



Stormwater runoff causes pollution and erosion in our creeks

A natural landscape acts like a sponge, allowing rainfall to soak into the ground. This percolation also replenishes the groundwater, which keeps creeks flowing after rains end. Paved surfaces prevent percolation and send stormwater to creeks more quickly and in greater quantity, causing increased erosion and flooding.

As water runs across roads, rooftops, and parking lots, it picks up oils, metals, and other pollutants. This polluted runoff flows down streets, through storm drains, into San Francisquito Creek, and ultimately to San Francisco Bay. There is no opportunity for plants and soils to filter out and break down pollutants before they reach the creek.

Allowing rainfall to soak into the ground helps eliminate these problems

This brochure describes techniques you can use to absorb rainwater in your yard and break the chain of impervious surfaces – from roof to driveway to street to storm drain to creek.

These kinds of approaches, if used throughout the watershed, could reduce pollution, erosion, and flooding and help keep local creeks healthy year-round.



Resources and demonstration sites

The San Francisquito Watershed Council recently completed two stormwater demonstration projects. The two sites, a single-family home and a public parking lot, showcase several of the techniques described in this brochure and focus on retrofitting existing landscaping and infrastructure.

More information about these projects, including design details, costs, photographs, and results is available at www.SanFrancisquito.org/runoff.

The website also includes links to online resources with design tools, fact sheets, and research about the impacts of development on creeks and bays.

SAN FRANCISQUITO WATERSHED COUNCIL



The San Francisquito Watershed Council is a nonprofit stewardship organization dedicated to fostering the health and diversity of the San Francisquito watershed.

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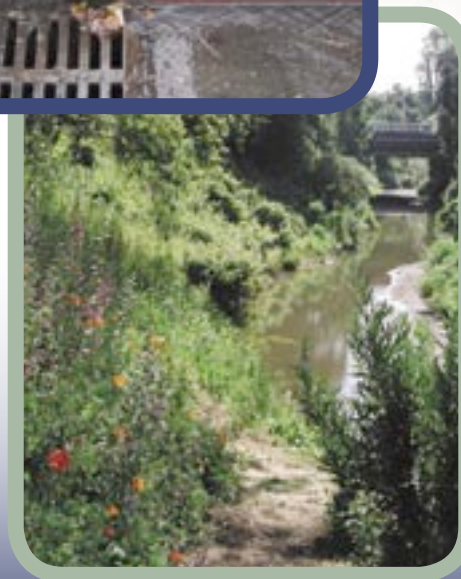
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Soak it up!

Creek-friendly techniques to absorb rainwater in your yard and reduce runoff



What you can do: Techniques to help your yard **soak it up!**

Below are examples of techniques you can use to reduce the impacts of paved surfaces and direct water to landscaped areas where it can soak into the ground.

More information about these techniques is available at www.SanFrancisquito.org/runoff.

Increase permeability of driveways, patios, walkways, and parking areas



◀ **Wheel tracks**, also known as “Hollywood driveways,” can be used in place of full-width asphalt or concrete driveways.

Local example: 725 Homer Avenue, Palo Alto.



◀ **Pervious concrete** contains air pockets that let rain trickle through to the soil below. Use a layer of crushed rock beneath the concrete to increase the amount of runoff that can be stored while it slowly percolates.

Local examples: Menlo Park Parking Plaza #5* (southeast of Santa Cruz Avenue between Crane and Evelyn Streets), and 367 Addison Street, Palo Alto (driveway of the historic Hewlett-Packard garage).



◀ With sufficient spaces between blocks, **unit pavers** allow rainwater to pass through to the ground below. Open spaces can be planted or filled with gravel. A layer of crushed rock under the pavers is recommended for clay soils.

Local example: 735 Homer Avenue*, Palo Alto.

Direct rainfall from rooftops to landscaped areas



◀ If your yard has clay soils, direct rooftop runoff to a **rain garden**, a landscaped area built with highly absorbent soil and set in a shallow depression where runoff collects. A rain garden can also be used to absorb runoff from paved surfaces and reduce ponding in yards with poor drainage.

Local examples: 735 Homer Avenue*, Palo Alto (rain garden absorbs downspout runoff) and Menlo Park Parking Plaza #5* (biofilter absorbs parking lot runoff).



◀ Roof runoff can also be captured in a **rain barrel** and used later for irrigation. Because of West Nile virus concerns, ask your county vector control office about standing water regulations and recommendations before installing a rain barrel or cistern.



◀ If the runoff from your roof is piped directly to the storm drain, consider **disconnecting your downspouts** from the storm drain. Instead, direct water to landscaped areas where it can soak into the soil. Use downspout extensions and splash blocks to keep water away from the building foundation.