



Oberlin College
Oberlin, Ohio
Environmental Management System

SCHOOL

Oberlin College, private, 4 year, 2800 students, Oberlin OH

ABSTRACT

Oberlin Stormwater Management Project (OSWAMP) is a grass-roots organization that will work to create bioretention – a process that removes contaminants and sedimentation from storm water run-off – through bioswales (a landscape system designed to remove contaminants and sedimentation from run-off) and rain gardens (saucer shaped areas of land that contain deep-rooted native plants and grass sedges designed to stop or reduce water flow from drain sewage systems), and commit to community outreach and education. Improving storm water management will not only make Oberlin campus and community “greener”; it will also help control flooding—which causes property damage—and improve riparian zone health (increased habitat and decreased bank erosion) along Plum Creek.



GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Goals

OSWAMP’s activities to restore Plum Creek Sub-Watershed are:

- Educating college and community members about storm water management (Ongoing)
 - Teaching the Stormwater Management and Invasive Species ExCo class (Fall 2011)
 - *Annika Sullivan and Sylvia Channing will be teaching a class to other college students about storm water management and invasive species. Focus will be placed on hands-on removal of invasive buckthorn berries.*
 - Work with ENVS 101 students on a rain garden project (Fall 2011)
 - *Eight students in Environmental Studies 101 will be organizing the building of five rain gardens for their final project. This project will be worked on throughout the semester.*
 - Installing four 4 interpretive signs along Plum Creek and signs at Plum Creek road crossings (Fall 2011)
 - *If funded, signs will raise awareness of Plum Creek and then importance of protecting the watershed.*
 - Improving storm water management skills of Annika Sullivan

- *Annika Sullivan will work to learn more about storm water management in Lorain County through readings, interviews, and projects.*
- Implementing bioretention on campus and in the community, including rain gardens and bioswales (Ongoing)
 - Installing two rain gardens on Oberlin College campus: South Bowl and Old Barrows Cooperative (3 September 2011)
 - *Annika Sullivan, aided by volunteers will plant two rain gardens on campus. Landscape architect Todd Martz is designing the gardens.*
 - Installing demonstration five rain gardens in homeowner's yards (Fall 2011)
 - *Students in Environmental Studies 101 will build these rain gardens.*
 - Installing a demonstration rain garden at Spring Street Park (Fall 2011)
 - *Katherine Szocik will be facilitating the building of this rain garden sponsored by the City of Oberlin.*
 - Launching "Friends of Rain Gardens" (Spring 2012)
 - *"Friends of Rain Gardens" will be a project for homeowners to help other homeowners build rain gardens in their backyards.*
- Disconnecting downspouts in the community and installing rain barrels (Ongoing)
 - Rain barrel workshop (Fall 2011)
 - *OSWAMP will hold a rain garden for homeowners to build rain barrels for a discounted price. Homeowners will pledge to disconnect their downspout.*
- Restoring the Riparian Corridor of Plum Creek (Ongoing)
 - Invasive plant removal (Ongoing)
 - First All-Ohio Day of Service (9 April 2011)
 - *Eleven students helped to remove periwinkle, garlic mustard, and buckthorn berries.*
 - Stormwater Management and Invasive Plant Species ExCo (Fall 2011)
 - *Twelve students will work to remove buckthorn berries for 2 hours every week.*
 - Planting native trees and shrubs (Ongoing)
 - Evan's Ditch riparian corridor improvement (Spring 2011)
 - *Volunteers helped to remove invasive plants along Evan's Ditch and then planted native bank stabilizing trees and shrubs.*
 - Vee Long Nursery (Spring 2011-Fall 2011)
 - *Volunteers planted 300 bald cypress saplings next to the cemetery. Once trees have matured, they will be transplanted.*
 - *This project was terminated due to a hot Oberlin summer; trees did not successfully transplant.*
- Encouraging the implementation of Low Impact Design (Ongoing)
 - Repaving of North Professor and Woodland Streets (Fall 2011)
 - *The City of Oberlin is paying for the repaving of North Professor and Woodland Streets. Oberlin College is paying for sustainable landscaping design.*
 - Oberlin Project Development (Ongoing)
 - *OSWAMP is not yet involved with the Oberlin Project.*

- Encouraging Best Management Practices (Ongoing)
 - Garden consultation (Ongoing)
 - *OSWAMP will work with homeowners to provide input into how best management practices and low impact design can be incorporated into the backyard.*

Accomplishments and Outcomes

Many of the activities above have still yet to be funded although we have several generous donors.

1. The Green Edge Fund has given \$20,000 for the installation of two rain gardens on campus: one in South Bowl and one in Old Barrows.
2. The Giving Women of Oberlin have given \$500 for the rain barrel workshop to take place in Fall 2011.
3. EnviroAlums have given \$250 for the improvement of the riparian zone of Evan’s Ditch along Legion’s Field.
4. The Miami Conservation District donated 500 bald cypress saplings that were planted in Vee Long Nursery. Unfortunately, these did not survive the extremely hot summer.
5. The Creativity Fund has given Annika Sullivan \$1000 to improve her entrepreneurial skills in the area of storm water management.

Challenges and Responses

Changing the storm water system can be a million plus dollar project. Stormwater issues need to be addressed using alternative cost-effective measures. However, this must involve every individual with a community. It has been hard to convince homeowners and everyone has a stake in protecting their watershed and implementing small means towards water conservation and water quality.

Campus Climate Action: Your School’s Carbon Footprint

To learn more about Oberlin College’s commitment to sustainability please visit:
<http://oberlin.edu/sustainability/>.

Commentary and Reflection

If you have extra time on your hands and are really passionate about an environmental issue, have fun creating systems on your campus. Be ready for the challenge. This takes a lot of hard work.

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Leaders and Supporters

Leaders and supporters include the following organizations and individuals:

Organization	Contact
City of Avon Lake	Joe Reitz
City of Oberlin	Jeff Baumann
Creativity Fund	Mary K. Gray
Food Policy Coalition	Gina Makris
Lorain County Community Development	Christin Brandon
Lorain County Health Department	Ken Pearce
Lorain County Soil and Water	Nanci Funi
Oberlin College Bonner Center	Beth Blissman
Oberlin College Community Government and Relations	Sandra Hodge
Oberlin College Grounds	Dennis Greive

Oberlin Community Services	Linda Arbogast
Oberlin Project	Eric Norenberg, David Orr
Ohio EPA	Ted Colin
New Agrarian Project	Sandy Kish-Jordan
Pipeline Project	Joe Reitz, Nanci Funi
RAP Coordinating Committee	Ken Pearce
Western Land Conservancy	Kate Pilacky
Zion Community Gardens	Sundance

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contacts

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Case Study submitted by: Annika Sullivan

Image credit: Noah Schwarz