

EPA and The Port Inn help Hodgson Brook Restoration Project

Installations aim to improve water quality

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PORTSMOUTH — The Hodgson Brook Restoration Project will receive a two-year grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to support the construction of a storm-water demonstration project in the lower Hodgson Brook watershed.

The Hodgson Brook Watershed encompasses 2,135 acres running from Pease International Trade-port to the North Mill Pond.

"Reducing the impacts of polluted storm-water to Hodgson Brook is challenging because of the urban nature of its watershed," said project coordinator Candace Dolan. "It's really forced us to think outside the box. There simply isn't space to install large structures to treat the storm-water that drains from entire neighborhoods into the brook."

Instead, Dolan said, with the help of the city and the University of New Hampshire Storm-water Center, the project will install smaller systems that together will improve quality of the water discharged into the brook.

The project will include installing tree box filters in storm drains. Thanks to a donation from The Port Inn on the Route 1 Bypass, it will also provide assistance to homeowners willing to install rain gardens and rain barrels on their property.

"Rain gardens are simply a depressed garden designed to collect and hold rainwater long enough for it to soak into the ground," Dolan said.

By installing rain barrels under downspouts, water from rooftops can be collected and stored for landscaping and outdoor use. The project hopes that when used together, these will provide protection to the brook by filtering out pollutants and reducing the volume of storm-water entering the brook. This will also aim to help to recharge groundwater aquifers and enhance properties while saving homeowners money on their water bill.

The Hodgson Brook Restoration Project seeks to improve water quality and habitats of Hodgson Brook through monitoring, education and building community partnerships. The project is funded by the N.H. Department of Environmental Services and managed by Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation.

For information on the project, call Dolan at 559-1529 or e-mail hodgsonbrook@blueoceansociety.org

