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Grant makes garden grow

By Cynthia Gamble

Staff writer

A demonstration rain garden at Terra Cotta Conservation Area (TCCA) is one of the beneficiaries of the \$1 million provincial grant awarded to Credit Valley Conservation (CVC). The grant, through the Showcasing Water Innovation (SWI) Program, which rewards innovative and cost-effective green projects, will be split among nine CVC innovative storm water technology projects— seven in Mississauga, one in Caledon and the Terra Cotta garden.

CVC is considered a leader in green technologies, working with municipalities and the business

community to develop projects such as permeable paving, green roofs and other innovative techniques to treat stormwater runoff, and improve water quality entering our rivers and Lake Ontario.

CVC Board Chair Pat Mullin said, "This (grant) will benefit residents in two major ways. Implementing green technologies will help protect our drinking water and boost economic growth by focusing on jobs and businesses of the future."

Christine Zimmer, CVC Manager, Protection and Restoration, says the nine are part of the Infrastructure Optimization: An Adaptive Planning and Water Management Approach for Small, Medium, and Large Municipalities Project. It was designed to promote low impact development by utilizing sustainable storm water infrastructure. This then reduces the impact of storm water runoff and pollution on groundwater supplies and ensures ensures safe, healthy and abundant drinking water now and into the future. The program will also teach these technologies to professionals, encourage homeowners to use water more wisely and strengthen sustainable water planning for municipalities. The TCCA rain garden will demonstrate how the runoffs from roofs can be treated — with the specially selected plants and specialized soil designed to act as a filter to clean the water before returning it to the water supply, said Zimmer.

If successful it can be applied to homes, schools, churches, etc.

The CVC is now monitoring the test garden for water quality to see how effective the various plants and soils are in filtering the pollutants. This teaching garden will be available for all TCCA visitors to explore. The CVC is currently working on the explanatory signage.

Zimmer said the CVC is also working with the Town of Halton Hills in developing a series of Low Impact Development guides for developers and homeowners.

The total CVC project costs just over \$3.8 million with several private and public sector partners. Private and public partners are contributing \$750,000 cash and in-kind contributions. The other sites include an education centre, park, church, and street reconstruction projects.

For more information on the CVC sustainable infrastructure practices go to www.creditvalleyca.ca/sustainability



Submitted photo

The rain garden at Terra Cotta taken at the time of planting/construction. The CVC is currently working on signage regarding the plants selected and how residents can install rain gardens to treat their roof top runoff.

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