MILL CREEK
WATERSHED COUNCIL
OF COMMUNITIES

In-Progress Project Summary: Natural Stormwater Solutions at the College Hill Recreation Center

Anticipated Completion: 2017

Project Overview

Bioretention basins provide a natural stormwater management strategy that decreases peak discharges from developed sites, filters pollutants and decreases discharge volumes through infiltration. At the same time, established bioretention planters can provide low-maintenance landscaping for homes and larger buildings.

Above: The existing planters at the entrance to the CHRC.

Existing planter beds at the Cincinnati Recreation Commission's College Hill Recreation Center (CHRC) have the potential to be converted to bioretention basins to assist with stormwater management on site. The facility recently hosted a hands-on open house where nearly 60 nearby homeowners were taught about rain garden design, construction and maintenance. A highly visible stormwater project at this site will maintain the local momentum toward green stormwater solutions started by this event.

Above: Bioretention facilities are attractive landscape features that provide a critically important function in managing stormwater in urban areas.

Modifications to drain-dry detention basin outlets can improve downstream habitat by protecting streams from erosion. Many basins are oversized and only designed to constrict flow for 10-year or 25-year rain events. Smaller, more frequent rain events can often still cause negative impacts. Modification to the outfall on site will be assessed for its value in preventing downstream habitat degradation.

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Project Details

The bioretention planter will collect stormwater from over 6,000 square feet of the adjacent parking lot and sidewalks. This will accomplish two key goals:

1. Reducing the volume of stormwater runoff reaching the Mill Creek in rain events, thus lessening streambank erosion, and

2. Facilitating plant uptake of nutrients and metals washed off of the parking lot which are detrimental to fish and bugs in streams.

Planted with native shrubs and wildflowers, the bioretention planters will be attractive features at the CHRC entrance and provide excellent habitat for birds and pollinators.

Above: The proposed bioretention basins are highly visible at the entrance to the CHRC. Educational signage will give facility users an understanding of stormwater runoff and why managing it is significant in protecting the Mill Creek and its tributaries.

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