CSREES National Water Quality Program

Title: Stormwater Management in Your Own Backyard

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Organization: Rutgers Cooperative Extension

State: NJ **Region:** New York - New Jersey - Puerto Rico - Virgin Islands **Year of Funding:**

Theme:

Situation: Stormwater runoff is contributing significantly to the pollution of the rivers, lakes and bays of EPA Region 2. Although the states and territories, over the past several years, have attempted to promote new stormwater management techniques to developers, these efforts ignore the more serious problem of controlling stormwater runoff from existing development, leaving these efforts to voluntary programs that require extensive public outreach and education efforts.

Objectives: The main objective of this project is to develop a public education and outreach program to help homeowners manage stormwater on an individual lot by lot basis to ultimately improve the water quality of the rivers, lakes and bays and promote groundwater recharge of the aquifers.

Methods: An educational curriculum on stormwater management has been created to help residents and farmers disconnect impervious surfaces, thereby reducing stormwater runoff peak flows, promoting groundwater recharge, and removing pollutants. Instruction is provided on the impacts of stormwater runoff, stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), and the design and maintenance of these systems. The participants also have a chance to actually help construct the BMPs and monitor their pollution removal effectiveness.

Partnerships: Partnerships with Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Master Gardener Program, US EPA Region 2, NJDEP, local watershed groups, and other local and state agencies have been established and enhanced.

Research: The project integrates education and outreach by researchers and extension educators transferring scientific knowledge to homeowners about stormwater management techniques that they implement in their own backyard.

Resources: The New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station has funded this project through faculty and support staff time contributed to the project.

Results: This program will ultimately improve the water quality of the rivers, lakes and bays and promote groundwater recharge of the aquifers. This public education and outreach program is the basis for a larger initiative called the Master Environmental Steward Program. This program has provided a unique opportunity that will allow Extension to lead the volunteer environmental preservation and restoration movement throughout the region.