

NATIONAL AQUARIUM IN BALTIMORE

Center for Aquatic Life & Conservation

Baltimore, Maryland

Image Courtesy of Michael Vergason Landscape Architects



To complement its world-renown Inner Harbor facility, the National Aquarium in Baltimore proposed developing a new aquatic animal care and conservation education center on a site along the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River. As part of a master planning team led by Ayers Saint Gross and Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Biohabitats

Regenerative design strategies including water quality BMPs, energy conservation, and adaptive reuse are being seamlessly combined with ecological restoration initiatives including coastal wetland restoration, riparian buffer enhancement and greenway corridor conservation.

integrated an adaptive management approach into the design of the multiple-phase campus development plan that includes the renovation of a public works garage, a public park, water access piers, and ecological demonstration gardens.

Among the strategies proposed were tidal wetland and woodland restoration, phytoremediation, and upland water treatment wetlands, all of which are aimed at regenerating ecological processes in a portion of the Middle Branch riparian corridor and shoreline. These efforts related directly to the Aquarium's mission by supporting Chesapeake Bay ecosystem recovery and

inspiring stewardship of aquatic environments.

Biohabitats' main objective was to demonstrate how the ecological interests of the project could be best served by using an adaptive management strategy that establishes a series of natural processes, monitors them over time, and adjusts elements according to the continual evolution of the elements and their processes. This strategy also supported program development and enhancement of the visitor experience.

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