

Slate Hill Conservation Area Precinct Study, Smithsonian National Zoological Park

Front Royal, Virginia



Biohabitats participated in an interdisciplinary planning study for the 240-acre Slate Hill precinct of the Smithsonian National Zoological Park and Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal, VA. Nestled

The Smithsonian Institution's state-of-the-art field research facility will be an international hub for the conservation of rare wildlife species and a national model for environmental stewardship.

in the hills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the site includes sensitive ecosystems such as woodlands, streams that serve as some of the headwaters for the Potomac River, and meadow areas that provide important habitat for regionally significant birds.

After contributing to the development of a sustainable Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan for the Front Royal property, which includes the Smithsonian Mason School of Conservation, Biohabitats supported this more detailed study of the landscape's capacity for reproductive research of rare or threatened wildlife from around the world. Biohabitats provided guidance related to preserving and restoring existing ecological resources, enhancing ecosystem function, promoting natural resource

stewardship, and minimizing disturbance and fragmentation of existing habitat.

The challenge was to balance the habitat needs of animals, including birds, canids, ungulates, and carnivores, with research requirements, and the sensitive and unique native ecology and hydrologic systems that occur on the site. Accommodating flexibility in form and use of the research facilities was a key goal along with promoting sustainability through wise energy and water use, and management of waste.

SERVICES

- Inventory & Assessments
- Planning
- Design
- Management
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conservation planning
ecological restoration
regenerative design



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Physiographic Province
Valley and Ridge
Bioregion
Chesapeake/Delaware Bays
Watershed
Headwaters of the Potomac River, South Fork of the Shenandoah River