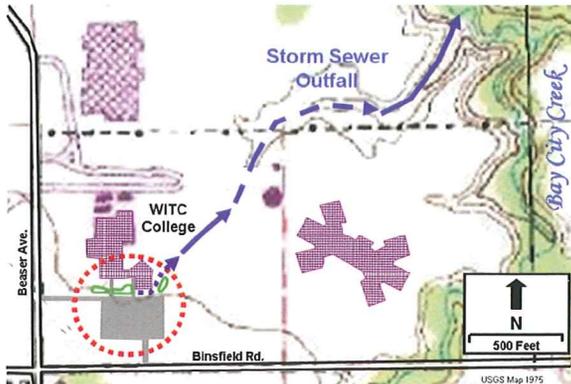


Why build rain gardens?

More than 240 tons of silt, sand, and clay erode each year from stream banks in the City of Ashland. Litter, sediment, and other pollutants are carried in runoff from roofs, streets, and parking lots during rain storms. Without filtering this runoff, many of these pollutants would reach Bay City Creek and eventually Lake Superior.

A key to reducing pollution in Bay City Creek and Lake Superior is to **SLOW THE FLOW** of runoff and filter out pollutants before they enter storm sewers and waterways. The WITC rain gardens capture polluted runoff from an 82,000 square foot parking lot and part of the building's roof. Filtered water that is not used by the plants is slowly released to the drainage ditch and storm sewer before reaching Bay City Creek.



The rain gardens demonstrate an effective way to clean runoff while creating an attractive and dynamic addition to the college landscape.

Who built the gardens?

The Ashland County Land & Water Conservation Department worked with WITC to design and install the rain gardens. The project was an educational component of a restoration and management plan for the Fish Creek watershed, which includes the City of Ashland. Funds for the project were provided by a grant to the City of Ashland from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and by grants from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Great Lakes Protection Fund.

Northern Native Plantscapes did the planting design. The Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College assisted with planting and installation, and Ken & Dale Excavating did the earth work.



ASHLAND COUNTY
LAND & WATER
CONSERVATION
DEPARTMENT



Ashland
WISCONSIN



2011

Rain Garden

Questions & Answers



Three rain gardens are found near the south entrance of the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

2100 Beaser Avenue
Ashland, Wisconsin

Please help WITC's **Green Team** maintain the gardens and keep them attractive.

Call 715-682-4591 ext. 3252 to find out more.

Was excavation necessary?

Yes. The clay soils in this area were highly compacted during construction of the college. To provide soil suitable for planting, we removed the compacted clay and replaced it with a special mixture of coarse sand and topsoil. This soil supports plant growth while filtering out pollutants coming from the parking lot.

Why do they fill with water?

The gardens fill with water after a rain storm. Runoff flows from the parking lot and roof tops faster than it filters through the soil. After these rain gardens fill, it takes about three days for the water level to drop below the soil surface.

Will plants die in the ponds?

No. The native wildflowers, sedges, and shrubs near the center of the gardens are found in the wetlands of our area. Once the plant's roots are well established they will thrive with temporary flooding and will use much of the water that soaks into the soil.

Why are pipes in the soil?

Because water moves very slowly through the underlying compacted clay, additional drainage was needed to provide a way for excess water to drain after the plants and soil filter out pollutants. To make sure that water does not stand too long in the gardens, a network of perforated pipes were placed within the garden soils of each basin.

What plants are here?

The lower areas of the gardens contain wetland plants and upland plants were used around the edges.

Wetland Plants (flower color)

- Blue Flag Iris (blue)
- Blue Vervain (blue)
- Boneset (white)
- Fringed Sedge (green)
- Monkey Flower (lavender)
- Path Rush (green)
- Purple-stemmed Aster (blue)
- Sneezeweed (yellow)
- Swamp Milkweed (pink)
- White Turtlehead (white)
- Wild Bergamot (lavender)
- Red Osier Dogwood (shrub-white)

Edge plants (flower color)

- Butterfly Weed (orange)
- Pearly Everlasting (white)
- Wild Strawberry (white)
- Native Bush Honeysuckle (shrub-yellow)
- Serviceberry (shrub-white)
- Nannyberry (shrub-white)

