

OMEGA INSTITUTE

Omega Institute Master Ecological Planning & Assessment Services

Rhinebeck, New York



from top: Workshop participants help construct a rain garden designed by Biohabitats; Measuring a tree as part of the Omega forest assessment

After Biohabitats provided design support for a wastewater treatment wetland at the Omega Center for Sustainable Living, the Omega Institute called on Biohabitats to develop an ecological master plan for its 200-acre property. The property includes a wide array of natural resources, including a rare bog lake, hardwood forests, streams, and wetlands. This unique suite of natural resources provides the backdrop for a retreat center devoted to human wellness and awakening the human spirit.

Biohabitats created an ecological master plan that assesses the existing stream, wetland,

A visionary ecological master plan, informed by thorough natural resource assessments, ensures that regenerative and sustainable design considerations will guide the future conservation and restoration efforts on this 200-acre campus.

forest resources, examines the landscape ecological context and develops an adaptive management framework for future stewardship and ecological enhancement. The forest assessment included analyzing the groundcover, understory, and overstory; identifying species and determining the relative abundance of invasive species; and compiling the existing or potential threats and stressors to the forest. Biohabitats collected data related to the vegetation, hydrologic regime and soils in order to assess the character and condition of the wetlands and analyzed the property's stream resources through a qualitative assessment of physical and habitat parameters and a quantitative sediment analysis. These assessments are the basis for an adaptive management framework and ecological action plan that will guide Biohabitats and

the Omega Institute as they continue to collaborate in its implementation.

Biohabitats also participated in the Omega Institute's premier year of their Ecological Literacy Immersion Program in the summer of 2013, teaching sessions on forestry, stormwater management and landscape ecological design and planning. As part of this program, Biohabitats designed and, with the help of program participants, constructed a rain garden outside of the Dining Hall that enhances the property's aesthetic and creates new habitat as it treats stormwater.

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