

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.



LABO PARK PROJECT

SOUTH ROCKWOOD, MICHIGAN

The Village of South Rockwood received a Grow Zone Mini-Grant to help re-establish the riparian buffer along a section of the Huron River at Labo Park. Labo Park, a small riverfront park, is framed by the Huron River to the north, and South Huron River Drive, located approximately 200 feet to the south of the river.

A steep slope separates the low-lying park from higher-positioned South Huron River Drive and an adjacent gravel parking lot. Over the years, the native vegetation that occupied the slope between the road and park had been replaced by grass, leaving relatively little opportunity for stormwater runoff carrying everything from road salt to fertilizers to infiltrate before it was transported into the river. Thus, the Labo Park Project was implemented as a means to increase rainwater



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

infiltration, trap pollutants, and improve the overall quality of the Huron River.

Planting occurred in June of 2009 and encompassed approximately 3,600 square feet of steep slope area adjacent to the road and parking lot. A variety of native grasses were planted, which have already resulted in positive benefits, including an 83 percent increase in rainwater infiltration and an estimated maintenance savings of \$385 per year.

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

Labo Park
South Rockwood, MI

Applicant

Village of South Rockwood

Partners

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

Award Amount

\$2,290

Funding Source

Clean Michigan Initiative
Nonpoint Source Program

Planting Date

June 7, 2009

Planting Size

3,600 square feet

Estimated Increase in
Rainwater Infiltration

83 percent

Estimated Maintenance
Savings

\$385 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.