

BROWN ADVISORY

Bond Street Living Canal

Baltimore, Maryland



From top: Floating wetlands enliven the Bond Street Canal and the view of Baltimore Harbor; Floating wetlands add beauty, biodiversity, and interest to the urban waterfront.

Prior to European settlement, the Baltimore Harbor was fringed with tidal marsh. Over the course of the city's development, however, the Harbor was dredged, tidal wetlands were filled in, and vertical seawalls were installed

to support maritime activities. With the disappearance of tidal wetlands came the loss of their important ecological functions, such as processing nutrients, providing wildlife, and trapping sediment and debris.

In recent years, several members of Baltimore's waterfront community have made efforts to restore and draw attention to some of those ecological functions through innovative pilot projects. One project is located alongside a wharf that was once a major maritime hub and is now home to the investment firm Brown Advisory. A key partner in the Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore's Healthy Harbor Initiative—an effort to make the Inner Harbor swimmable

Durable, modular floating wetlands add ecological function and environmental education to a busy, urban waterfront once fringed by marsh.

and fishable – Brown Advisory was eager to enhance waterfront ecology and pay homage to the tidal wetlands that once existed along the water's edge.

Biohabitats collaborated with Clearwater Mills, LLC to develop a durable, modular floating wetland to be placed in a vacant canal next to the wharf. Designed to withstand the Harbor's punishing wind, weather, and waves, the wetland floats on aluminum pontoons which can support the weight of a person to facilitate maintenance and can be adjusted for varied buoyancy. The media, which was fabricated by Floating Wetland Solutions, was planted by local students and Brown Advisory staff members with smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*), saltmeadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), and saltmeadow rush (*Juncus gerardii*).

Deployed in 2017, the wetland endured heavy wave action, winds, herbivory pressure and ice. Biohabitats and Clearwater Mills maintained the floating wetland through the 2018 growing season, which enabled the team to evaluate what species and planting arrangements lead to greater success. It also further calibrated the team's understanding of the dynamic natural and anthropogenic forces that challenge the integrity and durability of these novel ecologically engineered ecosystems. We are confident the Bond Street Living Canal floating wetlands are up to the task of surviving in this open, active, urban water body and creating a much-needed habitat for the aquatic organisms leaving within it.

SERVICES

- Engage
- Plan
- Engineer & Design
- Build
- Manage



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