



STORMWATER UTILITY UPDATES

JANUARY 2026

MS4 ANNUAL REPORT

- March 31st Deadline
- 2024 Audit follow-up, updates to:
 - SWMP
 - Utility Map
 - SWPPPs
- Ongoing efforts to meet 20% TSS reduction
 - Currently at 17.2%

PERMIT CONDITIONS

- Public Education & Outreach
- Public Involvement & Participation
- Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination
- Construction Site Pollution Control
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management
- Pollution Prevention
- Stormwater Quality Management

2025 STORMWATER UTILITY OVERVIEW

- 391 BMPs Inspected
- Maintenance Completed on 39 BMPs
 - Inlet Sediment Removal
 - Pond Inlet Dredging
 - Vegetation Management
- 8 Illicit Discharges Reported
- 8 Construction Projects Completed
 - New BMPs Approved

SEASONAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

In Collaboration with Parks & Rec and La Crosse Area Waters:

- Salt Smart
- Grow Green
 - Previously No-Mow May
- Soak It Up
 - Rain Barrel Workshop
- Leaf It

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: RENEW THE BLOCK

- LAW / Habitat for Humanity

<https://www.lacrosseareawaters.org>

https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipMOP3_rQ_5eCAXqbC42Y9p7p_mAfXarOyXYh9qzUmJ_iLS6nX-EbQRpzuYiAGJM7A?key=U2g0M0FZWC1IYV9DUXVmeIpsNkdOaEhSaC15WUpB

- Logan Middle School & Avon Street Homes
- Rain Garden, Fruit Trees, Outdoor Classroom Space
- Student & Staff Participation



RENEW PHOTOS



SOAK IT UP AWARD, EDUCATIONAL SIGN

LA CROSSE AREA WATERS

LaCrosseAreaWaters.org

SOAK IT UP RAIN GARDENS AND NATIVE PLANTS

HOW DOES A RAIN GARDEN WORK?

Rain gardens are shallow depressions (swales) filled with native plants. They capture, absorb, and filter stormwater runoff from roofs, parking lots, or roads. The rain garden at Logan Middle School captures stormwater and allows it to soak into the ground instead of rushing into storm drains. As water moves through the soil and the deep root systems of native plants, pollution is naturally filtered out. This helps keep dirty runoff out of our rivers, lakes, and streams while allowing clean water to refill our underground water supply, called groundwater.

Native plants also attract pollinators, improve soil health and structure, absorb nutrients like phosphorous and nitrogen, and bring beauty to school grounds.

We point downspouts toward the rain gardens and shape the earth to move water to it.

Native plants in rain gardens improve soil health, support wildlife and pollinators, and bring beauty to urban areas.

Sand, soil, mulch, and plants in the rain garden naturally remove pollutants. Water filters down to replenish groundwater, which is our drinking water.

A rain garden is dry most of the time. After a rain, water is typically absorbed into the ground in 12 to 48 hours.

Healthy soil created by the root systems of native plants is like a sponge and absorbs water fast.

Illustration by Brooke Kubicki, La Crosse, Minnesota

CAN YOU FIND THESE NATIVE PLANTS?

PORCUPINE SEDGE

With its spiky seed heads that look like little porcupines, *Carex hystericina* is a cool-looking grass-like plant. It helps trap sediment, clean water, and hold soil in place—making it a key part of keeping stormwater clean.

RIDDLES GOLDENROD

A rare find, *Solidago riddellii* blooms late in the season with golden flowers that feed migrating butterflies and native bees. This goldenrod thrives in moist soil and plays an important role in supporting pollinators when other plants are winding down.

PURPLE-HEADED SNEEZEWEED

Don't let the name fool you—this plant won't make you sneeze! *Helenium flexuosum* blooms in late summer with purple-centered yellow flowers that attract bees and butterflies. It grows well in wet areas and adds a bright pop of color to the rain garden.

OBEDIENT PLANT

This tall plant, *Physostegia virginiana*, gets its name because you can gently bend its flowers and they'll stay in place. With its pink spikes of blooms, it attracts hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies. It's a lot of fun.

This rain garden was installed as part of Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region's ReNew the Block project, with support from La Crosse Area Waters and made possible by 360 Real Estate. It helps protect local waterways, supports pollinators, and provides learning spaces for students and the community.

ReNew^{the}Block

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2026 PROJECTS AND GOALS

- Continue Working with Consultant on Utility GIS Upgrades
- Raise Awareness & Encourage SW Credit Applications for Green Infrastructure
- Increase SW Social Media Outreach

QUESTIONS & CONTACT INFO

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