



Go to the [Engage R1](#) webpage to see project updates and provide feedback.

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF 319 AND HELPING IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

This is saying thank you to all volunteers for working tirelessly, irrespective of unfavorable weather and site conditions to help plant native plant plugs in our **Water Quality Improvement Project!** You have made a remarkable difference in our community, our watershed and the environment at large! Thank you!



Some of our dedicated volunteers diligently planting plugs at (Left) Ken Rock Park and (Right) Park - Er - Woods.

CONSTRUCTION, SEEDING AND BLANKETING TO PLANTING



Construction was carried out by the Highway Departments of Winnebago County and Rockford Township in accordance with the designs.



The sites were seeded and covered with a protective blanket to hold loose soil in place and prevent erosion by wind or water.



Soil augers were used to drill holes to make planting easy. Plant plugs were laid up with more water resistant plants in the bottom of the construction and the less water resistant plants at the edges of the Best Management Practices (BMPs). Plants were distributed randomly to mimic how they naturally occur in nature.



The pictures above show freshly planted plugs at both sites.

CURRENT STATE OF BOTH BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



While plants at Ken Rock Park (Left) are at the "creep stage" because they are in their second year, plants at Park - Er - Woods (Right) are in their "sleep stage", where they are now establishing their root systems.

THE "SLEEP", "CREEP" AND "LEAP" STAGES DEFINED

- **Year 1: "Sleep"** refers to the first season in the garden where a perennial plant will focus energy on its root system. Typically you'll see foliage, but no blooms, since the plant is pulling lots of energy into a healthy, robust root system that will survive the winter dormancy period. Healthy roots anchor the plant, help it draw in water and nutrients, and build a healthy foundation for a long life in your garden.
- **Year 2: "Creep"** refers to the second year in the garden. Returning from winter dormancy, the plant will wake up in the garden and continue to grow. In the second season, you can expect to see blooms, though the plant hasn't quite reached its full size or full flowering potential. The root system will continue to grow larger and deeper, for a more resilient plant.
- **Year 3: "Leap"** refers to the third year in the garden when the plant will take off and reach its full size. Flowers and foliage will be at their best and you can really see the full potential of your plant. Yes, you need a little patience,

but as gardeners, we know that there is always something to look forward to!

WHY NATIVE PLANTS?

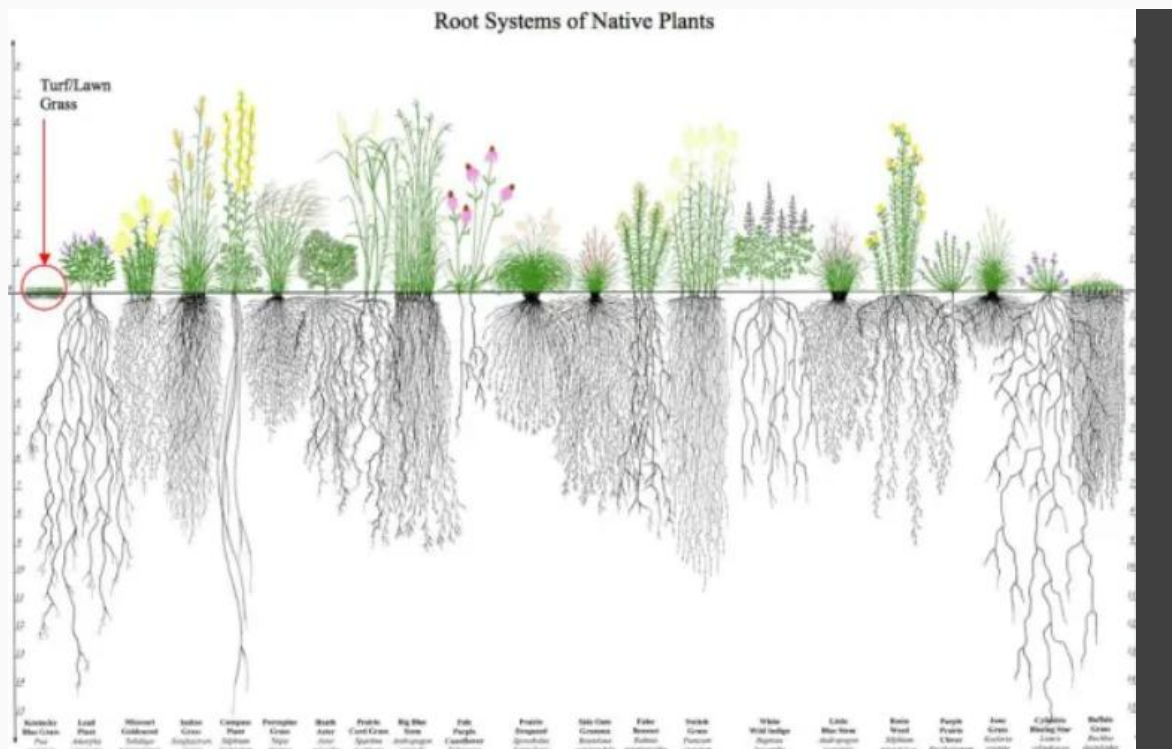


Photo source: Clean Water Education Partnership

1. **Prevent Erosion:** The roots of stable native plants help hold soil together, minimizing the risk of erosion caused by flowing water.
2. **Improve Water Quality:** Native plants filter out pollutants and sediments from runoff, improving the quality of water that flows into streams and rivers.
3. **Support Wildlife:** Streambanks provide habitat for a variety of species, including birds, mammals, insects, and aquatic organisms.
4. **Enhance Biodiversity:** Native plants support many pollinators and other beneficial insects, contributing to overall ecosystem health.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT

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Outreach Coordinator

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For more information, visit project website: [Engage R1](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS: UNLOCK THE EXPERIENCE: JOIN OUR SITE TOUR



Join R1 and partners on a tour and information session of the best management practices (bioretention basin) installed at Ken Rock Park and (bioretention basin) at Park - Er - Woods this July.

Come see the differences in the two improvements and how they will bloom and beautify these parks in the coming years. Interested? Contact Program Outreach Coordinator Estelle Adiaba (eadiaba@r1planning.org) for more information and to schedule a tour.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



A big thank you to all partners who contributed in diverse ways for the successful completion of this project.

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