

Protecting Water Quality in Rural Landscapes: A Comprehensive Community Nonpoint Source Education Program

Using Local Demonstration Sites as a Tool for Extension Education, Outreach and Evaluation

University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension, College of the Environment and Life Sciences; Holly Burdett¹, Alyson McCann¹, and Marion Gold²
In partnership with the Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island



clean water starts at home

Opportunities

- ☑ Provide human interest for media stories and outreach.
- ☑ Provide volunteer and training opportunities for Master Gardeners, students, landscape professionals and others on the installation, maintenance and monitoring of Best Management Practices (BMPs).
- ☑ Provide tangible examples for educating the public about BMPs.
- ☑ Provide a basis for developing new educational materials.
- ☑ Provide opportunity for strengthening public and private sector partnerships.

Challenges

- ☑ Require significant staff time and volunteer coordination.
- ☑ Degree of unpredictability. Site owners can experience life changes, illness, etc., that may hinder progress and availability.
- ☑ Site owner objectives and expectations may not be met.

Mass Media Campaign: provide human interest

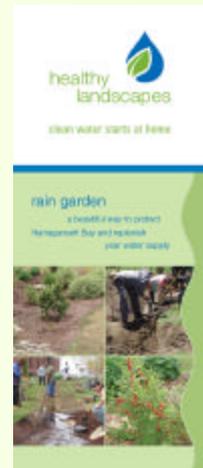
Local demonstration sites provide an ideal setting for:

- TV news segments and programs.
- Feature articles and press releases for print media.
- Visual, local content for websites and outreach materials.



This site was featured on a local TV news **consumer report** segment highlighting water conservation techniques.

This site was featured on a local TV news **Plant Pro** segment, highlighting sustainable lawn care.



Education Programs: tangible examples in a realistic setting

- Local demonstration sites provide visual, tangible examples of land use challenges and how to adopt BMPs within a realistic context.
- Local property owners and landscape professionals share their experiences, management techniques, success stories and continual challenges in a setting that fosters discussion and learning.
- Printed materials contain photos and examples from these sites.



Residents see examples of site-suitable native plants, a shoreline buffer, water conservation and stormwater management practices.

Residents see examples of water conservation, sustainable lawn care and stormwater management practices.

Installation, Maintenance & Monitoring of BMPs: train-the-trainers, strengthening programs, extending resources

- Local demonstration sites provide training and volunteer opportunities for URI Master Gardeners, URI students, landscape professionals, municipal leaders, and organizations.
- Robust CE programs within URI and the New England Region are strengthened through collaboration and sharing of resources.



URI students and Master Gardeners assist with establishing a coastal vegetative buffer.

Demonstration rain garden, North Kingstown Town Hall. Landscape professionals, URI Master Gardeners and municipal leaders receive research-based training from the University of Connecticut as part of the New England Regional Water Quality Program.

Educational Materials: provide basis for development of new materials

- This 1.5 acre site served as a basis for developing a tailored fact sheet and self-assessment worksheet series, *Livestock on Small Acreages: Protecting Water Resources and Health*.
- The series was developed to address the common conditions and goals of small acreage livestock owners who often "slip through the cracks" of traditional USDA Programs.



Rotational grazing and pasture management

Livestock yard, manure and stormwater management



Funded by the National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP)

September 2002 – September 2005 in cooperation with the Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island
United States Department of Agriculture Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service

¹Holly Burdett, Research Associate and ¹Alyson McCann, Coordinator, URI CE Home*A*Syst Program, Department of Natural Resources Science

²Marion Gold, Director, URI CE Education Center



This is contribution number 5040 of the College of Environment and Life Sciences, University of Rhode Island.