

# Co-benefits of Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat

## Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Stormwater runoff is a major source of pollution.

When it rains and water moves through the landscape it can pick up trash, bacteria, heavy metals, chloride and nutrients including phosphorus, nitrogen. Residents can help by managing stormwater where it falls through Green Storm Infrastructure (GSI).

Gray stormwater infrastructure is designed to move urban stormwater away from built environments. GSI, by contrast, uses plants and soils to capture and treat stormwater at its source! Example of these practices include land conservation, rain harvesting with rain barrels, green roofs, downspout disconnection, rain gardens, tree planting and more! These practices also create wildlife habitat and aid in carbon sequestration.



To learn more about how you can restore wildlife habitat in the built environment please sign up for a FREE Storm Smart assessment at: <https://winooskinrcd.org/stormsmart/>



## Species Spotlight !

Brook Trout need cool, well oxygenated waters to survive and thrive! Riparian buffers along streams maintains this habitat by reducing erosion and filtering sediment before it reaches the streams, providing shade to keep water cool, and increasing coarse woody debris in waterways where fish forage and seek refuge from other predators. Collecting rain water reduces runoff which collects nutrients and sediment which can reduce the macroinvertebrate communities within streams which fish feed on at various stages of their life cycle.



### Other co-benefits to wildlife and water quality include:

- Planting a rain garden reduces runoff and attracts pollinators like bees, butterflies and moths.
- Installing GSI regulates flow levels in streams and rivers which also maintains terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems for wildlife habitat.
- Planting native fruit trees and shrubs provides nesting locations and food for some songbirds and absorbs stormwater through their roots.

By managing stormwater and maintaining healthy aquatic ecosystems we simultaneously protect wildlife habitat for birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and insects! A healthy food web is dependent on dynamic ecosystems that can support a variety of species– the base of this is clean water!

Purchasing a Vermont Conservation Plate helps species like songbirds, salamanders, butterflies, bats, lynx, bobcats, and more through the Nongame Wildlife Fund and the Watershed Grant Fund.

