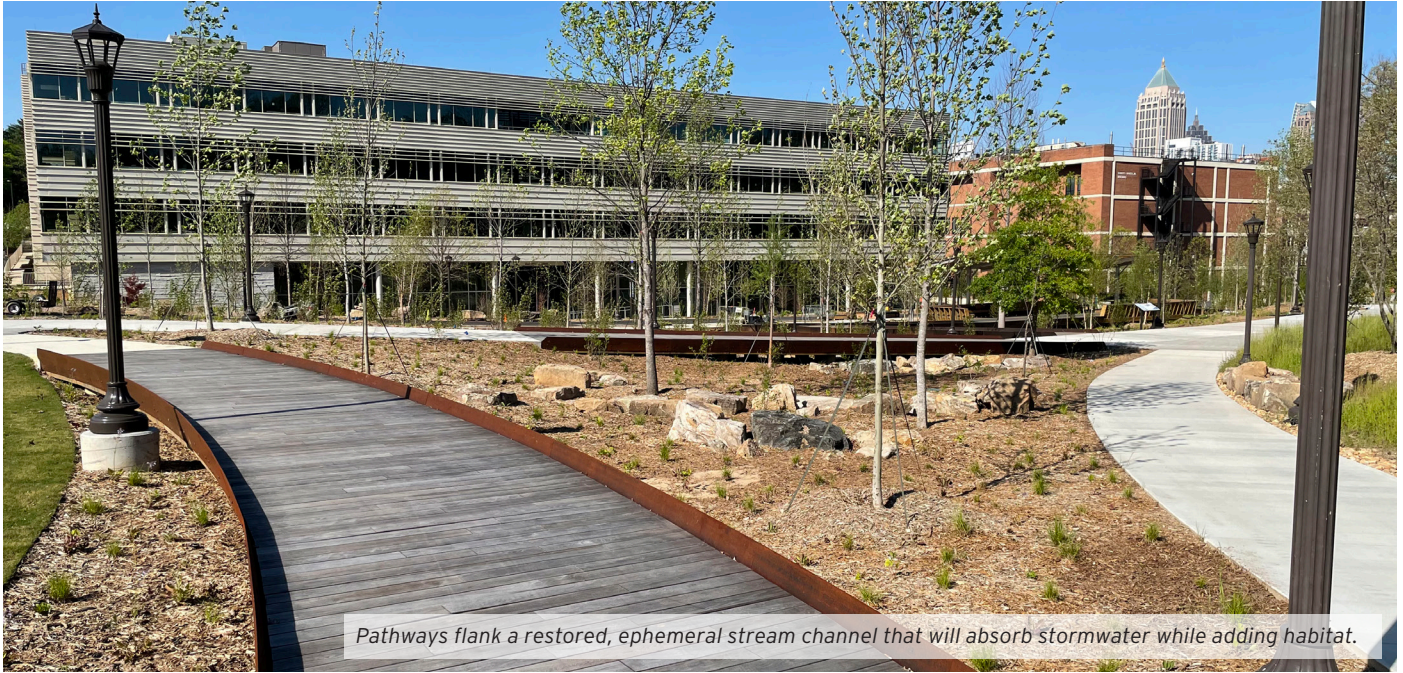


Georgia Tech Eco-Commons

Atlanta, Georgia

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Pathways flank a restored, ephemeral stream channel that will absorb stormwater while adding habitat.

A multifunctional design for campus common spaces weaves together innovative approaches that advance Georgia Tech's leadership in sustainability design.

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In 2006, Georgia Tech developed a Campus Landscape Master Plan that called for the creation of a permanent ribbon of interconnected, ecologically functioning open space in the heart of campus. At the core of this ribbon, a living laboratory and performance landscape called the Eco-Commons was envisioned to be a campus stormwater sponge, biodiversity hotspot, carbon sink, and site for respite and academic research. As a key member of the design team led by Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects and Barge Design Solutions, Biohabitats helped bring this inspiring vision to life.

Biohabitats began by evaluating historical information and framing the site's ecological potential. Two small valleys once characterized the site, but they were filled in the early to mid-20th century, when parking became the predominant land use. Working with the design team, Biohabitats helped develop a concept that would mimic the site's historic landforms and native piedmont plant communities and provide a mosaic of native habitats and refuge within an urban ecological context.

After coordinating an analysis to determine the viability of establishing targeted piedmont plant communities in the existing soil, Biohabitats developed a soil conditioning and amendment plan to loosen soil compaction and increase organic soil carbon. Biohabitats also developed plant composition schedules for each habitat type with species best suited to succeed.

To facilitate the creation of a living laboratory, Biohabitats developed an approach and methodology to evaluate the ecological performance of the Eco-Commons. This included a plan for the installation of continuous data sensors and field sampling. As the new backbone of the Georgia Tech campus, the Eco-Commons will provide ecological services and outdoor learning opportunities for future generations of students and community members.