

Funding Nature-Based Infrastructure: The Water Resource Restoration Program for Texas



Why Nature-Based Infrastructure?

Flooding occurs in Texas because so much of our stormwater is forced to flow over roads and parking lots, picking up toxic chemicals and gaining speed before rushing into our waterways. Increasingly, experts say that nature-based infrastructure features, like rain gardens and constructed wetlands are essential to our fight to reduce flooding because they are the only water infrastructure tool that efficiently lets stormwater soak into the soil.

Opportunities In Texas

Adoption of nature-based infrastructure has lagged in Texas because of a lack of good funding programs. Texas' Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) has financed only two "green infrastructure" projects, both of which were water reclamation projects that did not incorporate the benefits of natural features. We have the opportunity now to a Water Resource Restoration Program within the CWSRF to finance nature-based projects.

Benefits of Nature-Based Infrastructure

 <p>Water Quality Trap 45-99% of solid pollutants</p>	 <p>Flooding Absorb 50-90% of rainfall</p>
 <p>Urban Heat Reduce summer temps by 10-15 degrees</p>	 <p>Climate Change Sequester carbon in leaves and roots</p>
 <p>Drought Water that soaks in replenishes aquifers</p>	 <p>Mental health Green spaces reduce stress and anxiety</p>

The Iowa Model

The Water Resource Restoration Program is based on Iowa's "sponsored project" program. Through their CWSRF, Iowa has financed 110 nature-based projects in 85 communities and 1 state park. The program allows communities who apply for Clean Water State Revolving Fund loans to **increase the loan amount and choose a lower interest rate if they use the extra funds for a nature-based project**. This allows communities to build two projects for the price of one.

