

Green Infrastructure Program

Community Partner Profiles

2011 Partners

REGION 4: Jacksonville, Florida

Community Background

Jacksonville is located on the banks of the St. Johns River in northeast Florida and is the largest Florida city in both population and land area. Historically a maritime and industrial city, Jacksonville experienced economic decline for several decades through the end of the 20th century, but has experienced a renewal in the past decade.

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The St. Johns River is impaired for elevated nutrients and bacteria levels in the vicinity of Jacksonville, and many of the creeks that flow through Jacksonville to the St. Johns River are impaired. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has established total daily maximum loads (TMDLs) and with collaboration from local stakeholders they have developed TMDL implementation plans called Basin Management Action Plans.

In addition to being named a Green Infrastructure Community Partner in 2011, Jacksonville was selected to be an Environmental Justice (EJ) Showcase Community in 2010. EJ Showcase Communities use collaborative, community-based approaches to improve public health and the environment. The EPA grants \$100,000 in funding to help address specific concerns in these disproportionately burdened communities. EPA Region 4 is working with the City of Jacksonville and numerous local stakeholders to improve environmental and public health outcomes in an area of Jacksonville that consists of a predominantly low income and minority population, referred to as Health Zone 1.

Drivers for Green Infrastructure

Jacksonville is attempting to achieve the following goals by introducing green infrastructure into their community:

- 1) Reduce runoff that transports nutrients to the St. Johns River. The river is impaired for elevated nutrients, low dissolved oxygen and elevated bacteria levels as well as other impairments;
- 2) Reduce local flooding issues associated with impervious cover;

3) Improve community aesthetics. Jacksonville is undergoing an urban renewal and transformation from an industrial city.

Additionally, Health Zone 1 is located adjacent to the St. Johns River immediately north and east of the city center. The community is concerned about the consumption of fish and shellfish caught in local streams due to historic point source discharges from industrial operations.

Green Strategies and Programs

Jacksonville has already completed a number of activities to support green infrastructure. The city has established a stormwater utility that is beginning to fund low impact development projects and green infrastructure techniques for stormwater management. In 2009, the city issued a sustainable building ordinance to encourage sustainable development practices and provide fast-track permitting for green projects. Jacksonville has also implemented a series of green infrastructure demonstration projects for community revitalization and stormwater management, and has held a series of rain barrel workshops.

Looking forward, Jacksonville recognizes that green infrastructure will be a key component to restoring local water quality and is taking steps to incorporate green infrastructure and low impact development principles into its community. The city is developing rain barrel and cistern projects for the capture and reuse of rainwater. Jacksonville also plans to fund a number of green infrastructure demonstration projects for environmental improvement and community enhancement. Currently, the city, community stakeholders and EPA are in the process of discussing the location of these demonstration projects. The city will use the information gathered from implementing the GI demonstrations to develop a low impact development manual, and to move toward making green infrastructure a part of the vocabulary for all city departments. The low impact development manual is expected to be completed in 2012 and will be used in future development. This manual will complement the green building ordinance passed in 2009.

For more information: [City of Jacksonville: Future of Low Impact Development in Duval County](#)

[City of Jacksonville: Drainage Improvement Projects](#)

[St. John's Riverkeeper](#)