

New Rain Garden at Wahikuli Wayside Park

More than seventy volunteers sparked what hopes to be a new pollution-prevention practice on Maui

Over 70 members of the community representing county government, landscaping companies, marine and gardening non-profits and homeowners participated in the two day event which culminated in the creation of a rain garden featuring all native plants at Wahikuli Wayside Park. The rain garden training and demonstration garden installation in West Maui on March 15th and 16th was deemed a success, launching what organizers hope will be a “rain garden revolution” on Maui. The rain garden which intercepts and treats park shower run off is easily viewable from the new walking path below the first rest room north of the Lahaina Post Office in Wahikuli Wayside Park. The public is encouraged to go see the rain garden any day during park hours.



Participants ranged from elementary students to retirees from all over the island. They worked shoulder to shoulder to dig out the garden, haul compost, rock and mulch, measure grade and plant native plants. “Teachable moments” were called out by Horsely Witten Group environmental engineers, who developed the design and provided expertise. Hui o Ko`olaupoko executive director shared experience from rain gardens installed on Oahu, and provided a newly created “Hawaii Residential Rain Garden Manual” to all participants. This guide created for ease of use for homeowners will be available online at www.westmauir2r.com. Rain gardens are an easy, cost effective, ocean friendly practice home owners can install with friends or neighbors over a weekend. The Wahikuli rain garden is intended as a demonstration site to inform and inspire future installations.



Several community partners came together to make the workshop a success. Thank you to County of Maui Parks, Public Works and Planning Departments, Parsons, SCS Consulting, CJ’s Deli and Maui Nui Marine Resource Council for the generous contributions.

The design, technical expertise and balance of materials were provided through a NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program grant. NOAA is a key partner in the West Maui Ridge to Reef Initiative and funded and managed the Wahikuli-Honokowai Watershed Management Plan which identifies rain gardens as

a priority practice for meeting the Initiative goal of addressing land based pollution to reduce stress on coral reefs.

What is a rain garden?

A rain garden is an intentionally created flat bottom depression planted with natives positioned to receive, treat and infiltrate runoff from impervious surfaces. This nature-inspired technique is increasingly being employed by local governments and communities as a low impact means to reduce polluted run-off entering waterways.