

Davis Branch Stream Restoration

Woodstock, Maryland



from top: Constructed riffles restore the connection between the in-stream and riparian habitats; Large woody debris add complexity to aquatic habitats; Oxbow wetlands provide breeding habitat for amphibians

A unique swath of preserved rural land in a rapidly developing watershed is enhanced when stability, habitat, and ecological function are restored to a degraded stream and floodplain system.

Like many creeks in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, Davis Branch had become severely eroded by historic unsustainable land management practices and hydrologic manipulations associated with upstream watershed development. In an effort to improve the degraded channel, the Howard County Stormwater Management Division sought a restoration solution that would not only support stewardship of the adjacent Howard County Conservancy, but also support the County's water quality improvement and restoration efforts under its NPDES MS4 Permit.

Working closely with the County, the Conservancy, and community stakeholders, Biohabitats developed a design to restore aquatic

function to Davis Branch, taking advantage of the unique rural character and minimal constraints within the stream's riparian corridor. The design establishes ecologically meaningful reconnection between the restored stream and adjacent floodplain surface. The restored stream and floodplain system provide enhanced terrestrial and aquatic habitat variability, enhancing the diversity of the site's floral and faunal communities. The restoration also creates new opportunities for the Conservancy's education and outreach programs.

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