

Kenilworth Marsh Design-Build Tidal Wetland Restoration

Washington, DC



*top: After restoration; above left: Initial conditions;
above right: experimental restoration design*

In 1989, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) recognized the need to coordinate a multi-agency effort to restore the Kenilworth Marsh system to improve its productivity and water quality functions

within the watershed. The project was a cooperative effort by the Washington D.C. Department of Public Works, the National Park Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the COG. Biohabitats conducted a historical and environmental

The restoration of 33 acres of tidal freshwater marsh now serves as the keystone for ongoing restoration efforts along the Anacostia River.

assessment to identify key challenges in restoring the marsh and developed detailed plans to restore approximately 30 acres of tidal freshwater wetlands. Biohabitats researched and characterized existing and historical conditions of the marsh for four periods from 1890 to the present.

Biohabitats monitored the ecological and physical conditions within the marsh relative to human influences so that a reasonable restoration goal/design could be established for the remaining phases of the project. Biohabitats then devised a conceptual restoration plan based on these findings. Biohabitats conducted two charettes to review data, solicit alternative ideas and solutions, and develop a unified goal and implementation strategy.

Biohabitats developed detailed grading plans, planting plans and plant specifications for the experimental restoration construction. Restoration included bioengineering techniques such as “brush fences,” the use of dead plant material for structural stabilization for the short term and live plant material for the long term.

After implementation, physical and biological monitoring was conducted for one year. Based on the documented success, Biohabitats developed the final restoration design and specifications and managed construction for the Phase III full-scale restoration.

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