

RainScape Rebates Program Contractor Guide

Part of the

Deer Creek Watershed Alliance

a project of  MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

The Deer Creek Watershed Alliance (DCWA) is a project of the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Garden strives to seek and implement plant-based solutions to improve water quality and to reduce stormwater runoff. The most immediate, successful strategy for managing stormwater is to capture it where it falls.

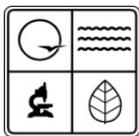
Over the past three years, the work of the DCWA engaged institutional leaders with jurisdictional authority in the watershed, technical experts, and citizen stakeholders who are invested in clean water and storm water management solutions to create a Deer Creek Watershed Management Plan. The management plan provides voluntary, educational guidelines for implementing green infrastructure for improving water quality and reducing storm water run-off. An important component of the management plan is to support constructive, voluntary actions of individual landowners, particularly since at least 80% of the Deer Creek Watershed land is privately owned.

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Missouri
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Introduction

RainScape Rebates is a joint program of Missouri Botanical Garden, Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and participating municipalities. Funds are available to sites within the boundaries of the participating municipalities included in the Deer Creek Watershed of St. Louis, Missouri. The purpose of the program is to improve water quality in Deer Creek and its tributaries by installing “**RainScaping**” - landscaping that helps capture rain where it falls, instead of allowing water to run off-site. RainScaping can also be employed to solve a drainage problem, increase aesthetic appeal, improve property values, and attract birds and butterflies in addition to other benefits.

Basic RainScape Rebates Program Parameters

Eligible Entities	Landowners may only submit for property WITHIN the participating municipalities that are partially or entirely within Deer Creek Watershed - includes homes, schools, churches, government entities and businesses. Rebates are not eligible for employees of Deer Creek Watershed Alliance, Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, or Missouri Botanical Garden.
Rebate Periods	There will be three rounds of rebates. See timeline below.
Site Size Limits	Landscaping projects converting established lawns or hardscapes or restoring woodlands must be at least 100 square feet in size. Green roof or rain barrel work projects (non landscaping features) have no size limits.
Project Time Constraints	Only projects to be installed after Rebate Application Notice to Proceed Date and within Rebate Project timeframes will be considered. Landowner agrees to maintain the design feature for a minimum of five years. See timeline below.
Reimbursement Guidelines	Projects are 75% reimbursable up to maximum \$2,000 per landowner for documented design/installation costs. Maintenance costs are the responsibility of the landowner. Paid receipts must be submitted, and a follow up site visit will be done to verify installation prior to reimbursement. If contractor fees are included in rebate requests they must be from Participating Contractors.
Plan Requirements	A Planting Plan is required with information on plant species, container size, number of plants and planting densities, plant material source, soil amendments to be used, and maintenance plan. Native plants are preferred but not required. Native cultivars will be considered equivalent to native plants. A two to three inch mulch layer is required where appropriate to inhibit weed growth, prevent soil loss and retain moisture.
Eligible improvements	Features must improve RainScaping functions of the land. See Eligible Improvements list for options. <i>Design goals are to retain stormwater on site</i> - the primary evaluation criteria.
Contractor Involvement – Includes all Professionals assisting landowners – designers, landscape architects, and installers	Landowners can act as their own contractor. However seeking advice of professionals trained in landscaping and RainScaping options is highly advised. If a landowner uses a contractor in this program that company must be a <u>Participating RainScape Contractor</u> . Rebates are given to the landowner – participating contractors should provide invoicing and receive payment as they do with regular jobs. Those contractors wishing to help landowners by improving their RainScaping and therefore being eligible for these rebates must follow the guidelines in this document and the RainScape Rebates Application to become a <u>Participating RainScape Contractor</u> . <i>Missouri Botanical Garden lists Participating Contractors but DOES NOT certify the technical expertise of contractors participating in the program.</i>

Eligible Improvements

An Eligible Improvements List (separate document) reflects available technologies and measures that are eligible for rebating through the RainScape Rebates Program. In general, projects must retain stormwater on the site and utilize improvements that will enhance the water quality of Deer Creek.

While landowners can act as their own contractor, a site visit and recommendation plan conducted by a RainScape Rebates Participating Contractor is highly recommended.

