
BLACK SWAMP CONSERVANCY

Redhorse Bend Preserve Restoration

Freemont, Ohio



Photo by David Ike Photography

*"The site looks great, and we are very happy with the restoration."
- Melanie Coulter, Conservation Manager, Black Swamp Conservancy*

Newly created wetland pool complex, with large woody debris habitat features such as standing snags, takes shape in a former agricultural field.

Frequently flooded farmland along the Sandusky River is transformed into a nature preserve that improves community access to the river while enhancing regional habitat and water quality.

SERVICES

Ecological Restoration
Water
Urban Ecology
Design & Build

Biohabitats helped the Black Swamp Conservancy transform 54 acres of frequently flooded farmland into a functioning floodplain of the Sandusky River, enhancing regional habitat, water quality, and riverfront access. The project was funded by a grant from the H2Ohio Program, a statewide initiative to ensure safe and clean water for all Ohioans.

Prior to the restoration, the site experienced flooding from the Sandusky River, seiche effects from Sandusky Bay, and stormwater from surrounding development. Water would then flow through drainage ditches, carrying sediment and excess nutrients directly into the Sandusky River and ultimately, Lake Erie, where algal blooms had become a problem.

After assessing the site's soils, hydrology, and hydroperiod, Biohabitats crafted a design to restore its ecological function and expand community access to the river. The design features subtle berms which guide floodwaters into a series of shallow pools, where nutrients and pollutants are taken up by native wetland plants. The design also removed levees adjacent to the river to increase floodplain connectivity while creating a more natural, vegetated riparian zone. Trees removed from site to improve floodplain connectivity and public access were repurposed to create aquatic and terrestrial habitat features. The design also created and restored 20 acres of upland native meadow habitat. Biohabitats led the design and construction of the project, which involved moving over 5,000 cy of soil from the low lying areas to higher ground. Large deer exclosures will protect the vegetation from deer and geese. Once complete, the Redhorse Bend Nature Preserve will be turned over to the Sandusky County Park District for long-term management as a passive park.