



# Swift Run: Growing Green for Clean Streams

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## REDUCING POLLUTION RUNOFF TO HEAL THE SWIFT RUN CREEK

Through this project, we are going to “slow the flow” of water that drains into Swift Run Creek after every rain event. By partnering with neighbors, the City of Ann Arbor, and Washtenaw County, the Huron River Watershed Council will bring ‘growing green’ methods to private properties.

### Keeping our Water Clean

These innovative techniques will capture polluted stormwater *before* it enters the storm drains and pipes that send untreated water directly into the creek. By capturing the water before it enters the system, we will filter out pollution while protecting the creek from harmful erosion due to stormwater runoff.



Rain garden rendering on Creek Drive

## PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

The large property Green Stormwater Infrastructure projects now have approved designs and are ready for construction. An Invitation to Bid (ITB) has been sent to local contractors and is currently open for construction bids. Critical documents and dates are below.

### Bid Documents

- [Invitation to Bid \(ITB\)](#)
- [Technical Specifications](#)
- [Addendum 1](#)
- 

### Site Designs

- [Mitchell Elementary School](#) (3 mb)
- [Forestbrooke Athletic Club](#) (3 mb)
- [Washtenaw County – 2201 Hogback Road](#) (2 mb)
- [Washtenaw County – 4100 Clark Road \(Safe House\)](#) (16 mb)

### Important Dates

- Pre-bid meeting: Monday, June 18, 2 pm at the NEW Center
- Questions submitted by 12 noon, Wednesday, June 20
- Final bids due: Tuesday, June 26 at 11 AM
- All project work needs to be completed by August 24, 2018

Any and all questions should be directed to Ric Lawson at [rlawson@hrwc.org](mailto:rlawson@hrwc.org).

## UPDATE MAY 2018

We have met with the large parcel property owners who are interested in Green Stormwater Infrastructure installations. Meanwhile, the Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the project funder, has approved these rain garden and green infrastructure projects, which will capture and filter stormwater runoff before it enters Swift Run Creek. (This creek runs through your neighborhood.) Current designs being reviewed by MDEQ include:

- **Mitchell Elementary School** – a large rain garden in the drop-off circle, porous sidewalk with underground storage to capture parking lot runoff along the backside of the school, and a small rain garden by the new classroom expansion. We hope to involve classrooms in the rain garden installations and maintenance.
- **Forestbrooke Athletic Club** – This cooperative swimming club property that borders Swift Run will receive porous parking with underground storage to capture building and street runoff, 4 rain gardens capturing street runoff, and a larger rain garden behind the pool to capture remaining deck and roof runoff. Altogether, the practices will capture and treat runoff from the property and surrounding roads for over 90% of storms.
- **Washtenaw County properties at:**
  - **2201 Hogback** – a train of rain gardens will capture and treat runoff from the parking and building for over 90% of storms
  - **2155 Hogback** – This service center will receive two sections of porous parking with underground storage to capture and treat building and parking runoff. Additionally, a rain garden in the road right-of-way will capture and treat runoff from a part of Hogback Road.
  - **4100 Clark** – The Safe House will have sections of porous parking with underground storage installed to capture and treat building and parking runoff. All runoff will now be captured and treated on site before entering the groundwater.

Together, these sites will capture and treat runoff from 2.7 acres of otherwise untreated land. The installed practices will be able to capture and treat up to 115,000 gallons in a single storm. Over an average year, these practices will capture and treat over 1.65 million gallons of runoff, about equivalent to 1.7 swimming pools each year.

In addition to these projects, the City of Ann Arbor and the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office are installing seven rain gardens in-between the sidewalk and the street in front of a few residential properties. These are neighbors who wanted a rain garden, and where there were no underground utility conflicts. Those homeowners have already been selected and contacted. City and County staff will be meeting with them in the next week to discuss details and finalize plans. The next step is digging and planting – if you would like to help plant, contact Susan Bryan, Washtenaw County Water Resources. From now on Susan Bryan will be your contact for the residential street right-of-way projects. Her email is [bryans@washtenaw.org](mailto:bryans@washtenaw.org)

For the larger projects in the bulleted list above, Ric at the Huron River Watershed Council will be your contact. His email is [rlawson@hrwc.org](mailto:rlawson@hrwc.org).