Rebate Application Process for Landowners

This Program is designed to allow flexibility in options and timing for expanding RainScaping options in the Deer Creek Watershed. The following steps are the *typical* process for a landowner:

- 1. ATTEND OPTIONAL LANDOWNER WORKSHOP:** Landowners can attend an optional landowner workshop to learn of program parameters and requirements. Workshops are two hours long and are held in the Frontenac City Hall. A link on the Deer Creek Watershed Alliance (www.deercreekalliance.org) website will include information from this optional workshop.

- 2. CONSULT WITH PARTICIPATING CONTRACTORS:** The program suggests getting bids from up to three participating contractor companies – however, competitive bids are not required to participate in the program. To be considered a RainScape Rebates Participating Contractor these companies must comply with certain program requirements such as possession of a business license, proof of insurance, and attendance at a required orientation. Landowners can act as their own contractors but the program strongly suggests using professionals trained to help you accomplish your goals. Consult with the contractors you've chosen to obtain RainScaping options for your land and obtain bids for the services to provide you with your chosen options. *Missouri Botanical Garden lists Participating Contractors but DOES NOT certify the technical expertise of contractors participating in the program.*

- 3. COMPLETE AND SUBMIT REBATE APPLICATION FORM:** Landowners complete the Rebate Application form contained within the RainScape Rebates Program Guidelines. This requires decisions on the following: type of RainScaping features to be installed; plants to be included; tests to conduct; strategies to select; determination of site features; budget; outreach options; and landowners will also have to include a drawn site map with the potential features, and a photo of the exact future locations of chosen RainScaping features. Decisions are best made in consultation with one or more Participating Contractors for the RainScape Rebates program. Participating Contractors are independent businesses and therefore will charge the landowner fees for their involvement. These fees can be included in the total bids submitted with the application. However any design fees will only be reimbursed if the project is accepted. Installation fees should not be incurred until after the project has been accepted. Also, landowners are responsible for paying Participating Contractors in a timely manner. Rebates will come after the project is fully completed and evaluated, well after due dates for completed contractor work.
 - a. Participating Contractors are listed on the website with contact information and category of service provided (Designer and or Installer).

- 4. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS:** Funds are limited; therefore there is no guarantee that everyone that submits a qualifying application will receive the Rebate. Only completed applications with appropriately designed projects will be considered. The RainScape Rebates Team will review and score all applications. It is estimated that approximately 60-80 projects will be funded in each round. Evaluations will determine the projects chosen for funding. Every project must meet the primary goal of retaining stormwater on the site. Projects must also utilize improvements that will enhance the water quality of Deer Creek. Priority will be given to projects that meet one or more of the following criteria:

 - a. Location accessible for public viewing or available for other outreach efforts
 - b. Larger size of area converted/size of drainage area
 - c. One or more neighbors also participating in the Rebate Program
 - d. Site located actually within Deer Creek Watershed boundaries and not just in a related municipality
 - e. High percentage of native plants
 - f. Plant-related solutions
 - g. Cost effective solutions

- 5. RECEIVE A NOTICE TO PROCEED:** Once evaluations are completed and projects chosen for funding landowners will receive a Notice to Proceed. See chart on page 5 for RainScape Rebates Time Frame notice. **NO INSTALLATION WORK SHALL BEGIN UNTIL THE HOMEOWNER HAS RECEIVED A NOTICE TO PROCEED.**

- 6. COMPLETE PROJECT WORK:** Projects must be completed within two growing seasons of Notice to Proceed. This allows time for the variety of project types to be installed and/or implemented.

- 7. SUBMIT PROJECT COMPLETION FORM:** Once work is completed and contractor invoices have been paid or purchases made, the Landowner must submit a signed Project Completion Form, along with copies of paid invoices or receipts. Landowners will receive instructions on completing this form. See RainScape Rebates Time Frame chart for final due dates.

- 8. QUALITY CONTROL/GROUND TRUTHING WORK:** Once the Project Completion Form is received a site visit will be planned to confirm proper installation of features and to collect final data. Concurrently the Project Completion form will be reviewed to ensure all information is included. Landowners should expect to receive a call to schedule the site visit within four weeks of submittal of Project Completion Form.

