



# Cold Spring Rain Garden Initiative:

## Landowners, Municipalities and Government Agencies partner to improve water quality

### Featured Project

The Sauk River has been on the impaired waters list for some time. In an effort to improve water quality, the Sauk River Watershed District (SRWD) initiated several landowner best management practice (BMP) programs to reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients entering area lakes, streams and the Sauk River. One program introduced in the lower region of the watershed was the Cold Spring Rain Garden Initiative, aimed at reducing storm water runoff to Brewery Creek and the Sauk River.

This program focused on a 5-square-mile area within the City of Cold Spring where storm water directly drains into the impaired Sauk River. By targeting information and outreach to landowners in that area, 75 landowners responded by expressing a concern and interest in doing their part to help the Sauk River, and 33 rain gardens are being installed. Rain gardens will restore water quality by infiltrating potential pollutants before entering waterways.

Project promotions and construction were overseen by the SRWD staff. Funding sources included a Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant (from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment), through the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). Project designs were completed by Wenck Engineering with planting and long term maintenance conducted by the homeowners under an agreement with the SRWD.



**Pictured: A curb-cut rain garden with a pretreatment chamber in Cold Spring.**



**Location:** City of Cold Spring, Stearns County

**Partners:** City of Cold Spring, Sauk River Watershed District, BWSR (funded through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment)

**Project Timeline:** The project began with a first mailing and registration form sent in April 2011. Meetings began May 3 for interested parties with final signup May 20, 2011. Construction began in June and will finalize in July at which time landowners have 1 week to install pre-purchased

plants and mulch according to design plans by SRWD.

Final inspection will occur at the end of July, again in October 2011 and annually each spring.



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# BWSR Featured Project

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**Project Costs / Funding Sources:** Each rain garden is expected to cost approximately \$3,000 with the exception of larger gardens with greater drainage area. The entire project for the City of Cold Spring is anticipated to cost \$95,000.

**Keys to Success:** In the current economy with diminishing state aid to cities, this collaboration between the Sauk River Watershed District and the City of Cold Spring launched a project that would not have been possible for the City or Watershed District without a partnership. The project will reduce city maintenance to the storm water system. This project will help protect Brewery Creek from high temperature run-off negatively effecting the brook trout population and reduce the volume of silt and biomass from entering the Sauk River itself.

**BWSR role:** The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources provided funding to the Sauk River Watershed District through the competitive grant process for Fiscal Year 2011, funded by the Clean Water Fund (from the Legacy Amendment).

**Measurable Outcomes:** This project is expected to significantly reduce the sediment load to the Sauk River and will be measured by the amount of debris removed from pretreatment chambers by landowners. Using the P8 model, it is anticipated that 35 pounds of phosphorus and 1,800 pounds of sediment will be captured each year within this rain garden system thereby improving the water quality of the Sauk River.

**Link / contact for more information:** [www.srwdmn.org](http://www.srwdmn.org)



**Pictured:** A participating landowner planting a rain garden.