



Testimony of Tom Blackburn

Advocacy Committee Chair, Northern Virginia Bird Alliance

on the George Snyder Trail

January 13, 2026

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Before the Fairfax City Council

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I am Tom Blackburn, of the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance. I want to give you a visual sense of the extent of the destruction at just a few of the points on the George Snyder Trail using photos at locations on Stantec's design plans on the city's website.

Slide 1: This is the view from the start of the trail at Route 123. The first excavation for the trail starts 150 feet away. Two thirds of the trail is significantly above or below the existing grade.

Slide 2: At 280 feet from the start, the trail will be 8 feet below grade. On the right side, the slope to connect with the surrounding terrain will be 22 feet wide and on the left there will be a retaining wall 10 feet high plus footers 3 feet below grade. (Stantec PL-01, XS-02, and RW1-03.)

Slide 3: This gives you an idea of how far below grade the excavation will be at this point. The excavation will be 275 feet long.

Slide 4: The trail switches from below ground to above ground 425 feet from the start. Here, at 500 feet, the trail will be built on 4 feet of fill dirt, with slopes 32 feet wide to grade down to the existing terrain. The trail will be on fill for 175 feet. (Stantec PL-01 and XS-04.)

Slide 5: A new section of fill dirt begins 775 feet from the start. At 900 feet, the fill dirt will be 3 feet high, with slopes to the surrounding terrain 23 feet wide. This section of fill is 255 feet long, and then the trail switches back to below ground. (Stantec PL-02 and XS-04.)

Slide 6: At 2075 feet from the start, the trail will be built on 8 feet of fill dirt to reach the first of 4 14-foot-wide bridges. The slope to the surrounding terrain will be 40 feet wide. (Stantec XS-16, BRE-10.)

Slide 7: This shows how far above grade the trail will be at the point it meets the bridge.

Slide 8: West of Fair Woods Parkway, the trail will be built on the side of a steep slope requiring retaining walls. 675 feet west of Fair Woods, the retaining wall will be 14 feet high plus footers 5 ½ feet below grade. The wall will be 312 feet long. (Stantec RW2-1, -02, and -04).

Slide 9: East of Fair Woods, there is a significant cross slope requiring a retaining wall 3 to 6 feet high and 175 feet long to make the trail level from side to side.

Slide 10: 75 feet east of Stafford Drive the trail will be up to 6 feet below grade, requiring excavated slopes 36 feet wide to meet the surrounding terrain. The excavation will be 150 feet long. (Stantec PL-10 and XS-52.)

