

# Green Stormwater Mini Grant Program

## Program Overview

The Green Stormwater Mini Grant program connects residents, businesses, and community groups with cost-share resources to complete projects that improve water quality by capturing, infiltrating, and dispersing stormwater before it reaches Puget Sound. Eligible project types include urban habitat, depaving, rain tanks, and rain gardens.

## 2024 Special Funding Partners

Pierce County  
City of Puyallup  
City of Tacoma Depave Program

## About PCD

Since 1949, Pierce Conservation District has worked with local landowners and public agencies to conserve natural resources that are essential to both our economy and our region's quality of life. Our collaborative efforts with citizen volunteers to create a just food system, improve water quality, promote sustainable agriculture, and recover wildlife habitat are the heart of our mission.



*Volunteers in Hilltop, Tacoma removing pavement*

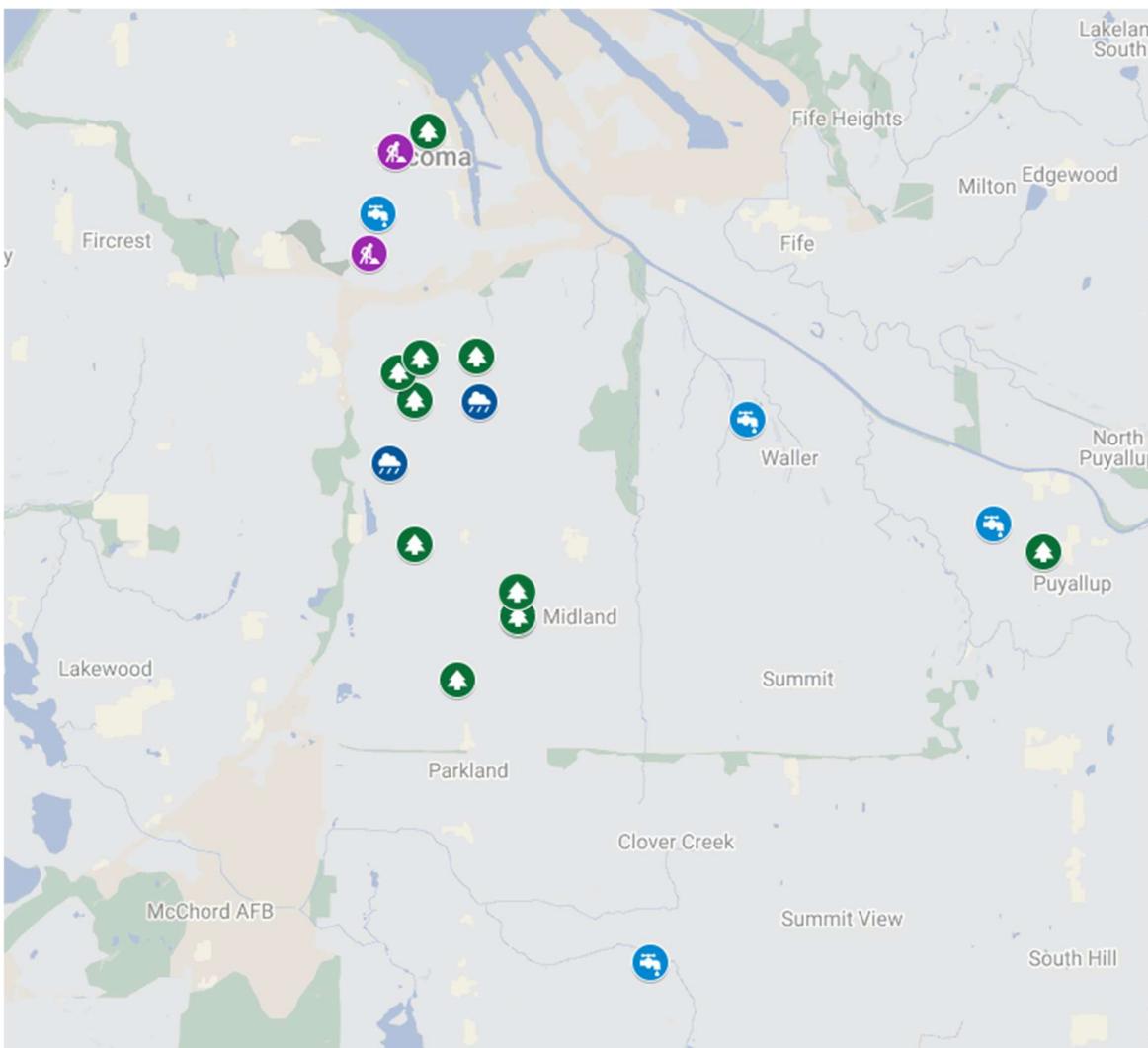
## 2024 Impact Summary

PCD's Green Stormwater Mini Grant program helped residents and community groups throughout Pierce County install eighteen projects in 2024. These projects, including two rain gardens, four rain tanks, two depaved areas, and ten urban wildlife habitats, transformed over 29,000 square feet of poorly draining lawn and concrete. Annually, these projects will keep 969,737 gallons of stormwater and pollutants out of storm drains and Puget Sound.

Mini Grants bring communities together. Forty-four volunteers and numerous friends, families, and neighbors gathered together during two volunteer events and three community work parties to install over 4,100 plants that will soak up stormwater and provide benefits to pollinators, birds, and other urban wildlife.

To prepare for 2025's Mini Grant projects, PCD staff completed 108 on-the-ground site visits to educate potential grant applicants about stormwater projects and assess their sites. These one-on-one interactions led to fifty-three Mini Grant applications in the fall of 2024, and a review committee selected twenty new projects for 2025.

## 2024 Project Map



**Urban Habitat**



**Rain Garden**



**Depave**



**Rain Tank**

## Projects in Pierce County

### DIY Rain Tank Installation Public Workshop



*A workshop participant cuts pipe*



*Dry fitting the plumbing*

PCD coordinated a free public workshop to teach DIY rain tank installation skills. A Mini Grant awardee in Pierce County offered their home and yard as a demonstration site. In this one-day workshop, an expert rain tank installer helped twelve participants gain hands on rain tank experience.

- Rainwater collected from 3,200 sq ft of roof
- 3 rain tanks: (2) 1,000 gal & (1) 400 gal
