## st. Mary's college of maryland St. Mary's College Buffer Management Strategy

St. Mary's City, Maryland



St. John's Pond riparian buffer management guidance

The St. Mary's College of Maryland campus lies in a historically significant and environmentally sensitive area along the shoreline of the St. Mary's River, a major tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. The rich campus history includes the colonial settlement of Historic St. Mary's City as the first capital of the state of Maryland, and briefly the U.S. capital. Campus activities influence localized water quality.

Over the last decade the campus facilities have expanded significantly. Biohabitats previously produced a Water Quality Comprehensive Plan with A. Morton Thomas, which included natural resource protection, stormwater management improvement, sustainable development, and Critical Area buffer management to the campus landscape. St. Mary's College of Maryland's storied history and unique relationship to the Chesapeake Bay are reinforced by a series of strategies to enhance and restore ecological function to campus wetlands, ponds, and river shoreline areas.

Biohabitats also developed an *Aquatic Buffer Management Strategy* for the campus, to help the College meet Critical Area requirements while promoting long-term ecological resilience.

The buffer management strategy defined the types and benefits of aquatic buffers, detailing recommended buffer widths for different functions, and the effectiveness of different vegetation types. Buffer management emphasized maintaining native landscapes, controlling invasive plant species, and improving habitat.

Informed by a thorough examination of existing campus conditions, the strategy provided specific guidance on improving buffers along the campus' major waterways and wetlands, including two iconic ponds and the St. Mary's River. The strategy also took into consideration the cultural and historic significance of the campus landscape.

The buffer management strategy also outlined implementation recommendations in light of Critical Area compliance requirements. To promote the viability of the campus water resources Biohabitats made recommendations for longterm management, operations, and maintenance for the campus buffers.

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