### Update Letter sent 10/17/17

Hello Mitchell neighborhood friends,

We are checking in to let you know the status of the Swift Run Creek Growing Green for Clean Streams project. In the last update we sent

## What We Do

### Our Impact

### Programs

- Biological and Habitat Monitoring
- Chemistry and Flow Monitoring
- Natural Area Assessments and Protection
- RiverUp!
- Climate Change
- Watershed Management Planning
- ▶ **Green Infrastructure**
  - Norton Creek Restoration and Planting
  - ▶ **Swift Run: Growing Green for Clean Streams**
  - Green Infrastructure Planning for Local Governments
- Clean up and Restoration
- Knowledge Networks & Outreach
- Advocacy and Policy
- Dams and Impoundments Program
- River and Lake Monitoring: MiCorps

in March, we let you know we submitted the Michigan DEQ-approved rain garden plans to the City of Ann Arbor for approval. The City made some adjustments to the plans, which resulted in many fewer gardens that would not capture as much stormwater runoff. We then submitted these revised plans to our funder, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ).

Since the revised plans did not meet the original project goal of capturing a large amount of stormwater, we need to unfortunately change the project plan. MDEQ will no longer fund the smaller rain garden project. We are disappointed. So now, instead of planting rain gardens in the public right-of-way between the roads and private residential properties, we are approaching owners of larger private and public properties to see if we can work with them on their properties. Projects include planting bigger gardens and trees, and building other infrastructure methods to capture runoff such as disconnecting downspouts, installing porous pavement, and constructing parking islands at lower levels that will absorb water.

Our goal is to get permission from these property owners and managers to develop projects that will collectively capture and treat enough runoff to make a significant water quality impact. We also hope to fund some of the original residential rain gardens in your neighborhood.

If you know the landowners of any of the larger properties in the [Swift Run creekshed](#) and would like to help us negotiate water quality improvement projects, please let us know as soon as you can. We are currently working on all the public schools. Other key properties include the following:

- Churches including the Korean Church of Ann Arbor in your neighborhood;
- Pittsfield Village and Colonial Square Apartments;
- Arborland, Packard Office Center, and several other commercial properties; and
- Washtenaw Community College

If you have any questions about the Swift Run: Growing Green for Clean Streams project, please let us know. In the next few months, we should have a decision from MDEQ whether we can proceed with the project. We need to have permission from the large property owners in order to continue so any connections to large property owners you can provide will be very helpful. We'll be sure to let you know the outcome.

Thank you!

### The Growing Green project goals:

1. Decrease pollution going into Callup Pond and the Huron River
2. Significantly reduce stormwater runoff from the neighborhood.
3. Return Swift Run to more natural flows
4. Allow for aquatic life to return to the creek.
5. Create a place for flowers to bloom; they will absorb water and support pollinators

## PROJECT NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

[Check out these free Master Rain Gardener Classes on You Tube](#)

Presented by Susan Bryan & Harry Sheehan (Washtenaw County), and Shannon Gibb-Randall (Insight Design)

### Original Design Plan:



- [Complete Design Plans \(PDF Download\)](#)

The project plan has been substantially revised as discussed above.

### PAST EVENTS

On-Site Tours by Street:

Wed., May 25, 2016 @ 5:30 pm: 3131 Creek Dr.

Wed., May 25, 2016 @ 6:30 pm: 3300 LaSalle Dr.

Tues., May 31, 2016 @ 5:30 pm: 3441 Creek Dr.

Tues., May 31, 2016 @ 6:30 pm: 3200 Fernwood Ave.

### NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING MAY 4 2016

6:00-7:30 pm

Scarlett Middle School

3300 Lorraine Street

Come learn about the proposed design and construction of the Swift Run: Growing Green for Clean Streams project! We will present a draft of the plan to use streets and parks to soak in rainwater. Projects include rain gardens and native plantings. We want to know what you think about the design and locations we propose. Construction is proposed to start in August 2016.