- Total storage: 2,400 gal



*Completed rain tanks*

## Projects in Pierce County

### Rain Tank at Three Hearts Farm



*Completed rain tank collects from shop roof*

This DIY install from a small Pierce County hobby farm features a large shop roof that funnels 100% of its rainwater into a single large tank. The awardee has been willing to offer private tours to help educate others interested in large tank projects.

- Rain collected from 1,200 sq ft of roof
- 5,000 gal rain tank
- 1 first flush divertor helps to keep the rainwater free of sediment

### Reforesting a Large Urban Yard



*Before: Unproductive lawn*

A Pierce County backyard lacked canopy cover. Adding trees, including cedar, serviceberry, and maple, will create mature canopy cover, provide cooling shade, stormwater benefits, and wildlife habitat.



*After: New trees installed in the Fall*

- 14 trees planted
- 5,700 sq ft backyard
- Pacific Northwest native trees

## Projects in the City of Puyallup

### Front Yard Urban Habitat



*Pollinator perennials will re-emerge in Spring*

This front yard was previously bare lawn. The homeowner replaced their front yard lawn by sheet mulching the grass with free cardboard and arborist mulch through Chip Drop. The yard faces a busy street and serves as a great location for educating others about urban wildlife habitat.

- 980 sq ft of lawn to habitat
- 193 native and pollinator plants installed
- 100% front lawn replacement

### Rain Tanks for a Backyard Garden



*Rain tanks will irrigate nearby fruit trees*

These small, stable rain tanks have a minimal footprint but big stormwater impact, diverting rain to raised beds and a residential backyard full of fruit trees.



*Slim tank next to garage*

- Rainwater collected from 1,411 sq ft of roof
- (2) 450 gal rain tanks
- 900 gal of total rainwater storage

## City of Tacoma Depave Projects

### Triangle Depave in Hilltop



*Before: Pavement traps heat*



*After: Plants and mulch cool the air and absorb and filter water*

This space at the intersection of S. Grant, S. Alaska, and 23<sup>rd</sup> St. had been paved over for at least forty years. The project was proposed by a group of neighbors, and PCD and the City of Tacoma's Depave program worked together with volunteers to transform it into habitat.

- 1,945 sq ft of concrete removed
- 506 plants installed
- 40 volunteers at 3 events

### Small Shared Courtyard Depave



*New plants, including trees, shrubs, and groundcover*

A downtown Tacoma neighbor transformed an enclosed concrete courtyard with a storm drain into a neighborhood space. The neighbors worked together with PCD to depave the space, which now contains room to gather as well as a small memorial garden.