- 9. REBATE PAYMENT PROCESSED:** Once the QC/Ground Truthing is completed, data has been collected, and the Project Completion Form has been verified, then rebate payments will be issued to landowners. Program estimates are for rebate payments to be mailed approximately ten weeks from receipt of Project Completion Form.

RainScape Rebates Program Time Frame

	Round One	Round Two	Round Three
Applications Available	1.7.13	5.15.13	11.15.13
Contractor and Landowner Workshops	Feb 2013	June 2013	Jan 2014
Rebate Applications Due	3.1.13	7.15.13	2.15.14
Project Notifications Out	3.18.13	8.15.13	3.15.14
Planting Time	Spring/Fall	Fall/Spring	Spring/Fall
Project Receipts and Completion Forms Due	No later than 12.2.13	No later than 6.15.14	No later than 12.2.14
Quality Control/Ground Truthing/Completion Forms Processed	Within 4 weeks of receipt of Project Completion Forms		
Rebate Funds Dispersed to Landowners	Within 10 weeks of receipt of Project Completion Forms		

Contractor Categories

NOTE: Contractor Involvement implies *all Professionals assisting landowners – designers, landscape architects, and installers.* Participating Contractors will be listed with category of service(s) provided, according to these two categories. Contractors may apply for one or more designations.

Landscape Design or Landscape Installation

Licensing and Professional Requirements

Contractors that meet the eligible requirements and have been approved will be presented on the program website as a ***Participating Contractor in the RainScape Rebates Program.***

To participate in projects that can be rebated by the program and to be pre-qualified as a participating contractor and maintain good standing with the Program, every company must submit a Contractor Application that fulfills the licensing and professional requirements as set forth in this guide, including a program orientation.

Basic Requirements:

- a. Formed and operating as a duly registered business in the State of Missouri and provide copies of licenses with the Contractor Application (as applicable).
- b. Insurance Requirements – Provide Certificate of Insurance with Missouri Botanical Garden listed as certificate holders and additional insured (except for Worker's Compensation).
 - Worker's Compensation Insurance, if applicable (\$500,000)
 - General Liability Insurance (\$1,000,000/occurrence; \$2,000,000 aggregate)
 - Commercial Automobile Insurance (\$1,000,000)

- c. Program Orientation - ensure at least one staff member attends a 2.5 hour Program Orientation
- these Orientations are offered one team for each Rebate Round
- d. Respond to ongoing reporting and quality assurance requests by program staff
- e. Staff must be trained with experience on proper installation of appropriate RainScaping features
- f. Agree to all requirements and submit signed Contractor Application

Best Practices

The determination of quality performance within the **RainScape Rebates Program** will aim to be consistent with professional landscaping guidelines and general industry best practices.

Quality Control and Ground Truthing

Every project will be monitored for full compliance with proper installation of RainScaping features, with the following minimum metrics collected and periodically evaluated to assess contractor and project performance: Project approval rates; homeowner feedback on quality; homeowner feedback on relations.

Additionally, all projects are eligible for site visits to gather further data and to pursue ground truthing. Several projects will be selected for case studies on the website to further promote RainScaping.

To ensure no appearances of conflict of interest, rebates are not eligible for employees of Deer Creek Watershed Alliance, Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, or Missouri Botanical Garden. All completed projects done for family members or employees of the installing contractor(s) will be flagged for full on-site Quality Control and Ground Truthing inspections.

Termination/Probation

Participating Contractor performance will be reviewed periodically for continued participation in the RainScape Rebates Program. The Program can terminate the opportunity for contractor participation at any time based on derogatory findings, prolonged lack of activity, or other considerations.

Exceptions

RainScape Rebates Program administrators can approve reasonable exceptions to written policies on a rebate-by-rebate basis.

Contractor Application

For a contractor to be considered a **RainScape Rebates Participating Contractor**, an application and supporting documentation will be required to be submitted to MBG's EarthWays Center for review and approval. The Contractor Application can be downloaded from www.deercreekalliance.org. There are no fees associated with becoming a Participating Contractor. Once a company is approved and maintains all requirements they will remain a Participating Contractor throughout the entire program.

Contact Information

If you have questions regarding the program guidelines or contractor application process, please email RainScaping@Mobot.org. If you need to speak to someone, please call the general Program phone number at 314-577-0202. Additional resources are available online at www.deercreekalliance.org.