



Coordinator's Watershed Corner November 2011

A note to the Clean Water Committee, Paso del Norte Watershed Council from the 319(h) Grant Watershed Coordinator, Brian Hanson

Hello all,

To prepare for writing the Watershed Based Plan, the Coordinator completed an online course called "Texas Watershed Steward". The goal of the training is to promote healthy watersheds by increasing citizen awareness and knowledge about watersheds, potential impairments, and watershed protection strategies to minimize nonpoint source pollution. The training is specifically designed to increase stakeholder involvement including development and implementation of Watershed Protection Plans. I encourage you take this easy, quick and free course. The program is sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. <http://tw.s.tamu.edu/online-course>.

Following along the same goals, this same group is organizing a one day workshop in El Paso in the spring. I will keep you informed.

Many of you have heard of Low Impact Development (LID). It was developed to reduce stormwater runoff volumes and reduce pollutant loading to lakes and rivers like the Rio Grande. So what is it? LID manages stormwater in small, cost-effective landscape features located on each lot rather than being conveyed to large, costly holding structures. This is achieved by developing ways to prevent, retain, detain, use and treat runoff. How? This can be achieved by mimicking natural conditions through landscaping that promotes ground water recharge. Urban water runoff can be routed to small catchment basins. LID reduces the need for clearing and grading, can eliminate pipes, inlet structures, and large stormwater ponds. Large stormwater flows to the river are greatly reduced. As a result, LID can reduce maintenance costs and site development. This can be especially effective during planning of new developments.

For more information see

<http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/publications.htm>

http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/pubs/LID_National_Manual.pdf



A median in this road in Las Cruces allows runoff from the asphalt to flow into the median and soak into the ground below the rock.

Watershed Tip: Runoff from Urbanized High Density Areas

Runoff from urban areas is noted as a possible source of *E. coli* bacteria, potentially getting to the Rio Grande. Stormwater from urban areas does not get treated or cleaned before it flows to the river. Minimizing pollutants is a good first step. If polluted runoff can be captured, the water can be filtered before it enters the groundwater or flows to the river. By using Low Impact Development, offsite runoff can be reduced and the pollutants filtered out.

Several benefits include:

- Reducing imperviousness, increasing porosity,
- Conserving natural resources and ecosystems,
- Maintaining natural drainage courses,
- Providing runoff storage measures dispersed uniformly throughout a site,
- Landscape with the use of a variety of detention, retention, and runoff practices,
- Reduces urban heat island effect.

Some useful websites are:

- www.lowimpactdevelopment.org
- <http://www.lascruces.org/en/Departments/Public%20Works/Services/Engineering%20Services/Stormwater%20Information.aspx>



In urban areas runoff can be directed to depressions that filter pollutants as seen here in Las Cruces.

One of the nine possible sources of *E. coli* is addressed as the Watershed Tip in each monthly edition of the “Coordinator’s Watershed Corner”. Nine possible sources of bacteria in the lower Rio Grande are : Impervious surface/parking lot runoff; Municipal point source discharges; Urbanized high density areas; On-site treatment systems; Permitted runoff from confined animal feeding operations (CAFO); Rangeland grazing; Pet waste; Waterfowl waste; Wildlife waste, other than waterfowl.

319(h) Grant Team
Brian Hanson: 575-646-2642

www.pdnwc.org