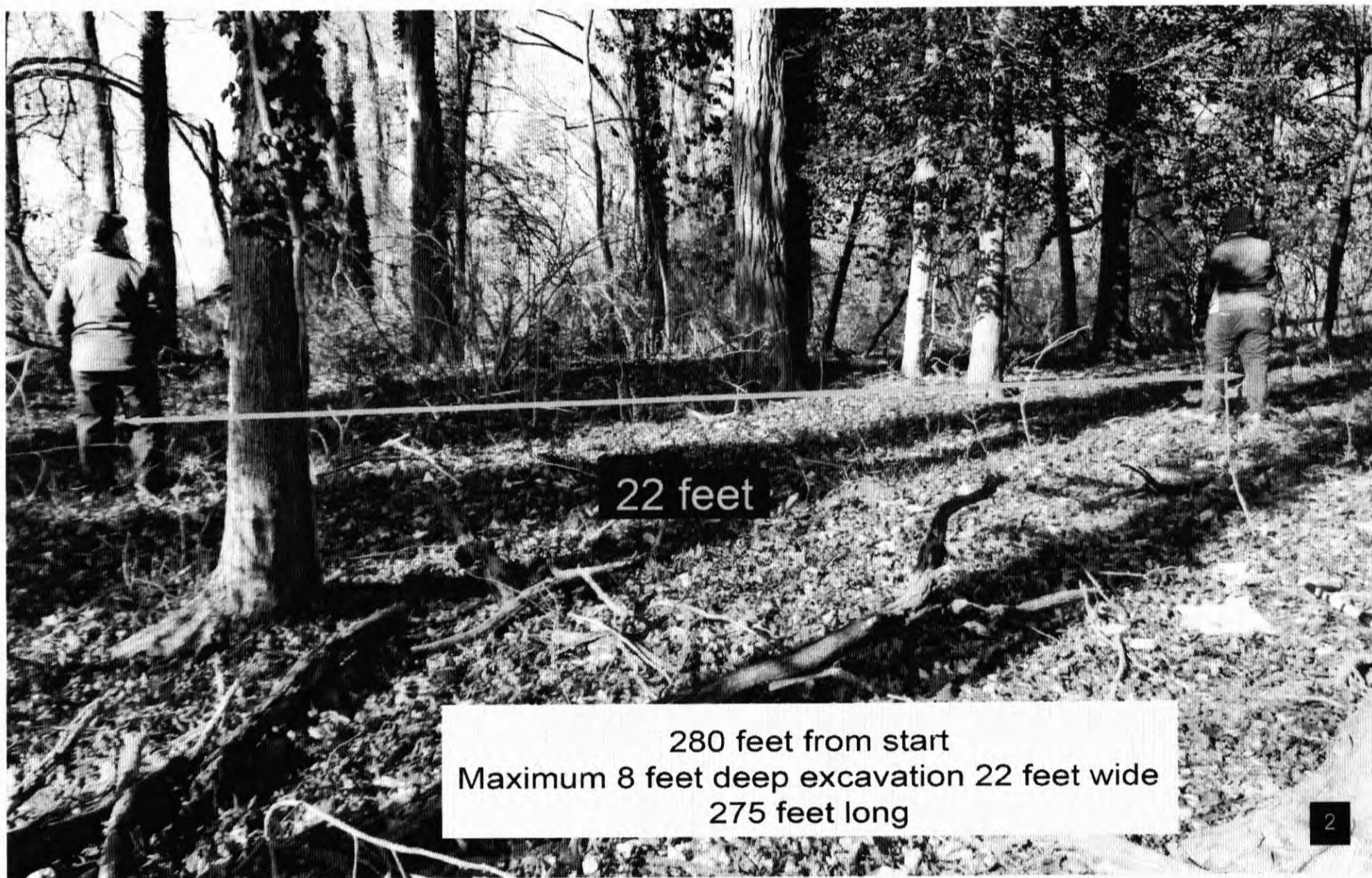
Slide 11: This gives an idea of how far below grade the trail will be at that point.

If you vote to fund the trail, your legacy will be the destruction of much of Fairfax City's urban forest.



