



Location: Silver Spring, MD
Designer: Theresa Dahlman
Fabricator: RainScapes Program of the Montgomery County



CASE STUDY

Interpretive Panels

The National Park Seminary—site of the new Seminary Park—has a long and distinguished history. Once the site of a rural inn, it became a finishing school for young women in the 1890s and a rehabilitation center for the U.S. Army during World War II through Vietnam. Post the conflicts, it was abandoned until 1989 when a local organization, Save Our Seminary, was incorporated to save the unique site from demolition. Today most of the original buildings have been restored, and National Park Seminary is a thriving community of single-family homes, condominiums, apartments, and townhouses.

In 2019, a team of residents decided to convert a 5,500 square-foot ravine overrun with invasive plants into a campus park. With guidance and a significant rebate from the RainScapes Program of the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, the area was replanted with native species as a conservation landscape. The Seminary Park garden installation was completed in July 2022 and it now provides habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, while redirecting stormwater away from local streams and reducing pollution runoff into our waterways.

Interpretive signs were added to describe the importance of the days when it was a school for young women. The signs are designed with a curved top, echoing the arches seen throughout the historic campus, and they showcase some of the native plants found in the garden. The team chose iZone's High Pressure Laminate because of its resilience to moisture, extreme durability, and easy maintenance, ensuring enjoyment of the park for residents and visitors for many years to come.

