

Groundwork Hudson Valley—Saw Mill River Coalition

...A bit of stormwater on the Saw Mill River, NY



Trash & pollutants from a storm = stormwater—maybe should be “stormtrash”



The Great Saw Mill River Clean-up—Building Stewards



Hudson River & Beyond Kayaking & Canoeing Club



**Playing “catch-up”
--Debris removal**

versus

**Preventative “Medicine”
--“Free-A-Tree
Invasive Vine Removal**



Connecting stormwater and flooding...



...to local legislative
“rules”
& Green Infrastructure
projects



Stormwater Roundtables



IMBYs—In-My-BackYard Projects: Rain gardens

DPW Garage Rain Garden & Tour



Bus Shelter Rain Garden



Group's garden plan curbs flooding, pollution

If you drive down Columbus Avenue in Mount Pleasant, you'll see a recently planted garden in front of the highway department.

It has freshly dug flowers and shrubs in two different areas, with short rock walls on the borders.

But it's not just a garden — it's a rain garden.

When I first heard that, I wondered if I heard right. Were they growing rain there? You know, little droplets raised to be a pelting, then maybe a torrent.

No such luck. But this garden serves a much more important function than most gardens. It will look nice in full bloom, but it doesn't need to be flowering to be effective.

This garden's primary function is to keep the Saw Mill River from flooding and to keep pollution out of that nearby waterway.

"It's way less expensive than a big complicated drainage system," said Anne-Marie Mitroff, director of river programs for Groundwork Hudson Valley and the Saw Mill River Coalition.

"It's basically doing the same thing," she said. "In fact, it's probably doing the job better."



GREG CLARY
Earth Watch

Mitroff's group wants to show municipalities and others that these kinds of natural solutions can solve stormwater run-off problems — including flooding — in all kinds of situations.

"We really want to get planning boards and the other people who decide on projects to know enough about rain gardens and stormwater pollution prevention that when they review plans that a developer brings them, they can ask questions and make suggestions," Mitroff said.

The group got a three-year \$1 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to work on a variety of programs, including stormwater controls.

They put some of that money together with \$50,000 from the state's Hudson River Estuary program to show how to create models in a fairly ur-



A team of stone wall builders from Groundwork Hudson Valley set up the borders for a rain garden outside the Mount Pleasant Highway Department on Wednesday. The organization is using federal and state grant money to provide the town with natural stormwater control to cut down on flooding and pollution in the nearby Saw Mill River.

banized environment that can cut down on flooding and other water problems caused by too much concrete.

At the highway garage, a 7,500-square-foot roof will now drain to leaders connected to the rain garden, irrigating the plants and percolating down into the stone under-

neath the top soil. There's an overflow pipe, but Mitroff doesn't expect it to get much use because of the garden's drainage design.

Peter Sciliano, Mount Pleasant's highway superintendent, liked the idea enough to push it with the town.

"I think it's a good thing for the environment," he said. "And I think it's good for the community to see this one and for people to think about doing something like it on their properties."

A healthy by-product of this project was unearthing and removing an old, leaky oil

On the Web

Additional demonstration sites are in the works and instructional information will be available at the sites and online at the coalition website: www.sawmillrivercoalition.org.

tank on the very site where the garden was planned. That delayed the planting a little, but the town got rid of contaminated soil in the process.

The gardens can be done relatively cheaply, Mitroff said. This project — with beds in a shady and in a sunny area to show two different examples — cost about \$3,500.

Her group is hosting a roundtable on Oct. 23 for municipalities to learn more about these options. And Mitroff is looking for more opportunities to do rain gardens along the Saw Mill River.

"If we could put enough of these in, we would cut down the (flash flooding)," she said. "And we would reduce the pollution like crazy because the gardens are very effective filters."

Reach Greg Clary
at gclary@lohud.com.

I am told...I forget.
I see...I remember.
I do...I understand.

-Chinese proverb

