

## Savage Library Renovation

[mostcenter.org/casestories](https://mostcenter.org/casestories)

### ■ Problem:

The Savage Branch Library in Laurel serves Howard County residents and includes a STEM Education Center. The large library property contained few trees or landscaping elements and experienced frequent drainage issues.

### ■ Solution:

To improve drainage and model smart stormwater management, the library site was retrofitted with permeable architectural pavers and innovative “stormplanters” that both provide attractive seating for library patrons and contain native wetland plants to capture and filter rainwater. Additionally, a new 30,000 square foot urban forest was planted to absorb rain, provide shade and habitat, and improve water quality. The library is now a testimony to what its STEM Center teaches, and it serves as an outdoor classroom for students to learn about stormwater runoff solutions.



Raised “stormplanters” capture and filter rainwater using wetland plants.



Permeable pavers allow rainwater to enter the ground. Photo credit: BioHabitats

## Key Project Facts

### Type of Project:

Bioretention, Urban Infrastructure

**Cost:** \$416,464

**Scale:** 1.6 acres, all highly impervious

**Funding Sources:** Howard County Watershed Protection and Restoration Fund

**Partners:** Biohabitats Inc.; Howard County Library System; Howard County Office of Environmental Sustainability

**More Information:** [biohabitats.com/projects/savage-branch-environmental-site-design/](https://biohabitats.com/projects/savage-branch-environmental-site-design/)

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## What is Polluted Runoff?

The growth of our cities has resulted in too many paved surfaces, which prevent rain water from being absorbed by the ground. Instead, the water runs off streets and buildings, collecting trash and dangerous chemicals on its way. This contaminated water overflows into our streams and rivers, creating public health hazards and toxic waters.

Storm water projects create safe paths for polluted runoff to be captured and filtered before it reaches our waterways. They keep communities healthy and the environment clean.

**When communities and their local governments work together to solve big problems like stormwater runoff, that's a story worth telling!**