

2015 EMC Environmental Excellence Awards Program

[← Return to EMC page](#)

Erie County Environmental Management Council

2015 Environmental Excellence Award Winners

The EMC Environmental Excellence Award Winners were established this year. The purpose of the awards is to showcase municipal and not-for-profit projects that can be replicated in communities across Erie County and beyond. This year's winners are:

- City of Buffalo, Electronic Waste Recycling Program
- Town of Aurora, Reading Road Ditch Reconfiguration
- Town of Grand Island, The Woods Creek Living Shorelines Project
- Village of Williamsville, Spring Street Streetscape & Green Infrastructure Project

The winning projects are summarized below.

CITY OF BUFFALO: ELECTRONIC RECYCLING PROGRAM

In 2012, the New York State Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act became the law. This important legislation was created to protect human health and the environment by diverting thousands of pounds of waste from landfills and incinerators. As of 2012, it became illegal for municipalities to pick up e-waste for disposal. The City of Buffalo responded by opening a permanent Electronic Waste (E-Waste) Drop off center for its residents. Over 1100 tons of electronic waste has been diverted from the waste stream since the site was opened.

In 2014, the law was expanded to include consumers. It became illegal for residents to put E-Waste at the curb for disposal. The City of Buffalo responded by initiating a 6 month period (starting in June 2013) of warnings on E-waste left on the curb, educational notices in waste bills and on government TV. The City of Buffalo passed an ordinance to enable the City to fine residents \$105 if they leave E-Waste on the curb. This has drastically cut down on E-Waste at the curb and ensured that it was recycled rather than potentially releasing toxins in the environment. In addition, the City of Buffalo increased the hours of operation at the E-Waste Drop-Off Center from Monday through Friday to include the first Saturday of the month to make drop off easier for residents.

In 2013, the City of Buffalo also expanded the drop off site to include the collection of Universal Wastes which include fluorescent lamps, ballasts, batteries and mercury containing devices. This allows city residents to properly dispose of Universal Waste safely and conveniently. The City also has a trained Universal Waste Inspector that conducts site visits at City owned buildings to ensure compliance with Universal Waste disposal requirements.

For more information, call 851-5014 or visit: www.city-buffalo.com/recycling.

TOWN OF AURORA: READING ROAD DITCH RECONFIGURATION

At the request of the Town of Aurora Conservation Board, the Town of Aurora Highway Department took the lead to reconfigure Reading Road ditches to obtain the following objectives:

- Reduce Soil Erosion
- Reduce downstream sedimentation Reduce traffic hazards and accidents
Increase site visibility
- Reduce or eliminate future maintenance costs
- Reduce spread of invasive species

This project had the support of the Town Board and the Planning Board. The work was completed in May and June 2014 with the ground cover established protecting the soil surface. There was little evidence of erosion a month later after establishing the vegetative cover that will reduce future sedimentation downstream.

Mr. Gunner, Town of Aurora Highway Superintendent, redirected his crew assigned to ditch cleaning and repaving Reading Road to remove shrubs and trees along the proposed ditch modification right-of-way, after speaking to each landowner, securing their permission. The Town Highway Department is charged with removing hazardous vegetation along town roads, and as part of this task, select vegetation was removed and town equipment was used to reslope the ditches further away from the pavement at a gentler slope. The work was completed in May and June of 2014. The number of hours and therefore costs were about the same as a regular work day. This was a test project and the successful attributes will be applied to the proposed Hubbard Road ditch reconfiguration this spring.

For more information, email: edi@earthdimensions.com.

TOWN OF GRAND ISLAND: THE WOODS CREEK LIVING SHORELINES PROJECT

The Town of Grand Island took advantage of Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper's Niagara River Riparian Restoration Program to implement a riparian planting and no-mow buffer strip along Woods Creek on a town owned property in September 2012. It is located in an area known as the Town Common and is immediately adjacent to Town Hall. This is a highly visible area in the center of the Town.

The project's aim included reducing the stream bank erosion and sedimentation of the creek by restoring the riparian buffer that once existed along the creek. The no-mow feature of the project allowed the town to cut down on maintenance costs for the property, while the grassy strip, shrubs and trees created habitat, stabilized the stream bank and reduced pollutants (stormwater run-off and fertilizers) from entering the creek. The town has been following the maintenance (no-mow) plan since 2012. Today the riparian buffer is fully established and provides a beautiful naturalized area along Woods Creek with multiple environmental benefits.

This project was achieved at a minimal cost, just the out-of-pocket cost of purchasing the necessary plants. Labor was provided by volunteers from Grand Island residents and the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper's organization.

For more information, email Conservation@grand-island.ny.us or contact Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper at (716) 852-7483.

VILLAGE OF WILLIAMSVILLE: SPRING STREET STREETScape & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

This project involves transforming an underutilized road into a vibrant "B street/" a center of activity in the Village of Williamsville and a model for green infrastructure and stormwater management. Spring Street is becoming the "greenest street in the suburbs" with a recently completed draft design plan and full scale implementation this summer and fall. Total project cost will exceed \$3 million, funded with grants from NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Project grant, Environmental Facilities Corp. Green Infrastructure Grant, and State Dormitory Authority funding from State Sen. Michael H. Ranzenhofer, R-Amherst.

The sea of asphalt that drains rainwater from Main Street and silts ponds in Glen Park will be replaced by permeable paving, mountable curbs, stepped bioretention planters, a tiered bioretention wall, elevated crosswalks and other "green" elements that encourage pedestrian activity, calm traffic and collect stormwater.

This project illustrates how environmental improvements can also be economic development initiatives. After falling into disrepair, the historic Water Mill on Spring Street was purchased by the Village in 2005, saving it from foreclosure. Progress is already visible in the former "dead areas" around the historic 1811 Williamsville Water Mill, which began to come to life and draw business activity after the green infrastructure plan was unveiled. After the restoration, Spring Street will center a historic Mill District with shops and direct access to Glen Park and Glen Falls. The project has also increased awareness of stormwater runoff and what can be done in other areas of the village to reduce runoff and introduce more permeable surfaces to new street projects.

For more information visit: www.walkablewilliamsville.com.