All persons are encouraged to participate in public meetings. Accommodations, including sign language interpreters, may be arranged by contacting the City Clerk's office at 734.794.6140; via email to: [cityclerk@a2gov.org](mailto:cityclerk@a2gov.org); or by written request addressed and mailed or delivered to:

City Clerk's Office

301 E. Huron St.

Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Requests made with less than two business days notice may not be able to be accommodated."

### June 21, 2015 – Neighborhood Meeting

**What:** Swift Run Neighborhood Public Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015

**Time:** 6 pm-7:30 pm

**Location:** Scarlett Middle School, 3300 Lorraine St.

You're invited to learn about the Growing Green for Swift Run project, upcoming construction in your 'hood, and how you can participate in protecting your creek!

We will give a presentation followed by a discussion so we can answer your questions.

There will also be a free raffle to win a rain barrel and light refreshments will be served. **No RSVP required. This is a free event. Please join us!**

## July 16, 2015 – Just Scheduled: Free Guided Tour of Mitchell Neighborhood Rain Gardens!

Huron River Watershed Council invites you to join us for a brief guided tour of Swift Run creek and a few rain gardens in your neighborhood. Please join us if you would like to:

- Get to know your neighbors
- Meet some Master Rain Gardeners
- Learn about "slowing the flow" at home
- Explore the creek
- Hear more about our Swift Run Growing Green for Clean Streams project

**Date:** Thursday, July 23, 2015

**Time:** 6:00 pm-7:00 pm

**Location:** Meet at 3159 La Fere St.

Just show up!

## June 22, 2015 – Have you filled out your Swift Run questionnaire yet? Please do, your opinion counts!

In order to gain insights into residents opinions and knowledge of the Swift Run Creek, HRWC has sent out a pre-project questionnaire to Mitchell residents living in the project area. Please take a moment to fill it out so that we know how best to partner with your community.

## October 2014 – HRWC Received Grant Approval for Grow Green Swift Run

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## What is HRWC doing for this project?

The project is divided into three distinct phases.

### PHASE ONE:

#### Neighborhood Assessment and Water Quality Data

**Collection.** During this phase, HRWC did a pre-project social survey to learn more about the neighborhood residents and current knowledge of and values for the creek. Our water quality sampling program also collected data on stream health metrics to develop a baseline status.

[Click here to download the project brochure](#)



Testing water in Swift Run Creek

### PHASE TWO:

**Slowing the Flow.** During this phase, HRWC and partners have gathered public input, performed surveys, and tested soil to locate gardens that are specifically designed to temporarily hold and infiltrate stormwater runoff along numerous parks and the public right-of-way sections throughout the project area. Installing these gardens is also part of Phase Two. Residents will also have a special opportunity to participate in city and county programs to place rain gardens on their own property and disconnect pipes and gutters that send residential runoff directly into the city's stormwater system.

(The slow the flow approach uses various techniques that are categorized as "green infrastructure." Learn more about [Green Infrastructure here.](#))

### PHASE THREE:

**Project Evaluation.** A post-project social survey will explore any changes in knowledge or attitudes as a result of our outreach efforts. Additionally, new water quality data will be collected and compared to baseline measurements to assess the impacts of the project on the health of Swift Run Creek.

Swift Run is a small creekshed in the greater Huron River watershed. It begins in farm fields in Pittsfield Township, flows through the City of Ann Arbor's landfill, under the US 23 and Washtenaw Avenue interchange, and into South Pond before entering the Huron River at Gallup Park.



Renee's Rain Garden in Swift Run Neighborhood



Dried creek bed in Swift Run near Route 23.

Swift Run is an urban creek. Stormwater runoff from lawns, parking lots, and roads have harmed the stream by creating unstable water flow, introducing pollutants (E. coli bacteria, phosphorus and ionic compounds), and producing habitat problems that include extreme flow velocities and high ionic content in the water. Preliminary study results indicate that the project neighborhood generates **17% more phosphorus**, **76% more sediment**, and has **45% more bacteria**, and 6% higher ionic conductivity than upstream.

