The Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) converted a former turf grass area to a native vegetation area to serve as a riparian buffer along the banks of Woods Creek within the Lower Huron Metropark. The HCMA hopes that this new riparian buffer will reduce erosion, provide a deep rooted vegetative filter to remove excess nutrients and pollutants, improve wildlife habitat, and provide an educational opportunity for Metropark visitors.

The new native plantings are found along the right bank or south side of Woods Creek, just upstream of the creek’s confluence with the Huron River. This location was chosen, in part, because of the findings of the Lower Huron River Watershed Management Plan. In the plan, Woods Creek was expected to witness a significant loss of support for aquatic life as a result of predicted urban development and increased imperviousness in surrounding areas.
A suite of plant plugs and seeds consistent with a riparian floodplain environment were selected for the project. With assistance from its project partners, which included the Woods Creek Friends (WCF), Van Buren Township, and Wayne County, the HCMA recruited various volunteers to engage in a planting and seeding event (June 2009).

Since planting, the approximately 9000 square foot native planting area has already been shown to achieve a 303 percent improvement in rainwater infiltration in comparison to the previous turf grass. Further monitoring activities will be performed by WCF in order to gauge the impacts of the project.

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.