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DuPage County, SCARCE Celebrate 20 Years of Sustainable Design Challenge



Top Left: SWM Chair Jim Zay listens in on one of 22 presentations brought in for the event. Top Right: Students from Glenbard East share their green building's features with Stormwater Committee Member Andrew Honig. Bottom Right: SWM Chair Jim Zay gives some remarks to all the students during the no-waste luncheon. Bottom Left: The 421 Building Atrium is abuzz with activity as students present their models and judges ask plenty of questions.

SWM and SCARCE reached a momentous milestone recently as they hosted the 20th Sustainable Design Challenge on April 21! Students from all over DuPage County poured into the County Administration Building to present their models of sustainably-designed homes and businesses to judging teams composed of local STEM professionals. In between judging rounds, students also were taken on a tour of green infrastructure practices used through the County campus, seeing real-life examples of the features they put in their models. SWM Committee Chair Jim Zay, who has served as Chair for all 20 years of the Challenge, remarked on the event's history and impressiveness of the students during the zero-waste luncheon at the end of the day. Participating high schools included York Community (Elmhurst), Glenbard East (Lombard), Lake Park (Roselle), Hinsdale Central, and Waubonsie Valley (Aurora). We thank all of the teachers and professionals who have supported the Challenge all these years, and SCARCE for taking on this massive event year after year!

[Read More](#)

City of West Chicago Earns Water Quality Flag

Around Town

There's still plenty of time and opportunities to purchase native plants this season! Natives are a very useful tool for managing stormwater and improving water quality, and you don't need many to see benefits! They are more tolerant to drought conditions and can wick away excess rainfall much better than lawn grass. DuPage Wild Ones has



DuPage SWM Chair Jim Zay, Environmental Chair Saba Haider, and County Board members Melissa Martinez and Greg Schwarze join SCARCE in awarding West Chicago the flags.

SWM and SCARCE awarded the City of West Chicago with both their Water Quality Flag and Earth Flag for their stewardship in creating cleaner water and a healthier environment in their community. Stormwater Committee Chair Jim Zay, Environmental Committee Chair Saba Haider, and SCARCE Founder Kay McKeen, joined by County Board members Melissa Martinez and Greg Schwarze, awarded the city's Environmental Commission with the flags.

[More Info on the Water Quality Flag Program](#)

A Day All About Water at Jay Stream Middle School



Carol Stream Mayor Frank Saverino, SWM Chair Jim Zay, and SCARCE Founder Kay McKeen all welcomed the students to the day's activities, along with staff members from SCARCE, Antunes, and the DuPage Water Commission.

Earlier this month, SWM and SCARCE returned to Jay Stream Middle School in Carol Stream for a full day of water education with the entire 6th grade. SWM Chair Jim Zay, longtime Carol Stream resident, kicked the day off by remarking how important good stormwater management has been to the community. SWM staff members talked about the engineering and construction of the nearby Armstrong Park Reservoirs, and used an interactive floodplain model to demonstrate the benefits of stormwater best management practices. Staff from SCARCE, Antunes, and the DuPage Water Commission held their own sessions on water pollution, stream wildlife, and what students can do at home to protect water quality.

compiled a [thorough list of all the native plant sales](#) happening in the region. Not sure where to start? Our partners at The Conservation Foundation offer free backyard consultations through the [Conservation@Home program](#). They can give you expert advice based on the specific site conditions and help you figure out your yard's possibilities. Get out there and start planting!



The deep roots of native plants like these help to reduce flooding by both absorbing plenty of water and breaking up compacted soil, allowing more rainfall to infiltrate quickly into the water table.

Upcoming Events

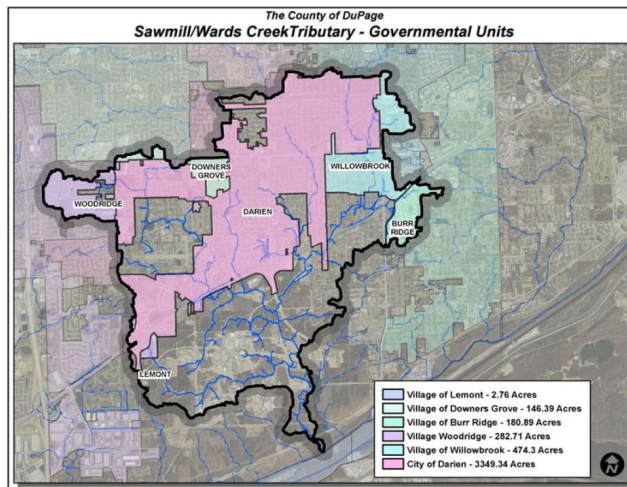
Sawmill Creek Watershed Plan Stakeholder Meeting

Wednesday, April 29, 2026, 5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

SWM will be hosting our first stakeholder meeting for the Sawmill Creek Watershed Plan in-person at the Willowbrook Community Resource Center located at 825 Midway Drive in the Village of Willowbrook. The meeting will be open to the public, and will include a 30-minute formal presentation starting around 6pm. The rest of the time will be allotted for discussion and questions.

The County is looking to obtain any flooding information within the watershed from all stakeholders and community members. We will discuss the overall schedule, as well as the next steps for the Sawmill Creek Watershed Plan.

Ultimately, DuPage County is looking to create a watershed plan for Sawmill Creek which will outline objects and alternatives to address flooding, drainage, and severe water quality concerns throughout the watershed.



SCARCE Growin' Green Garden Market

Saturday, May 2, 2026, 9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

Join SCARCE at their annual Growin' Green Garden Market. Since 2014, the garden market has been the premier eco-friendly garden fair in DuPage County, featuring several environmentally conscious vendors and activities, including SWM staff discussing water quality-friendly practices and initiatives. Free to the public, it will be held outdoors at 800 South Rohlwing Road (IL Route 53) in Addison.

[More Info](#)



Stormwater Management Planning Committee

Deborah A. Conroy, Chair | Jim Zay, Committee Chair

David Brummel | Dawn DeSart | Lucy Chang Evans

Grant Eckhoff | Gary Fasules | Andrew Honig

Paul Hinterlong | Steve Nero | Nunzio Pulice

Edward N. Tiesenga | Sam Tornatore

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