

Harbor Brook Constructed Wetlands Pilot Treatment System Project

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The Harbor Brook Constructed Wetlands Pilot Treatment System Project includes construction of a wetland-based natural treatment process to remove pollutants from combined sewer overflows released into Harbor Brook during heavy rains. During and after significant rain storms, the volume of stormwater runoff often exceeds the area's combined sewer system's capacity resulting in overflows of mixed runoff and sewage. The resulting overflows are sometimes discharged directly into nearby surface waters such as Harbor Brook and eventually Onondaga Lake. This discharge is called a combined sewer overflow, or CSO.



The Constructed Wetlands Pilot Treatment System Project will be located along Harbor Brook on County-owned property just south of Burnet Park on the west side of Syracuse, near the Skunk City neighborhood.

This project is considered a “pilot” project because it includes a monitoring and research component that will help determine the performance of three types of wetlands to be constructed. The project will assess the potential for their use at other CSO locations in the City of Syracuse.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Harbor Brook Constructed Wetlands Treatment Project being done?

Onondaga County entered into an Amended Consent Judgment (ACJ) with the State of New York, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Atlantic States Legal Foundation on January 20, 1998 pertaining to pollutants that discharge into Onondaga Lake from the Metropolitan Syracuse Wastewater Treatment Plant and combined sewer overflows. On November 16, 2009, it was agreed upon by all parties that the County would institute the Save the Rain Program and “green infrastructure projects” to reduce the volume of rainwater that presently enters the combined sewer system in an effort to reduce the frequency and volume of CSO discharges to waters tributary to Onondaga Lake to aid its clean-up.

Who is constructing the project?

Onondaga County, specifically the Department of Water Environment Protection, is responsible for constructing the Wetland Treatment Project at Harbor Brook as a special initiative of the “Save the Rain” program to reduce stormwater runoff and CSO pollution.

Will the project affect residents living in neighborhoods near Harbor Brook?

No. Once constructed the project is not expected to adversely affect residents near the site. During construction access to the area near Harbor Brook will be restricted to protect public safety. Once constructed the area will be restored and landscaped.

What about odors or mosquitoes?

The wetlands will be monitored for odors and other problems. Odor and mosquito problems are not expected when the wetlands are operating and maintained as intended. Adjustments to water levels and other procedures will be taken to correct conditions from becoming problems. The project is being designed to allow for natural control of mosquitoes by local wildlife and aquatic species, like frogs and dragonflies.

What about safety and security for children in the neighborhood?

The wetlands will be part of the stormwater basin that presently exists along Harbor Brook. The wetlands will be surrounded by earthen berms and will be fenced and landscaped to restrict access by children and others. The area surrounding the wetlands will be planted with native vegetation including trees and shrubs to give it a more natural appearance. The placement of trees and shrubs will avoid the creation of potential hazards to public safety and security. Some form of security lighting may be necessary to discourage illegal activity and vandalism.

Will the athletic fields and bikepath used by the community be affected by the project?

The existing athletic fields just east of Velasko Road used by the Syracuse Chargers Rugby Club and others in the neighborhood will not be affected by the project and will still be available for recreational use. Public access will be restricted along the bike and pedestrian path through the center of the stormwater detention basin during construction activity for safety reasons, but access will be restored once construction at the site is complete.

What kind of long term educational opportunities will the project offer to school children?

The Wetland Treatment Project will provide a place for local schools to bring children of all ages to learn how wetlands work and how they benefit the community.



A Floating Wetland Island



A Vertical Downflow Wetland



A Surface Flow Wetland

Where can I get more information about the project or for updates?

Project information is available on Onondaga County's website

<http://ongov.net/>

through the Save-the-Rain website at

<http://savetherain.us/>