Restoration of Wild Duck Pond

Ridgewood, New Jersey

From top: Algae growth along shoreline; view from the north shows low water level in the pond

Ecology, resilience, and sense of place are restored to a treasured, but ailing community resource.

Bergen County, New Jersey's 577-acre Saddle River County Park meanders along the Saddle River and its tributary brooks and connects five park areas. The park includes a popular, multi-use trail and circular paths around several ponds. One such pond is Wild Duck Pond in the town of Ridgewood.

Wild Duck Pond was originally fed by the Saddle River, but when a dam on the River was removed and its hydrology was altered, the river became disconnected from the pond and no longer provided it with surface flow. Over time, the pond began to experience high nutrient loads, algal blooms, and fluctuating water levels.

In an effort to enhance the pond's ecological function and aesthetics while also reducing its maintenance costs and working toward stormwater management and ecology goals of the County's new Parks Master Plan, Biohabitats developed a design to restore the pond.

Biohabitats began by conducting an ecological and hydrologic assessment of the pond's conditions. This included an examination of a pump system that had run aerators within the pond. Based on the findings, Biohabitats developed several restoration design concepts. Biohabitats then commissioned a topographic and bathymetric survey to support the selected concept, which included relining the existing pond, creating fringe wetlands along the perimeter of the pond, stormwater wetlands feeding stormwater into the pond, and an above grade pump providing a secondary water source to the pond.

Once constructed, the regenerated, resilient pond will provide the County with a robust, living model for future ecological restoration initiatives.

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