New Jersey Rain Garden Rebate Program: Fostering Adoption of Stormwater Management Practices
By Christopher C. Obropta, Jessica T. R. Brown, and Sara Mellor

ABSTRACT
This poster will depict the development of the Rain Garden Rebate Program and its successful implementation. Five educational programs were delivered to encourage residents to install a rain garden. Seven technical support sessions were conducted where homeowners met with design professionals to develop a custom rain garden for their home. After the gardens were installed, the RCE Water Resources Program inspected the gardens and issued a rebate in the form of a Visa™ gift card to the homeowner. Due to the success of this program, other municipalities in New Jersey are seeking to replicate it in their communities.

BACKGROUND
While educating homeowners about stormwater management and how rain gardens can help reduce the impact of stormwater runoff to local waterways is important, the goal of the program was to promote a behavior change. The intent of the program was to get homeowners to disconnect downspouts and driveways from flowing directly to the storm sewer systems that drain to a nearby waterway by diverting the runoff to a newly constructed rain garden on their property. To encourage homeowners to take action, the partners determined incentives would need to be provided so a rain garden rebate program was created.

WORKSHOPS & IMPLEMENTATION

RESULTS
Five educational sessions were held over two years. Attendance ranged from 13 to 21 people per session, with total attendance at 85. To further recruit participants for the rebate program, our funding partner, the New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) conducted nine one-on-one educational meetings for individuals interested in potentially participating in the Rain Garden Rebate Program, yet were unable to attend the formal session. Of the 94 educated about rain gardens and the rebate program, 51 attended one of the seven technical support sessions. Of the 51 attending the technical support sessions, 44 were eligible for rebates.

The graph above shows the impact of the Rain Garden Rebate Program over the last year and a half. Since August 2013 the number of those impacted through education, one-on-one technical support sessions, or actual installation has increased by over 50%.

CONCLUSION
The amount of the rebate being offered for installing a rain garden was set at $3 per square foot up to $450 (150 square feet). The total amount distributed to date is $4,680, which is for 12 applications that includes 14 rain gardens.

The size of the rain gardens range from 48 square feet to 405 square feet, with a combined total of 2,507 square feet. Together these 12 rain gardens capture, treat, and infiltrate 326,600 gallons of stormwater per year.