

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.

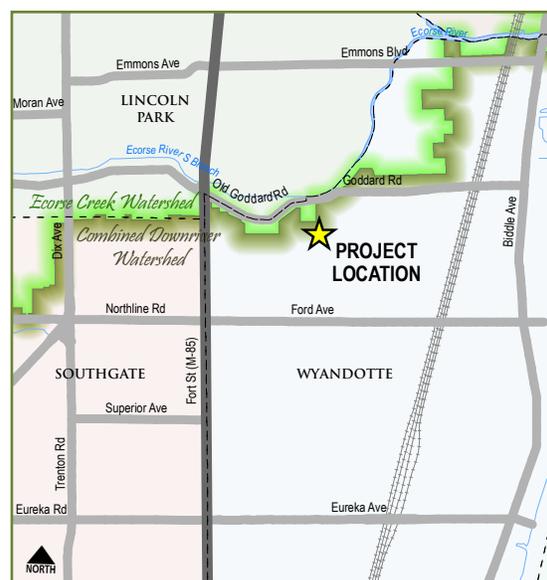


WILSON MIDDLE SCHOOL WILDFLOWER GARDENS

WYANDOTTE, MICHIGAN

Students and teachers at Wilson Middle School, partnering with the school’s Warrior Science Club and Builders Club, Roosevelt High School football program, Boy Scouts Venturing Pack #1756, and the City of Wyandotte Engineering Department, have created several new native wildflower gardens. Scattered in various sites at the school, including near the primary school entrance and in a courtyard, these wildflower gardens provide unique opportunities for students to discover nature and learn about the environment.

Typical of most school sites, the grounds at Wilson Middle School feature large areas of mowed lawn with scattered landscaping. In addition to their desire to provide natural learning environments for students, school officials initiated the project as a means to improve



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

the infiltration of stormwater runoff, enhance natural habitat, and reduce grounds maintenance costs. Planted in June of 2009, the wildflower gardens have already demonstrated benefits, including a 457 percent increase in rainwater infiltration in comparison to the previous ground cover. To further evaluate the benefits of the wildflower gardens, future monitoring activities will be performed by the City Engineering Department and Warrior Science Club.

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

Wilson Middle School
1275 15th Street
Wyandotte, MI

Applicant

Wilson Middle School

Partners

- City of Wyandotte
- Wilson Middle School Warrior Science Club & Builders Club
- Roosevelt High School Football Program
- Boy Scouts Venturing Pack #1756
- Wayne County

Award Amount

\$2,273

Funding Source

Clean Michigan Initiative
Nonpoint Source Program

Planting Date

June 2009

Planting Size

813 square feet

Estimated Increase in

Rainwater Infiltration

457 percent

Estimated Maintenance

Savings

\$39 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.