Sac State, city land $3 million storm water grant

Sacramento State’s Office of Water Programs (OWP) and the City of Sacramento have been awarded $3 million in Proposition 84 clean-water funding from the State Water Resources Control Board. The grant will be used to design, construct and monitor low-impact development (LID) measures on the Sac State campus that will greatly reduce the impact of storm water runoff on the American River.

Plans include new bioretention planters, rain gardens, compost-amended bioswales, roof-runoff disconnects and other infiltration enhancements across much of the campus.

“We are thrilled to assist the city in executing this grant and implementing their LID standards,” says OWP research engineer Maureen Mathias Kerner. “It’s an excellent opportunity to contribute to sustainability in Sacramento and on our campus. A highlight of the project is its university setting, which will establish a centralized location for LID education and outreach.

“In addition to providing stormwater treatment and pollution prevention, the LID BMPs (best-management practices) will be demonstration examples for students, practitioners and the general public,” she says.

Four bioretention planters to be installed in Parking Lot 7 will infiltrate and treat runoff from one of the campus’s largest impervious tributary areas. And just north of the lot, near the University Union, a “green street” will feature rain gardens and porous-pavement parking. In the center of campus, seven downspouts on Calaveras Hall – one of the oldest buildings at Sac State – will be disconnected from the storm sewer system, and runoff will be redirected to the new rain gardens.

Some of the existing lawn in the Library Green and Campus Grove will be replaced with rain gardens, and existing curbs will be cut to direct additional runoff to new infiltration planters. Six compost-amended bioswales will replace impervious areas in Parking Lot 1 at the front of campus. Two bioretention planters will be installed in Parking Lot 10. Finally, along College Town Drive on the west side of campus, existing grass terraces and conventional curbs and gutters will be retrofitted with four rain gardens to treat runoff from the road and a bike path.
OWP funded the grant proposal’s preparation, and OWP staff will monitor the system before and after its construction to document its performance.

After the clean-water project is completed in about three years, Sacramento State will host an LID conference for local contractors and practitioners “to highlight the project implementation lessons we learned,” says OWP engineering manager Kevin Murphy. “We’re also planning for a mobile app to guide visitors around campus, a project website and informational signage at each of the 25 sites on campus.”

Implementation of the City of Sacramento’s upcoming LID standards and public education are key components of the Sacramento State project.

“Retrofitting existing facilities to improve stormwater quality is a difficult challenge,” says Dalia Fadl, senior engineer with the city’s Department of Utilities. “This project will incorporate typical Sacramento LID designs and put the results on display for the community. We are pleased to partner with Sac State on this project. Our goal is to transform the Sacramento community with LID designs, one project at a time.”

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Office of Public Affairs at (916) 278-6156. – Dixie Reid

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116-S14-DR