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Company/Organization: NH Department of Environmental Services

Challenge or Opportunity: Over 90% of the water pollution problems in New Hampshire are caused by the pollutants carried in stormwater runoff from the roads we travel, the buildings and parking lots we use, the stores and restaurants we visit, and the homes in which we live. Every property has the potential to contribute to water pollution.

Approach or Solution: Rain gardens! Stormwater runoff is simply water from rain or melting snow that doesn't soak into the ground. Instead, it flows over the land surface, picking up pollutants as it goes, and travels untreated into nearby bodies of water. Letting stormwater soak into the ground instead of running off helps reduce pollution, reduce flooding, and recharge groundwater supplies. Installing rain gardens and rain barrels is "just one thing" we can do to reduce stormwater runoff and pollution from businesses and homes.

Impact: On average, one rain garden can reduce runoff by 18,876 gallons per year. Over 7 lbs of sediment are removed, as well as .09lbs phosphorus and .22lbs nitrogen. These numbers may sound small, but when they are multiplied by hundreds of rain gardens, the impact to our environment is huge. Rain gardens are good for our planet; their beauty touches our souls, as well.