

# Stephenson County Soil & Water Conservation District



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Because there is no mitigation to address runoff issues related to storm water draining directly into local rivers and streams within any municipal boundaries in Stephenson County, the Stephenson County Soil and Water Conservation District launched a Rain Barrel/Rain Garden Education Project utilizing funding available through a grant from Section 319 Non Point Source Pollution Control Program from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District.

Rain Barrels were offered to residents that live within a municipal boundary in Stephenson County for only \$20 and a packet on building and maintaining a home rain garden was distributed with each rain barrel. A total of 125 rain barrels were sold to residents of Stephenson County and 10 rain barrels were donated to schools and non-profit organizations.

Rain barrels are an excellent way to help the environment in urban areas because they reduce storm-water runoff which can carry pollutants and sediment directly to creeks and rivers. Specifically in Stephenson County pollution of our water is an issue that needed to be addressed; we not only face the issue of storm water draining directly into rivers and streams but also find that temporary flooding is an issue due to inadequate storm drains for above average rain events. Rain barrels are an excellent way to conserve resources and reduce the amount of well or municipal water being used.

The barrels shown in the pictures above were distributed to the Freeport Art Museum for Woman's Garden Club of the Freeport Historical Society and the Freeport Area Church Cooperative who started a community garden.

This project proved to be a huge success and provided public relations with urban residents of Stephenson County. It offered the opportunity for individuals unfamiliar with the Stephenson County Soil & Water District to visit and learn where the office is located & the type of service the District provides.