excavation starts at 150 feet

Start of Trail at Rte 123

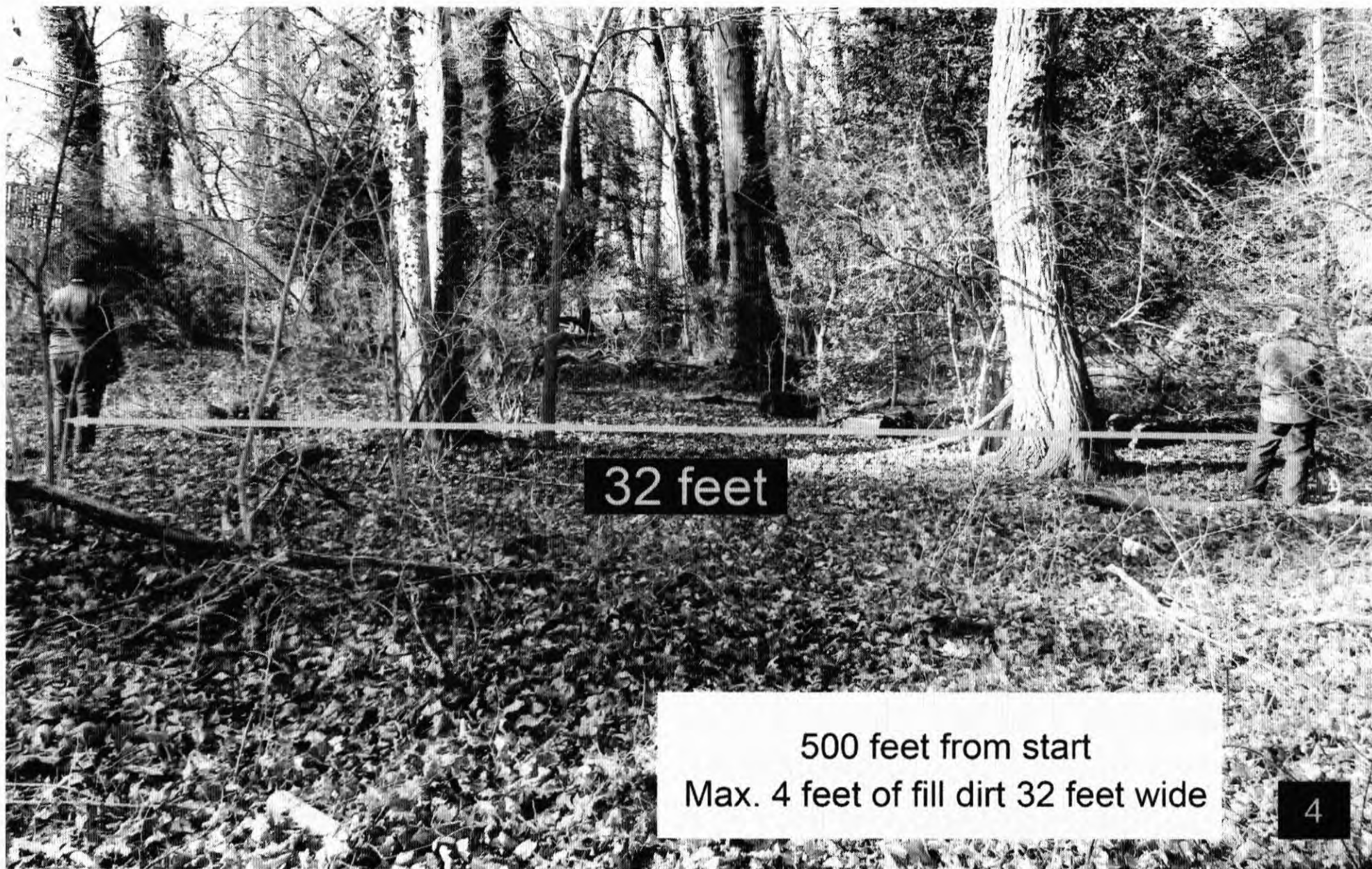


22 feet

280 feet from start
Maximum 8 feet deep excavation 22 feet wide
275 feet long

A black and white photograph showing two people from behind, standing in a wooded area. They are looking at a surveying instrument mounted on a tall pole. The instrument has a circular dial and a vertical scale. The background is filled with trees and foliage. A text box in the upper right corner provides context for the location.

