

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.



VILLAGE HALL NATIVE GARDEN

SOUTH ROCKWOOD, MICHIGAN

The Village of South Rockwood is in the midst of a concerted effort to educate citizens on the importance of reducing stormwater runoff. This effort has included the introduction of a regular feature in the Village’s quarterly newsletter outlining strategies for controlling runoff. To “lead by example” in this endeavor, the Village received funding through the Grow Zone Mini-Grant program to create a native plant garden at the Village Hall as a means to reduce stormwater runoff.

The Village Hall is located immediately across the street from the Bancroft-Noles Drain, which empties into the Huron River. Prior to the installation of the native plant garden, rainwater from the Village Hall roof would travel directly to the Bancroft-Noles Drain by way of a parking lot drain or sheet flow. After the native plant garden was installed, rainwater infiltration rates increased by 103 percent in



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

comparison to the previous grass surface, significantly reducing the amount of rainwater from the Village Hall roof that empties into the drain.

A key determinant for the identification of this project was its location in a highly visible area adjacent to the Village Hall. It is hoped that residents who see the benefits of the native plant garden might be inspired to undertake similar projects within the Village.

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

South Rockwood Village Hall
5676 Carleton-Rockwood Rd
South Rockwood, MI

Applicant

Village of South Rockwood

Partners

- DTE Energy
- South Rockwood Water and Sewer Board
- Wayne County

Award Amount

\$2,402

Funding Source

Clean Michigan Initiative
Nonpoint Source Program

Planting Date

June 7, 2009

Planting Size

875 square feet

Estimated Increase in Rainwater Infiltration

103 percent

Estimated Maintenance Savings

\$77 per year

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