As a result, the biological community of the creek has suffered. Indeed the habitat on Swift Run is quite poor. Much of the creek in the upper portions has stagnant water or no water, depending on the weather conditions. In the lower part of the creek, flashy flows have eroded banks leading to muddy, mucky water conditions unsuitable to support diverse aquatic life.

The Growing Green project will significantly reduce stormwater runoff from the neighborhood, return Swift Run to more natural flows, reduce pollution going into Gallup Pond and the Huron River, and allow for aquatic life to return to the creek. For more information about the creekshed or for access to our creekshed report on water quality and aquatic habitat, please visit our [Swift Run Creek Profile Page](#).



## Where is the project area?

Redwood and Pittsview parks are the two public locations in which we will be installing rain gardens to slow the flow of stormwater runoff. The three "green streets" where we will concentrate a series of vegetative rain gardens will be within the boundaries of Platt, Packard, and Charing Cross roads and Lorraine Street.

The map below outlines the project's neighborhood.

If you are within this boundary and have questions, contact [Ric Lawson here](#). HRWC and partners will also be providing technical assistance and special incentives to residents to encourage the entire community to participate in "slowing the flow" of rain water into Swift Run Creek from their own properties. If you are interested in a free assessment and recommendations, [email us here](#).



Click to enlarge



## What's going on?

We shared a [draft plan](#) with residents at a neighborhood meeting on May 4, 2016. Residents were asked for feedback on the plan including any specifics, especially on any rain gardens sited in front of their property.

The designer incorporated input to make all necessary alterations and finalized the plan. We shared the plan with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for review and approval, which has been done. The City of Ann Arbor reviewed and approved the plan, and the [final plan](#) is now posted. The project is currently [out for construction bids](#). We anticipate construction to begin sometime this summer.

Here is the timeline as of May 2017

- Survey of elevations and utilities: complete
- Soil boring surveys: complete
- Preliminary design work: complete
- Complete 1st design: complete and posted to web
- Neighborhood review: complete
- DEQ review: complete
- Final designs: complete
- Construction bids: being accepted
- Construction start: late summer

### What's been done so far:

If you saw surveying in 2016, that's because we were looking for places to plant rain gardens in the parks, schools, and along the streets. City contractors surveyed the neighborhood for complete information on existing conditions. Separate contractors also conducted soil borings to provide detailed information on the underlying soils, especially their capacity for infiltrating stormwater. This information was incorporated into the project design.

The initial design of the street and park projects was shared with neighborhood residents multiples times in a series of stakeholder meetings and street "tours." We held 2 neighborhood meetings, one in July 2015 to introduce the project, and the other in May 2016 to introduce the draft plan to gather feedback. During the surveying process, we dropped off flyers at each neighbor's door to let you know how to find information about the project. We also conducted an awareness survey among neighbors to gather your opinions about water in our area and what neighbors do or are willing to do to protect it. Finally, we conducted a set of four street meetings at different locations to discuss the project, and went door-to-door to discuss with many residents.

The first set of designs were completed and submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality for approval which is complete. The City of Ann Arbor reviewed and approved the plan, and the [final plan](#) is now posted. The project is currently [out for construction bids](#). We anticipate construction to begin sometime this summer.



## What about parking and traffic congestion?

**Parking:** The preliminary designs included "bump-out" features that added additional rain garden space by moving the curb-line out into the existing street, which is much wider than current standards. Following neighbor feedback and a cost-benefit analysis, the rain gardens were reduced in size to follow the existing curb-lines. Therefore, parking will not be impacted.

**Traffic congestion:** See parking above. The project design will not impact traffic.

**Sidewalks:** Sidewalks will not be installed as a part of this project.



## After the rain gardens are installed, what's next?

Rain gardens require maintenance, but neighbors will not be required to maintain them. Once built, the gardens will be incorporated into the City's Green Infrastructure Maintenance Program, which ensures that all Rain Gardens installed on City property (including the right-of-way area) are maintained, either by City/County staff, volunteers, or a contractor. Properly designed and maintained rain gardens, like the ones that will be installed, do not attract pests or create stagnant pools.

Rain gardens have been effectively installed nationally, including numerous locations across Ann Arbor (Miller Avenue is a good example). The design process includes a full evaluation of the local topography, soils, hydrology, and permeability. These evaluations include soil testing and analysis.