- 180 plants installed
- 440 sq ft of concrete removed
- 2 work parties to depave and mulch

## PCD Projects – Rain Gardens

### Rain Garden Mimics Mima Mounds



*Water flows from a dry creek into the rain garden*

This front yard contains a new rain garden surrounded by earthworks built to mimic Washington's mysterious Mima Mound landscape. Native grasses and wildflowers will cover the mounds with pollinator-friendly texture and color.

- Rain garden infiltrates 553 sq ft of roof
- 892 sq ft of lawn to habitat
- 115 native and pollinator plants installed

### Rain Garden and Thriving Urban Habitat



*Before: Half of the yard already sheet mulched*

A small rain garden sits to one side of a yard with 100% lawn replacement. Hardy ferns and sedge line the rain garden, and native shrubs fill the rest of the yard.



*After: The rain garden is surrounded by habitat*

- Rain garden infiltrates 300 sq ft of roof
- 1,360 sq ft of lawn to habitat
- 386 native and pollinator plants installed

## PCD Projects - Other Ways to Harvest the Rain

### Berm & Basin Pilot Project



*Before: A muddy mess and waterlogged lawn*

The soil in this yard infiltrated too slowly to install a traditional rain garden. Two large bioswales were constructed for water from the roof to infiltrate across a larger surface area.



*After: Berm and basin system disperses stormwater*

- Berm and basin infiltrates 405 sq ft
- 1,020 sq ft of lawn to habitat
- 307 native and pollinator plants installed

### Small Space Rainwater Harvesting



*A small rain tank fits perfectly against the house*

This project showcases rain tanks in small spaces. The smaller, 205 gal tank sits next to a gate in front of the house, while a larger 530 gal slimline tank rests next to the house in the backyard. Both tanks infiltrate excess stormwater into the ground.

- Rainwater collected from 1,387 sq ft of roof
- (2) rain tanks: 530 gal, 205 gal
- 735 gal of total rainwater storage

## PCD Projects - Urban Habitats

### Green Street Neighbors



*Front yard shrubs*



*Backyard forest habitat*

Two neighbors worked together and completed a large, transformational project to create habitat and get rid of lawn. New plants include a large variety of native and edible trees and shrubs.

- 2,490 + 3,156 sq ft of lawn to habitat
- 186 total new plants installed
- 2 neighbors embarking on one project

### Metropolitan Development Council Slope Habitat



*WCC crew in action*

PCD's WCC crew provided professional restoration services to a badly eroded bare slope in downtown Tacoma. The crew staked jute netting onto the slope and planted the site with drought-tolerant erosion control plants and seeds.

- 1,950 sq ft of eroded slope to habitat
- 209 erosion control plants installed
- 6 WCC crew members trained in rappelling and steep slope restoration

## PCD Projects - Urban Habitats (continued)

### Front Yard Habitat Showcases Homeowner DIY



*100% lawn conversion*

This homeowner depaved the front walk and built short retaining walls to completely transform their yard. The Mini Grant project covered the soil amendment, chips, and new plants to finish out the project.

- 2,290 sq ft of lawn to habitat
- 574 native and pollinator plants installed
- 100% lawn replacement between front yard in this project and backyard in previous project

### Backyard Makeover to Vibrant Habitat



*Before: Pitted lawn sloped towards garage*

A small unwalkable backyard got a big facelift with this project. Water no longer flows towards the garage foundation with the new landscaping in place.



*After: New pollinator plants ready to be installed*

- 1,660 sq ft of lawn to habitat
- 485 dog and kid-friendly plants installed
- 3 family members pitched in to DIY prep the yard

## PCD Projects – Urban Habitats in the Right-of-Way

### Adding Canopy and Color to a ROW



*Before: Bare grass*



*After: Trees and perennials*

A hot and dusty right-of-way in Tacoma's South End will provide blooms, color, and shade for years to come. This large project showcases what can be achieved with a small budget.

- 1,250 sq ft of lawn to habitat
- 335 new plants installed
- 4 family and friends helped to plant

### Wide ROW Revamp to Urban Habitat



*Before: Lawn has minimal ecological benefit*

This right-of-way project on a corner lot shows off two different habitats – sunny meadow in the front yard, and PNW forest understory on the side yard.



*After: A thriving array of beneficial plantings*

- 1,970 sq ft of lawn to habitat
- 878 new plants installed
- 10 neighbors and friends helped to plant



## **GSI Mini Grant Program Contact**

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## **2024 GSI Mini Grant Partners**

