

IRVINE NATURE CENTER

Irvine Nature Center Stream & Wetland Restoration Design-Build

Owings Mills, Maryland



Located on a 210-acre site featuring forests, meadows, wetlands, and headwater tributaries of the Jones Falls, a highly regarded headwater trout stream in Baltimore County, Irvine Nature Center offers experiential environmental education programs for children and adults of the greater Baltimore area. With a mission that includes inspiring people to explore, respect, and protect nature, Irvine recognized the need to protect and improve some of the nature in its own backyard. Several sections of tributaries on the site had long ago been

An educational nature center lives its mission to protect nature by restoring stability, function, and habitat to more than 1,500 feet of degraded stream and adjacent wetlands.

ditched to support agricultural practices. Those alterations, along with more recent land use changes on adjacent and nearby properties, had caused the streams and wetlands to become degraded.

With funding from the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund Capital Improvement Grant and a partnership with the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCDC), Resource Environmental Solutions, Biohabitats, and Irvine Nature Center teamed up to implement stream and wetland restoration. The design approach was to restore the degraded stream sections, divert stormflow to adjacent field areas where it would infiltrate and create localized

wet habitat areas, restore riparian wetland hydrology, reduce sediment and nutrient loading, and reestablish a mosaic of native emergent, forested, and scrub shrub wetlands. The project restored 1,550 linear feet of stream and restored and enhanced wetlands adjacent to the stream. Revegetation involved the planting of more than 2,100 trees and shrubs, and seeding with native dry and wet meadow herbaceous seed mixes. The project is regarded by the MASCDC as a model for municipalities seeking nutrient and sediment credits.

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