

Davis Branch Stream Restoration

Woodstock, Maryland



From top: Eroded banks of Davis Branch; The Conservancy is a popular birdwatching site

The Howard County Conservancy aims to educate people about the natural world, preserve the land and its legacy for future generations, and model responsible stewardship of our environment. This mission is demonstrated in the way they manage their 232-acre site, which is located in a watershed that has experienced significant development over recent decades.

Like many creeks in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, Davis Branch, a stream that flows through Howard County Conservancy

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.

property, had become severely eroded by historic unsustainable land management practices and manipulated hydrology as a result of development in its upstream watershed. In an effort to ameliorate degraded channel conditions, the Howard County Stormwater Management Division sought a restoration solution that would not only align with the Conservancy's mission but also support the County's water quality improvement and restoration efforts under its NPDES MS4 Permit.

Working closely with Howard County, the Conservancy, and community stakeholders, Biohabitats crafted a design to restore pre-disturbance aquatic function to Davis Branch, taking advantage of the unique rural character and minimal constraints within

the stream's riparian corridor. The design, which employs a variety of natural channel and floodplain structures using indigenous materials, establishes ecologically meaningful reconnection between the restored stream and adjacent undisturbed floodplain surface. The restored stream and floodplain system provides enhanced terrestrial and aquatic habitat variability, augmenting the Conservancy's already richly diverse floral and faunal communities. It also creates new opportunities for the Conservancy's education and outreach programs.

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