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Ecological Restoration of Plaster Creek

This past summer my coworkers' and I have been able to help clean up the plaster creek water shed. Plaster creek is a terribly contaminated tributary to Grand River. Over the years we have continuously polluted and neglected the creek. As a result the creek is unsafe to touch the water, there is an immediate need of action that my team has been working on. We have been doing a lot of restoration work, mostly in maintenance and instillation of curb cut raingardens. We truly have been making a difference in the health of plaster creek. Throughout the summer we have transplanted around one hundred thousand plant doubling what was completed last summer. We have installed six curb cut rain gardens, and two rain gardens.

We have identified the way to get the best outcomes from our curb cut gardens. The biggest help in plant growth is compost. By mixing compost in with the soil we have ensured the plants get enough nutrients to grow properly. There is a large part of maintenance that is included when making these gardens. Two years is the allotted time of plaster creek stewards to clean the sediment from the basins, and to weed the garden beds. From there we trust the homeowner will continue to clean and weed. It is imperative that we maintain the gardens so they don't get overgrown with weeds, or just get mowed over.

When analyzing how effective our rain gardens are we found that sixty percent of runoff water is captured and prevented from polluting the creek. The data collected is from that road, however if every road had sixteen curb cut raingardens, the effects would simulate natural water flow into the creek. Water from the road would be cleaner going into the creek as well.

Over the duration of installing, and planting these raingardens. Our team came in significantly under budget so much so that we are able to install six more than expected. Over the years to come there is going to be over sixty raingardens, our goal is that eventually with the help of all these raingardens there will be decreased contamination levels in the creek. This is still a very far future goal but ideally we want to see pictures of children playing in the creek again without waders on.

I personally was effected to become more environmentally aware, and cautious of how what we see as little things can turn into huge impacts later. There is the notion that contaminants thrown in the creek just go away. Away is a relative term it all end up somewhere, and that somewhere is creating terrible pollution issues. When working on a curb cut I can feel the work of God being displayed through me. That feeling is one I would and could never trade.