



To: Commissioner Ted Terry  
From: Michele Ritan, executive director, East Decatur Greenway  
Date: October 8, 2021  
Re: funding request: remediation of contaminated stormwater runoff into state waters (East Branch Middle Fork Shoal Creek)

### Background and History

East Decatur Greenway (EDG) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Dekalb County. EDG's properties comprise approximately 3.25 acres in a densely populated area of the county. Our mission is to create and sustain community greenspace, protect the watershed that traverses the Greenway, remediate environmental contamination, provide environmental education, and promote safe trails for bicycling and walking in this part of DeKalb County.

EDG's most significant achievement was the completion of a petroleum remediation at a former gas station at 890 Columbia Drive, made possible by grant funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency. (EDG was one of only two recipients of this grant in Georgia in 2015.) EDG received an additional EPA grant through the Dekalb County Revolving Loan Fund in 2017. (Total funding: \$407,000). The EPA's primary interest in this effort was to protect the creek that runs through EDG property.

### Funding Request Details

There is a location on EDG property (1131 North Carter Road) where a ditch has been constructed that channels contaminated stormwater directly into the creek. We propose to remediate this condition with a bioswale/rain garden, which is a current best practice in stormwater management. We hope this project will serve as a model for other similar locations in Dekalb County.

EDG's property on North Carter Road is a popular area for children and adults to walk, play, and relax. Due to EDG's successful efforts to remove invasive plants, the creek is now easily accessible from this property and is a magnet for local children (residents and K-8 school next door) for play and recreation. *Since the pandemic began, EDG has drawn substantially more visitors, since many adults and children work and study at home, and have found EDG an excellent place for rest, exercise, and recreation. Thus, reducing water contaminants to protect*

*the health of Dekalb citizens, particularly children, is even more critical today due to increased traffic in the Greenway.*

EDG requested a consultation from Steve Sanchez, landscape architect and principal of HGOR in Atlanta (which he graciously provided pro bono). Mr. Sanchez recommended construction of a bioswale (also known as a rain garden) in the area now occupied by a large trench that channels water directly into the creek.

The benefits of a bioswale on water quality include:

- Protects local waterways from stormwater pollutants
- Creates habitat for wildlife, including birds and butterflies
- Reduces non-point pollution by filtering stormwater
- Reduces standing water (puddles) that can attract mosquitoes
- Creates colorful gardens with a variety of flowers and plants year round
- Requires little maintenance after establishment

EDG has obtained a proposal from RMG Landscape Solutions, a company based in Dekalb County, with expertise in this type of project. The amount of the estimate (attached) is \$9,745.

Attachments:

Slides from a Georgia Tech research study for EDG that describe the contaminants found in this type of stormwater

RMG Landscape Solutions estimate

Information on bioswales:

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/bioswales\\_can\\_improve\\_water\\_quality\\_resources](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/bioswales_can_improve_water_quality_resources)