainstorms, which are becoming more frequent as the climate continues to change.



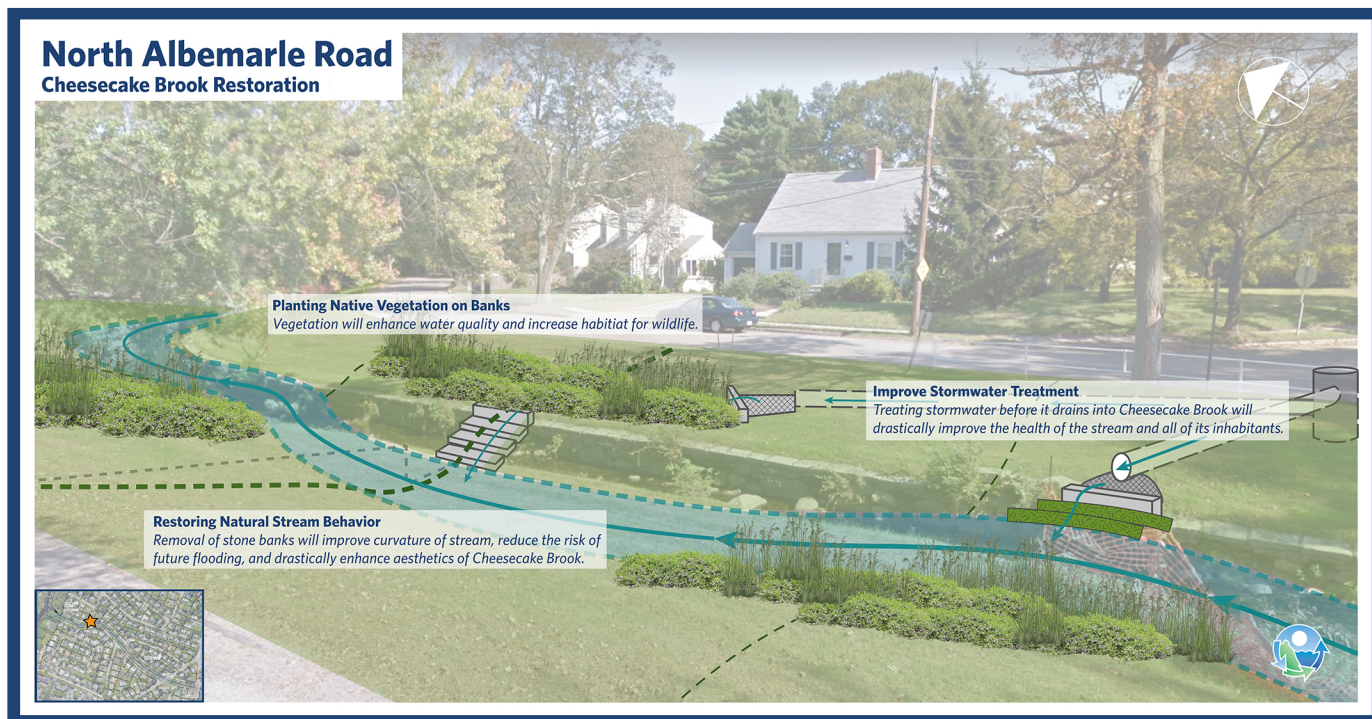
Fuller Brook, located in Wellesley, is an example of a successfully restored stream.

Naturalizing and Restoring Streams

Past decisions do not have to inform future management of assets like Cheesecake Brook. As stream restoration practices have been increasingly used in the past decades around the country, the techniques have improved and so have the benefits. **Stream restoration has proven to be a successful way to improve water quality, restore habitat, create natural spaces for people to enjoy, and more.** Locally, Fuller Brook in Wellesley was restored in 2016 to address invasive species and water quality issues. The restoration provides an example of what restoration along Cheesecake Brook could look like.

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An infographic explaining the proposed interventions to the Albemarle Road portion of Cheesecake Brook that would restore a healthy stream environment.

Restoring Cheesecake Brook

With input from the community and help from environmental engineers, CRWA created a conceptual design for the restoration of Cheesecake Brook from Watertown Street to the Charles River. This vision includes **removing the stone banks, restoring a more natural channel shape, planting the banks with native vegetation, and restoring the natural curvature of the stream.** In addition, nature based solutions such as **bioretention areas and outfall stabilizations** can improve quality of water entering Cheesecake Brook from the stormwater pipe networks under the surrounding streets.

Community Benefits of Restoration

Restoring Cheesecake Brook would turn an often overlooked "ditch" into a **natural feature of the landscape** once again. Restoring the stream banks and curvature would create a more natural appearance, **reduce stormwater flooding**, and **provide habitat space** for bugs and fish alike. Water quality in the Brook and the Charles River would be improved by the bioretention and outfall stabilizations. Surrounded by schools, playing fields, and bike routes, this project would also provide excellent **educational value** for all to understand how humans and nature interact and reunite the Newton community along this forgotten gem.



Fall foliage collecting in the current of Cheesecake Brook.

Support CRWA

CRWA is a **consistent advocate** for the restoration of the Charles River watershed and all of its tributaries. Please consider **supporting our efforts** to make this project and future projects possible. Visit our website for more information.

Acknowledgements

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