



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Environmental Services

Iowans working to protect and improve water quality mark Soil and Water Conservation Week



MEDIA CONTACTS: Steve Hopkins, DNR, 515-725-8390
or stephen.hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov; or Lee Wagner, 515-725-0992
or Lee.Wagner@dnr.iowa.gov.

DES MOINES — Iowans working together in their communities and backyards to improve soil and water quality, many with the help of DNR assistance and funding, are marking Soil and Water Conservation week April 29-May 5 to celebrate their achievements and inspire others to begin work on their own land.

Projects that focus on reducing stormwater runoff in three urban areas – Easter Lake in Des Moines, Dry Run Creek in Cedar Falls and in the Iowa Great Lakes region – have used conservation practices to help filter and soak in more than 32.1 million gallons of

stormwater. That's enough water to fill almost 49 Olympic-sized swimming pools, or to fill the City of Stanton's coffee-pot shaped water tower 642 times. The projects also significantly reduce the amount of soil and nutrients washing off with stormwater into creeks, lakes and rivers.

In urban areas, pavement and development prevents stormwater from naturally soaking into the soil and instead washes off pollutants from lawns and concrete into storm drains, which empty into Iowa's waters untreated. The three projects all receive funding and assistance from the DNR's Watershed Improvement Program through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Section 319 program. Since 1990, the DNR has worked with the EPA's Section 319 program to invest \$95 million into 582 clean water projects statewide, which has reduced sediment runoff by 12,068 tons in 2016 alone – enough to fill a line of dump trucks almost 4 miles long.

In addition, the State of Iowa's State Revolving Fund and its DNR-managed Water Resource Restoration Sponsored Projects program allocates \$10 million each fiscal year toward projects that address water quality issues on the landscape. Through fiscal year 2018, SRF has committed \$62 million for 82 projects in 67 Iowa communities and one state park. The State Revolving Fund General Non-Point Source Program has also assisted eight communities with low interest loans for their projects to address stormwater issues. The program has issued nine loans totaling more than \$45 million, including a green infrastructure loan to the City of Johnston to help better soak up stormwater in the Des Moines suburb.

State grounds share improvements in stormwater management as well. The DNR worked with the Iowa Department of Administrative Services in September 2017 to aerate and spread compost on the Iowa State Capitol terrace lawn to improve how much water the ground soaks up, reduce stormwater runoff and improve the soil. Called "soil quality restoration," this practice is one of the least-cost urban conservation practices that Iowans can use to do their part to improve soil and water quality.

For more ideas on how you can make improvements in your yard and your community, visit www.iowadnr.gov/watershed or www.rainscapingiowa.org.

