



ELKHART COUNTY
soil and water conservation
D I S T R I C T

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For immediate release

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Rain Gardens germinate and grow thanks to Elkhart River Alliance program

The Elkhart River Alliance (ERA), together with the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), has helped three Goshen homeowners and the Elkhart Environmental Center to install rain gardens. These rain gardens, funded in part with federal Clean Water Act funds, will reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants entering the Elkhart River and its tributaries. While funds last, the ERA is accepting applications from other homeowners in Goshen and parts of Elkhart to do the same thing.

A rain garden is more than just a hole in the ground – it is a landscaping feature created to hold stormwater runoff from rooftops or paved surfaces in an urban setting. Rain gardens are vegetated with native perennial plants that are adapted to periodic flooding as well as dry periods.

When it rains, the rain garden will fill up, but the water will slowly drain until there is no more standing water. They are designed to drain within 24 hours, which prevents mosquitoes from breeding. Stormwater is treated and slowed as plants and soil break down pollutants in the water as it drains. In addition to the water quality benefits, rain gardens add beauty and attract wildlife to back yards.

The Elkhart River Alliance has received a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), to help install rain gardens and other water quality practices. The grant will pay up to 75% of the cost of installing a rain garden. Applicants must be in a critical area of the Elkhart River Watershed. Critical areas include all of Goshen and parts of Elkhart.

For more information, contact Eric Kurtz at eric.kurtz@in.nacdnet.net or 533-3630 ext. 3. Application information can also be found at www.elkhartriveralliance.org.

Note to reporters: Attached are photos of rain gardens installed at the three homes in Goshen. The homeowners are willing to be interviewed and have photos taken, and their contact information is available from the contact listed above.