280 feet from start
8 foot high retaining wall



32 feet

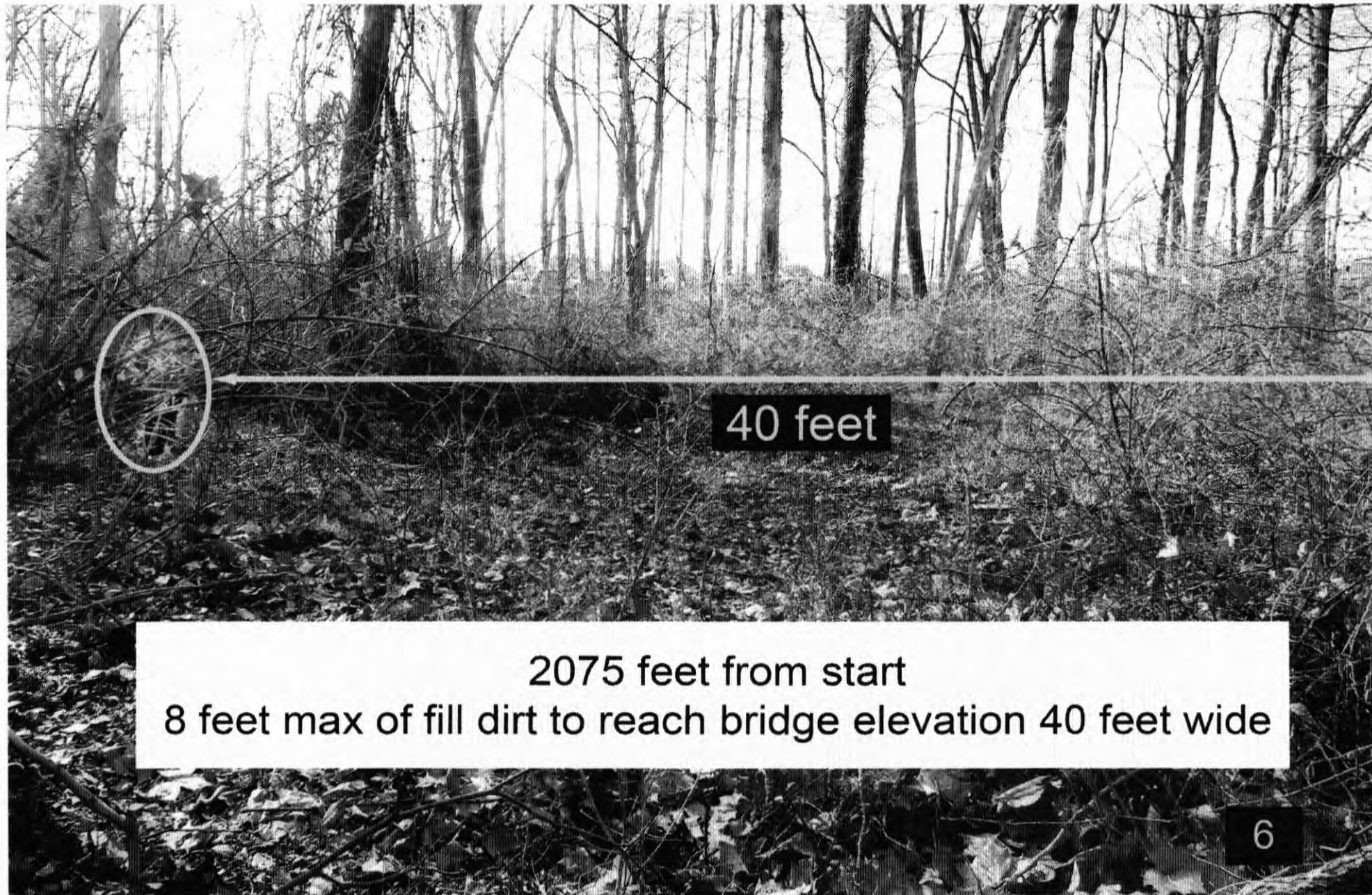
500 feet from start
Max. 4 feet of fill dirt 32 feet wide



