

ALLIANCE OF
DOWNRIVER
WATERSHEDS

GROW ZONE MINI-GRANT PROJECT PROFILE

Why native plant gardens?

Native plants have deep, “thirsty” roots that help retain water on your site and filter out the pollutants in runoff. They help stabilize soils and prevent erosion. Native plants are drought tolerant, so you water less. Native plants are disease resistant and rarely require fertilizers, so you save money. Native plants improve soil conditions on their own, so you save time.

Reducing water runoff from hard surfaces and yards is key to protecting water quality. Water that runs off hard surfaces, lawns and gardens contain pollutants like fertilizers, dirt and debris. When polluted runoff enters storm drains and ditches, it is discharged into the river system unfiltered.

About the Grow Zone Mini-Grant

The Grow Zone Mini-Grant program was established in 2008 to find host sites within the Downriver area to implement native planting projects. After issuing a call for proposals, the Alliance of Downriver Watersheds selected a total of 10 host sites, which included several schools, parks and municipal properties.



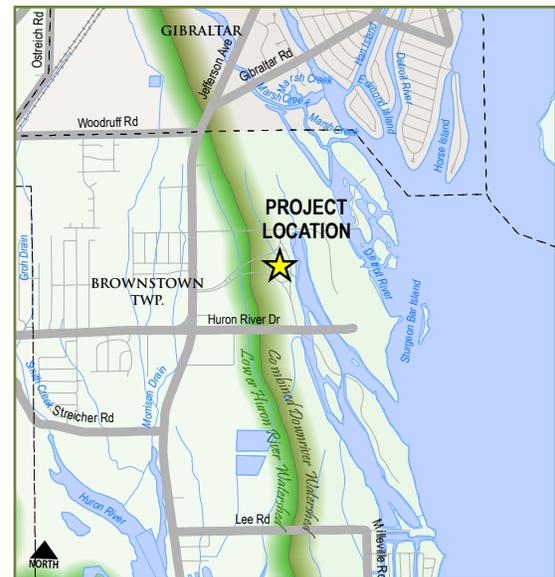
RIPARIAN BUFFER AT LAKE ERIE METROPARK

BROWNSTOWN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

In an effort to enhance lands for wildlife, protect water quality, and create a highly visible public education project within the Lake Erie Metropark, the International Wildlife Refuge (of which Lake Erie Metropark is a part) secured funding through the Grow Zone Mini-Grant program and implemented two native planting projects.

The first project resulted in the conversion of an approximately 3 acre area of mowed lawn to a native lakeplain wet-mesic prairie. This area is located adjacent to an existing, high-quality coastal marsh system that provides habitat for a variety of species, including federal and state threatened species.

The second project component consisted of the replacement of existing low-quality vegetation within an approximately quarter-acre parking lot median. The existing Giant Reed Grass was removed



What's a grow zone?

A “grow zone” is a native planting area that is implemented to improve water quality and wildlife habitat. Grow zones, which usually replace lawn areas, provide many benefits:

- reduce stormwater going to our rivers
- increase wildlife habitat
- improve water quality, and,
- cost less to maintain than traditional lawn areas



BEFORE



PLANTING DAY - JUNE 2009



AFTER

and replaced with native species that enable the space to serve as a public demonstration and educational area.

Both projects are located in a highly visible area near the Marshlands Museum, which is the Metropark's main interpretive site, making the native planting areas ideal for public and school programs. Both planting areas provide a representative suite of species from which to learn about freshwater marsh and lake-plain prairie natural communities.

Over the course of the next several years, the Alliance of Downriver Watersheds (ADW) will engage in the monitoring of each grow zone site (10 were completed in 2009) and is committed to implementing additional green infrastructure projects to realize regional water quality and habitat diversity improvements.

About the Alliance of Downriver Watersheds

The Alliance of Downriver Watersheds (ADW) is a governing body in southeast Michigan established to carry out stormwater policy and management across the Ecorse Creek, Combined Downriver and Lower Huron River watersheds. The members of the ADW include the Wayne County Airport Authority, Woodhaven-Brownstown School District and 24 units of government in the Downriver Area.



www.allianceofdownriverwatersheds.com

Project at a Glance

Location

Lake Erie Metropark
32481 West Jefferson Ave
Brownstown Township, MI

Applicant

International Wildlife Refuge Alliance

Partners

- Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority's Lake Erie Metropark
- Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
- Wayne County

Award Amount

\$4,284

Funding Source

Clean Michigan Initiative Nonpoint Source Program

Planting Date

June 2009

Planting Size

108,000 square feet

Estimated Maintenance

Savings

\$11,556 per year

This Nonpoint Source Pollution Control project has been funded, in part, by the Clean Michigan Initiative Nonpoint Source Program to Wayne County for the Grow Zones Across the ADW project. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.