

## **Stormwater Solutions for Oregon Communities**

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In 2007, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) convened a statewide task force to develop recommendations for reducing the impacts of urban stormwater runoff on Oregon's waters. The task force recommended a comprehensive educational program to help growing communities adopt more sustainable stormwater management practices, which are often called "low-impact development (LID.)"

Numerous studies have shown that as new development occurs and impervious area increases, the hydrology of local streams is substantially altered by decreased groundwater recharge, flashier flows, increased flooding, and stream channel erosion. LID practices reduce the hydrological and water quality impacts of urban development by slowing down, filtering, and reducing the volume of stormwater runoff. Examples of LID practices include bioswales, rain gardens, green roofs, and pervious pavements. Careful site planning to preserve natural areas and trees is also an important component of LID.

In 2009, with funding from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and private foundations, OEC and Oregon State University Extension/Oregon Sea Grant launched a collaborative educational program called "Stormwater Solutions." The program aims to educate, motivate, and assist developers and builders; local government staff; planners; engineers; and landscape designers to implement water-quality friendly development practices that reduce stormwater runoff. We are currently working in the Willamette Valley and the Rogue Valley and plan to expand the program to coastal communities and eventually to Central Oregon. In each area we convene a local advisory committee to identify needs, guide workshop development, and assist with outreach. We provide at least three Stormwater Solutions workshops in each area, plus rain garden training for homeowners and Master Gardeners. In the Rogue Valley we were also able to provide technical assistance to help one local government identify demonstration project opportunities and update codes and ordinances to encourage LID.

The presentation will include successes, outcomes and lessons learned from this ongoing effort to educate smaller communities about sustainable stormwater practices, as well as additional needs that have been identified and recommendations for future work.

### **Teresa Huntsinger**

Teresa Huntsinger is the Program Director for Clean and Healthy Rivers at the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC). Teresa convened OEC's Stormwater Solutions Team, organizes workshops on low-impact development practices, is expanding the "Ecobiz" certification program for landscaping professionals, and participated in the Governor's Headwaters to Ocean advisory group. Prior to joining OEC in 2006, she worked for the Coalition for a Livable Future for 7 years. Teresa holds a B.S. in Biology and Environmental Studies from the University of Oregon. She served as a rural community development volunteer in the Peace Corps in West Africa, and she currently volunteers as board chair of the Johnson Creek Watershed Council.

### **Megan Kleibacker**

Megan Kleibacker, Oregon State University Extension Service and Oregon Sea Grant Watershed Education Program Associate, coordinates OSU Extension's Watershed Education (WE) Team and oversees the Oregon Master Watershed Stewardship program. Megan has a strong background in youth watershed education, involving youth in watershed restoration projects, and working with volunteers. She conducts needs assessments for program development, develops and implements program evaluation plans for a variety of water and watershed related education and outreach efforts, and serves as the central communication hub for the OSU WE Team.