23 feet

900 feet from start

Max. 3 feet of fill dirt 23 feet wide



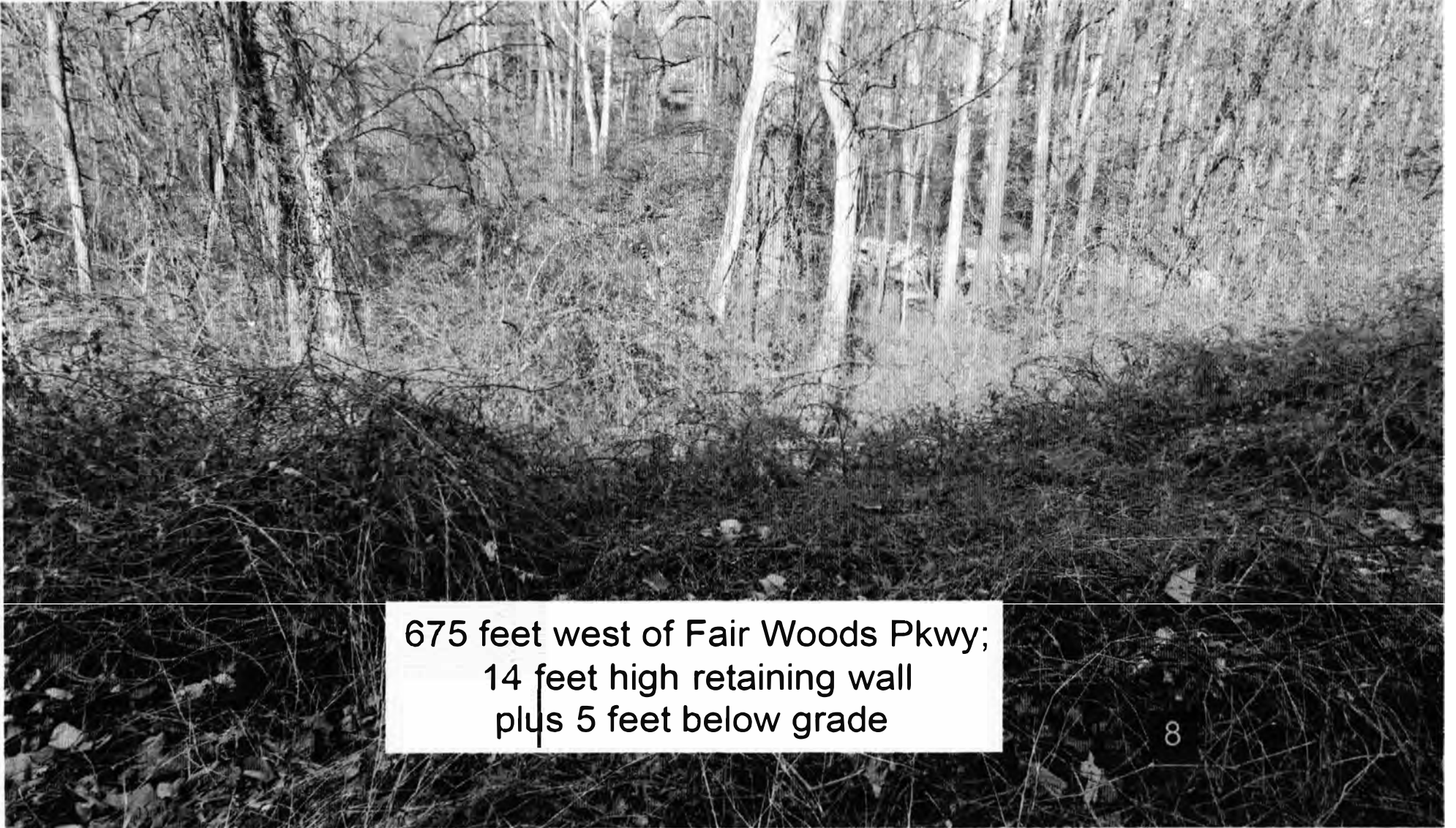
40 feet

2075 feet from start
8 feet max of fill dirt to reach bridge elevation 40 feet wide

