

Rockcrest Stream Restoration

Rockville, Maryland



top: Initial conditions; middle: During construction; bottom: After restoration

This urban stream restoration, which won the 2009 Preservation Award from Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation LTD, demonstrated that natural channel design can improve stream stability in spite of the heavily developed watershed conditions while also improving aquatic habitat.

Rockcrest tributary flows into Rock Creek, a tributary to the Potomac River within the City of Rockville. With drainage from an urbanized watershed, the tributary was experiencing flashy and erosive flows, which caused accelerated bank erosion and scour at its culvert crossings.

City of Rockville Department of Public Works turned to Biohabitats for help in restoring this degraded stream. The Biohabitats team evaluated the Rockcrest channel and developed a restoration plan that used natural channel design techniques to stabilize the channel while also removing failed, hard armoring, enhancing the riparian buffer, and treating invasive plant species. Biohabitats also performed analysis and design

to modify storm drain and sanitary structures adjacent to and crossing the stream channel.

To ensure that the restoration met the needs of local residents, Biohabitats held public meetings and participated in a special community event. The project also included post-construction monitoring. The tributary is now a stable, self-maintaining system with improved aquatic habitat and a healthy, native riparian buffer.

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