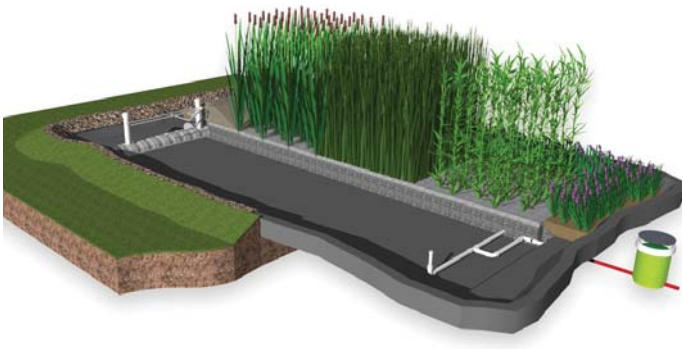
REFARM CAFÉ

RE Farm Café–Onsite Sustainable Water & Nutrient Management

State College, Pennsylvania



Typical subsurface flow constructed wetland

"RE Farm Café, a groundbreaking farm-to-fork restaurant and sustainable grange will not only tempt the palates of its visitors with fresh, local, creative cuisine, but it will also offer insight into how we can embrace sustainable farming, cooking, and building practices in our own lives." —Duke and Monica Gastiger, proprietors

RE Farm Café is re-imagining the food and agricultural experience found in more typical restaurant settings. The RE Farm Café, set on a working farm, will offer a unique dining experience that serves as a community educational resource while expanding opportunities for a diversity of regional agricultural production. The RE Farm Café will promote agricultural sustainability through development of an agro-management plan that responds to–and regenerates–the existing landscape and geology, and supports native food-producing and pollinator-attracting plant species. Additionally, the RE Farm Café facilities will be designed to meet or exceed net-zero energy and water goals as part of its pursuit to be the first restaurant to meet the Living Building Challenge™, a robust standard for buildings that go beyond 'green'.

Visioning and planning for the project has included development of an in-depth analysis of the farm's setting–and its place in the history, ecology, and geology of the greater region–to best inform the approach for regenerating the land, soils, productivity and human community. A diverse team of agro/ecology graduate students from nearby Penn State, regenerative design specialists, architects, engineers, and dreamers have come together to reimagine the future of food and a deeply-rooted agriculture of place.

Biohabitats is providing visioning, engineering design, and permitting of the wastewater treatment strategies to support the project. The approach includes the use of natural treatment technologies to passively filter and clean the effluent before safely recharging the groundwater. A settling tank with a long retention time clarifies the effluent and digests solids; a subsurface flow constructed wetland provides treatment of nutrients and pathogens, and a land application system allows effluent to slowly percolate through the soil back into the ground. The treatment system itself requires almost no energy to operate as it relies primarily upon biologically-passive components.

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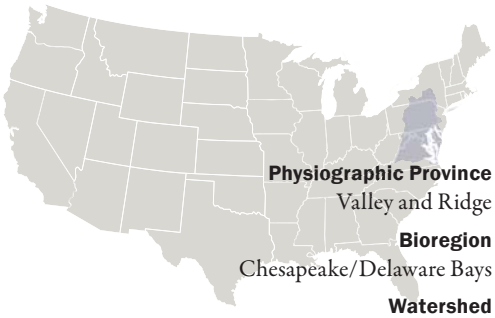

Physiographic Province
Valley and Ridge

Bioregion
Chesapeake/Delaware Bays

Watershed
Susquehanna River