Grant funding from the State of Michigan and U.S. EPA support this project. The grant was specifically provided for the concept design presented at the neighborhood meeting. The high cost of the project is due to the extensive installation of rain gardens throughout the neighborhood and the need to provide stormwater treatment where there currently is none. Alternatives such as underground storage (as was done at Pioneer High School, for example) are far more expensive and less cost effective. Our models indicate that the result of the project should be a significant improvement to the flow and water quality of a creek that is currently impaired due to stormwater runoff. This is a benefit you will be able to see directly in the creek flowing through the Mitchell neighborhood.



## What can I do as a resident or property owner?

There is always plenty to do!

If you live or own a business in Swift Run (Mitchell Neighborhood), **you can get a FREE HOME ASSESSMENT** on how you can slow-the-flow on your property. [Email Anita here](#) if you are interested. Here is an example of some [Site Visit Recommendations](#).

You can also:

**Participate in the process.** If you live in the neighborhood, we encourage you to complete our surveys, attend the public planning meetings, and speak with your neighbors about the project and Swift Run Creek.

**Adopt public spaces.** For a low stress contribution, consider clearing out storm drains so they are free from litter and debris. If you're looking for a bigger commitment, let us know if you're interested in adopting a rain garden or helping maintain the rain gardens at the public parks.



**Make your home creek-friendly.** Boost the health of Swift Run by capturing rainwater on your property and putting it to good use. Plant a rain garden, install a rain barrel, direct your downspouts away from hard pavement and into your garden, or plant native floral and fauna. Our [Take Action](#) pages



Sweep these so they are free of debris.

Install a rain barrel.  
Great for watering  
potted plants.

have great information on how you can stop stormwater from harming our  
creeks and river.

**Volunteer with HRWC.** We're always looking for extra helping hands for a number of our projects and  
programs. For more information, please visit our [volunteer information page](#).



### What were the Neighborhood Survey results?

Many thanks to all those who participated! Here are the preliminary survey results: [Swift Run Survey Results](#)



### Who else is participating?

HRWC, Washtenaw County, the City of Ann Arbor, and you!

#### PROJECT LEAD:



#### PROJECT FUNDING AND PARTNERS:



HRWC was awarded a \$700,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and U.S. Environmental  
Protection Agency in 2014. The grant funding is being matched with \$240,000 from project partners at the [City of Ann Arbor](#) and  
the [Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's](#) office, for a total value of almost \$950,000.

This NPS Pollution Control project has been funded wholly or in part through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's  
Nonpoint Source Program by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement 2014-0030 to the  
Huron River Watershed Council for the Swift Run project. The contents of this webpage do not necessarily reflect the views and  
policies of the United States Environmental Protection Agency or the Department of Environmental Quality, nor does the mention  
of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.



### What can I do to learn more?

- Visit our [Swift Run Creekshed](#) Site.
- Visit our [Grow Green Infrastructure](#) site
- Review our [Middle Huron Watershed Management Plan](#)
- Sign up for HRWC's news and information through our email updates.

SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL UPDATES:

EMAIL ADDRESS (ENTER ADDRESS AND HIT 'ENTER'):



### Who do I contact to participate or ask questions?

Please feel free to contact us [via email here](#) or call (734) 769-5123,  
ext. 609

#### IN THIS SECTION

##### Green Infrastructure

[Norton Creek Restoration and Planting](#)

[Green Infrastructure Planning for Local Governments](#)

[Swift Run: Growing Green for Clean Streams](#)



#### LEARN

What is a watershed? How big is it? Get informed.



#### VOLUNTEER

Get outside, collect data, have fun!



#### DONATE

There are lots of ways to support our work. Dig in  
here.



#### MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Join us in giving the river the love and care it needs.

*"Protecting and restoring the Huron River System – so all in our connected communities can enjoy and benefit from this essential natural resource for generations to come."*



#### STAY CONNECTED AND UPDATED

A lot happens with HRWC and the watershed. Get notified of new events, initiatives and outcomes by subscribing to our e-mail newsletter.

**SIGN UP**



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