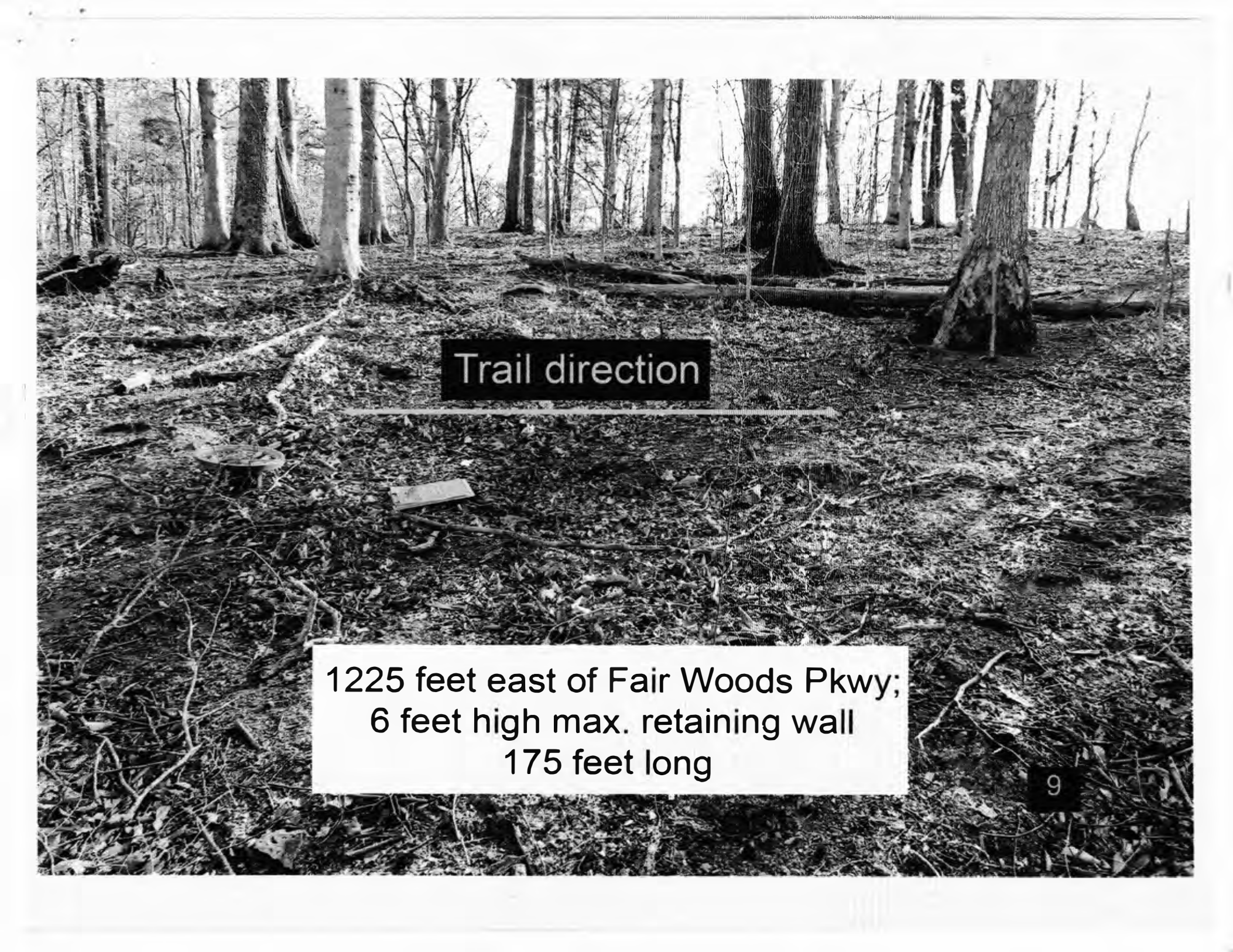


8 feet high

2075 feet from start
8 feet max of fill dirt to reach bridge elevation

A black and white photograph showing a dense wooded area. In the foreground, there is a thick layer of brush and low-lying vegetation. Behind this, a steep embankment rises, covered in more dense foliage and trees. The trees appear to be mostly bare, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting. The overall scene is a natural, somewhat overgrown landscape.

675 feet west of Fair Woods Pkwy;
14 feet high retaining wall
plus 5 feet below grade

A black and white photograph of a forest floor. The ground is covered in dry leaves, twigs, and some fallen logs. Several trees with bare branches are visible in the background. A dark, rectangular retaining wall runs horizontally across the middle of the image. A white line, possibly a trail, leads from the bottom left towards the wall. A small, dark, circular object, possibly a manhole cover, is visible on the left side of the foreground. A white text box is overlaid on the bottom right, and a black text box is overlaid on the middle of the image.

