



# The South Grand Current

[www.southgrandwatershed.com](http://www.southgrandwatershed.com)

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## Harrisonville Elementary gets Rain Garden

**H**arrisonville Elementary School and the South Grand River Watershed Alliance anticipated that a rain garden would be completed at the Elementary School before the end of September. However, nature had other priorities. Rain events throughout the fall were frequent enough that it was October 20 before the site could be prepared and planting nearly completed.

Volunteer parents of Harrisonville Elementary School students, members of the South Grand River Watershed Alliance, Community Conservationists with the Missouri Department of Conservation and staff person with MDNR met early that morning to begin the work of spreading compost, arranging and planting about 525 plants. Thanks to the Cass County Commissioners, the site had been prepared earlier in the week for the arrival of the compost that Town & Country Disposal, Inc. donated for the project.

The Harrisonville Elementary School partnered with the South Grand River Watershed Alliance to implement the rain garden as a landscape feature to reduce nonpoint source pollution. The rain garden will to be used in the classroom curriculum to teach about nonpoint source pollution.



A rain garden is a depressed area with plants that can survive in very wet or dry conditions. It is located to capture runoff from impervious surfaces such as roofs and parking lots. By capturing runoff from areas such as these, rain gardens serve to slow the runoff. The plants aid in filtering the many nonpoint source pollutants in the runoff and help infiltrate rainfall into the aquifer. Thus more rain is kept where it falls instead of being rushed along with all the contaminants it carries to a stream through the stormwater system.

The plants in the Harrisonville Elementary rain garden are all native to our area. Native plants are ideal for rain gardens and other landscaping

as they have adapted to the local environment over thousands of years. Many have exceptionally long roots which make them especially effective in filtering and infiltrating stormwater.

The planting of the school rain garden will be completed and mulch installed as soon as weather conditions permit. A sign explaining the function of the rain garden will also be installed. Go to

[www.southgrandwatershed.com](http://www.southgrandwatershed.com) for additional photos. A second rain garden is planned for the Mill Creek Upper Elementary School, Belton, Mo in the spring.

This project was made possible with grant funding awarded to the South Grand River Watershed Alliance through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

The \$9,450 in federal funding was awarded for the construction of two community rain gardens and a nonpoint source educational curriculum and is provided by the Environment Protection Agency, Region 7, 319 Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant through the department's Water Protection Program. For more information, contact Amanda Sappington, in the department's Water Protection Program, at (573) 751-8728. ♪

*Register your rain garden at*  
[www.southgrandwatershed.com](http://www.southgrandwatershed.com)

## Rain Barrels—Revival of an Ancient System

In recent years, as many cities work toward solutions for problems caused by stormwater runoff, urban dwellers have been encouraged to install rain gardens and rain barrels. Probably most people in these modern times do not realize that rain barrels are nothing new—people worldwide have used the concept of rain barrels for thousands of years. Cistern is the ancient name and the one familiar to most in this country who have relied on them as a convenient way to collect and store rainwater for essential household use. Now with urbanization and its accompanying stormwater problems, another very useful function for rain barrels has been identified.

With ever expanding areas of impervious surface— streets, highways, parking lots, buildings— stormwater cannot infiltrate to recharge aquifers as it did in the past. Instead, it rushes across these surfaces to nearby streams carrying all the contaminants and debris it picks up along the way. This increases the volume, velocity and pollution of stormwater reaching the stream and contributes to more damaging floods, erosion and deterioration of aquatic habitat.

Rain barrels/cisterns can make significant contributions to fixing stormwater- caused problems; are very adaptable for a variety of situations; and can be implemented by homeowners, businesses and developers. In many Low Impact Developments runoff is directed to huge underground or under street cisterns and the stored water is made available for landscape watering by the residents, thus keeping rainwater where it falls.

A surprising amount of rainwater can be harvested from just one rooftop. For example, the runoff of a 1.5-inch rain from a 750 square foot roof area is enough to fill nearly nine

50-gallon rain barrels.

Water your landscaping from your rain barrel(s) and save on your water bill—and, enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing to better water quality. Rain barrels to hook to a downspout can be purchased or easily put together with purchased materials. Be sure to use a food-grade barrel to avoid the risk of contaminating the rain. Instructions to make rain barrels can be found at: [www.southgrandwatershed.com](http://www.southgrandwatershed.com) or call 816-779-6708 to have instructions mailed to you. ♪



For many of us, water simply flows from a faucet, and we think little about it beyond this point of contact. We have lost a sense of respect for the wild river, for the complex workings of a wetland, for the intricate web of life that water supports.

Sandra Postel,  
"Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity"

## Volunteer Opportunities to Promote Quality Water

Volunteer opportunities for you to help spread the word include:

- Tabling at community events
- Helping with community rain garden maintenance
- Distributing SGRWA brochures, newsletters, program fliers etc.
- Helping with set up at the SGRWA Open House
- Identifying presentation (water quality related) opportunities

[info@southgrandwatershed.com](mailto:info@southgrandwatershed.com) or 816-779-6708 to volunteer

## Join or Start a Stream Team

Anyone can start a Stream Team— Individuals, families, schools, youth groups, community, church or service groups

Being a member of a Stream Team is a great way to have a hands-on contribution to learn about, care for and protect local waterways. It's also a great way to have fun with others working to promote the health of Missouri Streams. Call 573-522-4115, ext. 3591 to learn about Stream Teams in your area or visit [www.mostreamteam.org](http://www.mostreamteam.org)

## Presentations for Your Group or Organization Available

Need a program for your group or organization?

The SGRWA is available to present programs on water quality related topics such as Rain Gardens, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Watershed 101 etc.

Contact us through our website, [www.southgrandwatershed.com](http://www.southgrandwatershed.com) or call 779-6708 or 331-2824

### SGRWA Meetings

Regularly scheduled Board of Director meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise posted on our website. Time: 5:30–7:00 p.m. at the office of PWS #10, 530 S. Peculiar Drive, Peculiar, Missouri. Members and others interested in water quality are welcome.

### SGRWA Mission

To promote and advocate for the preservation, protection, and restoration of the waters of the South Grand River Watershed.