

Rock Creek–Milkhouse Regenerative Stream Conveyance Design-Build

Washington, DC



top: After restoration
bottom: Initial conditions

Rock Creek Park, a favorite spot among Washington, DC bikers, hikers, birders, runners and skaters, is a natural oasis amidst a highly urbanized landscape. Administered by the U.S. National Park Service, this popular park contains many degraded streams. Biohabitats is helping the District Department of the

A degraded urban stream is reconnected with its floodplain, improving water quality and local hydrology.

Environment restore one of them, a perennial tributary to Rock Creek.

This design/build effort applies a regenerative stormwater conveyance (RSC) approach to 1,000 linear feet of incised stream channel. By raising the channel bed and reconnecting the stream with its floodplain and riparian wetlands, the conversion of stormwater to groundwater is optimized, and erosive energies are reduced.

The project demonstrates this technology as an alternative to traditional approaches to stream and outfall erosion, such as piping, rip rap and hard structures. The RSC approach will improve water quality as a result of the cessation of head-

ward migration of the channel incision. It will also improve local hydrology by tempering the influence of stormwater runoff on the stream, converting “peaky” surface discharge into shallow seepage, reducing bank erosion and tree loss, and improving the quality and quantity of water delivered to downstream reaches. This project is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

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