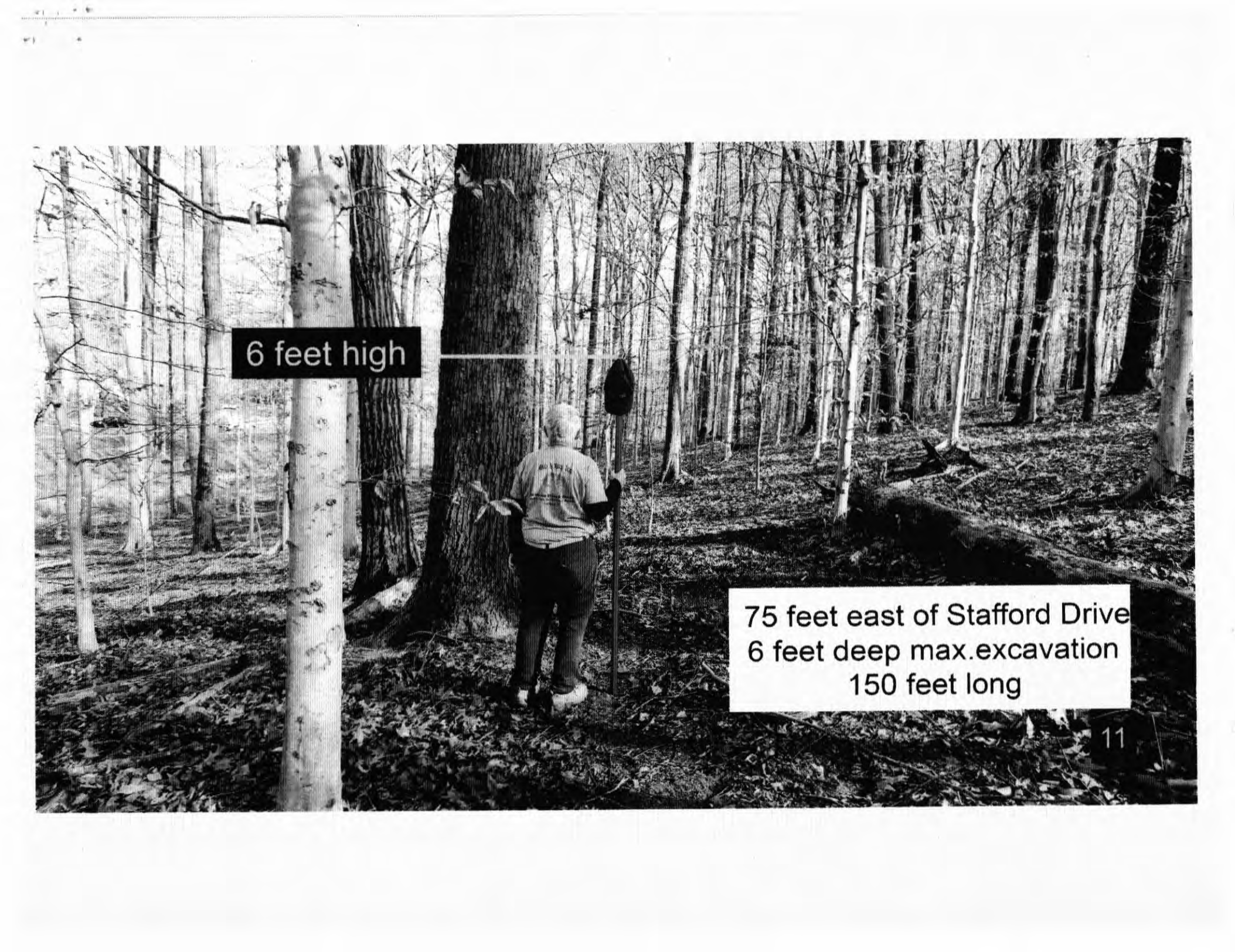
Trail direction

1225 feet east of Fair Woods Pkwy;
6 feet high max. retaining wall
175 feet long



36 feet

75 feet east of Stafford Drive
6 feet deep max.excavation 36 ft.wide
150 feet long



6 feet high

75 feet east of Stafford Drive
6 feet deep max. excavation
150 feet long