

Hamilton County Implements Green Infrastructure to Manage Stormwater Runoff

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District (HCSWCD) was established on February 4, 1965. Hamilton County is the third largest county in New York State, and the least populated. Approximately 63% of the land is state owned Forest Preserve and remains unaltered by development. In addition, 89% of the county is forested, 5% is water and 6% is open area and hamlets. The HCSWCD staff works to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality and quantity, manage invasive species, and offer diversified programs and educational events to the public.



Photo Credit: Hamilton County SWCD

In order to protect the integrity of Hamilton County's natural resources, the District provides technical assistance to land owners, municipalities, and organizations that meet conservation needs.

CHALLENGE

Stormwater runoff is a statewide issue, including in Hamilton County. However, the uncertainty of local homeowners and municipalities on the applicability and effectiveness of Green Infrastructure (GI) practices has resulted in the lack of their use throughout the county.

SOLUTION

To address this issue the HCSWCD, with assistance from New York State Pollution Prevention (NYS P21), integrated several GI Demonstration Projects at their office building to offer the public the chance to see the installation and use of GI stormwater practices, while capturing and reusing stormwater runoff from their facilities. A rain garden and bioswale were installed with native Adirondack plants that absorb runoff pollutants from roofs, parking lots, and lawns. These projects filter the water, extract pollutants, and allow clean water to be emptied into Lake Pleasant via the culvert system. Two rain barrels were installed. Rain gutters carry rainwater from the office roof into the rain barrels for storage. This harvested water is used to maintain a pollinator and vegetable garden, and wash company vehicles and the motor boat, demonstrating efficient conservation practices to the public and municipalities. To help the community better understand the effectiveness of these GI projects, permanent signs were installed to allow for self guided tours. The signs have QR codes (barcodes) that direct people with smart-phones to the HCSWCD's website for additional information and videos.



Photo Credit: Hamilton County SWCD

CHALLENGE

- The uncertainty of local homeowners and municipalities on the applicability and effectiveness of Green Infrastructure practices has resulted in the lack of their use throughout Hamilton County to manage the stormwater runoff issue

SOLUTION

- HCSWCD, with assistance from NYS P21, integrated several Green Infrastructure Demonstration Projects at their office building to offer the public the chance to see the installation and use of GI stormwater practices that capture and reuse stormwater runoff from their facilities

RESULTS

- Raised awareness about the importance of protecting water quality through stormwater pollution prevention
- Created a visual display of the benefits of rain gardens, bioswales, and rain barrels in a local, high traffic setting
- Projects resulted in areas of natural resource conservation education through videos, social media, newsletters, press releases, presentations, and events that reached over 6,400 people

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TESTIMONIAL

RESULTS

The HCSWCD's Conservation Education Program enlightened students and adults about the importance of stormwater pollution prevention through a video, social media, newsletters, press releases, presentations, tours, and events. Tours and information booths showcased the GI Demonstration Projects, and over 900 people attended these events. A pre- and post-event questionnaire determined if participants grasped a better understanding of how GI works to improve water quality, and if they had an interest of installing GI at their home or municipal office.

Not only did these projects promote stormwater pollution prevention, but they created areas of natural beauty by utilizing native plants with vibrant flowers to attract butterflies and birds that offer a soothing locale where people reconnect with the outdoors, decompress, and enjoy nature.

The HCSWCD's GI Demonstration Projects encourage individuals to implement stormwater pollution practices on their own property. As the number of rain gardens, bioswales and rain barrels increases, water quality and quantity that is essential for Hamilton County's robust ecosystem and healthy communities will be protected.



Photo Credit: Hamilton County SWCD

"We installed green infrastructure projects not only to protect water quality and quantity, but to demonstrate to the public that rain gardens, bioswales and rain barrels can be efficient and installed to prevent stormwater pollution," explained Elizabeth Mangle, District Manager. "Our project, thanks to NYSP2I support, was a success- we went beyond demonstration, and encouraged our community to take action and install green infrastructure at their own homes."

– Elizabeth Mangle, District Manager
Hamilton County Soil & Water
Conservation District

NYSP2I PARTNERS



10 Regional Technology Development Centers

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ONLINE RESOURCES

[HCSWCD Website](#)
[Green Infrastructure Video](#)
[Facebook](#)
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