



Sustainable Solutions for All

GSI Project Report: Co Lam Pagoda Temple

Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) are nature-based solutions, like rain gardens and cisterns, that slow stormwater’s entry into sewers and prevent flooding. ECOSS helps homeowners, churches, and community centers install GSI to help reduce polluted runoff. During heavy storms, stormwater can cause sewer overflows into our waterways and also erode hillsides and streambanks.

A Little Bit About the Temple

The Co Lam Temple is located in South Seattle and is a gathering space for Seattle’s Vietnamese Buddhist community. Terraces line the property, with gardens, statues and scriptures scattered throughout. Around 100 members visit the temple regularly, and on big holidays like Tet Vietnamese New Year and the Quan Am Festival, thousands fill the space. The temple offers a summer program for youth, Vietnamese language classes to preserve the culture, volunteer cooking to raise money, funeral ceremonies and a meeting place for the Lion Dance Committee.

With such large garden terraces, rainwater and irrigation are necessary for plants to thrive. The temple decided to install cisterns and a small floral garden to capture and store rainwater and reduce flooding. *This installation, led by ECOSS, was possible because of funding from The Boeing Company and support from The Nature Conservancy. We invited Master An, a leader at the temple to share his experience with us.*

Spotlight on Master An

Master An was excited about the GSI project because the temple values harvesting water from Mother Nature and the garden contributes to the beautiful environment. Since the temple is run by donations, the reduced water bill and savings on property taxes through stormwater facility credits is really important. Finally, the cisterns create a safer environment by storing rainwater that might otherwise flood the market stand and parking lot in the winter.

Spotlight on Tom Le

Tom Le, owner of Sky Landscaping Services, is a Rainwise-certified Vietnamese contractor. As a member of the temple and someone who is knowledgeable about the community’s needs, Tom worked closely with Master An and ECOSS to ensure that the project was a fit for everyone involved. Tom was able to refit the gutters and install five cisterns, allowing the temple to harvest valuable rainwater. ECOSS supported Tom in making Excel spreadsheets for budget proposals and writing up contracts, leading to capacity building for Sky Landscaping Services. Tom believes the cistern project will be a great example to show visitors the benefits of GSI projects.

Project Details:

Scope:

1 x 205 gal , 4 x 265 gal cisterns installed, 1 small floral garden

2,700 sq. ft. of roof captured

Project timeline :

December 2016– July 2017

Contractor:

Tom Le from Sky Landscape Services

“It’s nice to have a garden next to the office because the area used to be empty and now it’s beautiful..”

-Master An



Tom Le (Sky Landscaping Services), Master An (Head Monk at Co Lam Temple), and Kevin Duong (Vietnamese Community Coordinator at ECOSS)



205 gallon cistern and small floral garden in front of Co Lam temple office



What's the Problem?

Stormwater runoff begins with our region's most popular attribute, rain. When it rains, water falls on roofs, sidewalks and other hard surfaces and runs off quickly. On its way to the storm drain, rain collects dirt, oil and many other chemicals.

During big rainstorms, stormwater can back up and flood homes, cause sewer overflows, erode streambanks and pollute vital salmon habitat, shellfish beds and our swimming beaches.

In Seattle, sewer overflows occur hundreds of times per year. As a result, **Stormwater is Puget Sound's #1 source of pollution.**

RainWise Solution

So what can we do? Actually, a lot including slowing the runoff. Remember, only rain down the drain!

RainWise is a program through King County and Seattle Public Utilities that helps homeowners install rain gardens and/or cisterns to collect, absorb and filter rainwater before it reaches stormwater drains.

Property owners can be reimbursed up to 100% of the costs by using RainWise certified contractors.

Financial assistance is also available depending on the size of the roof.

The program serves private properties in eligible areas including residents, businesses and multifamily buildings.

The ECOSS Approach

ECOSS is a leading environmental nonprofit that serves the interests of residents, industry and government by bridging knowledge and cultural gaps with environmental education and technical assistance.

We hire people within the communities we serve—meet people where they are and in their language.

The ECOSS Multicultural Outreach Team represents a dozen languages and engages communities through tabling, door to door advocacy and presentations with in-language materials at events.

RainWise Contractor Pool

ECOSS recruited nine multicultural companies about becoming RainWise certified.

ECOSS supports contractors every step of the way in becoming RainWise certified through assistance in filling out paperwork, digital literacy, translation services and building customer service skills.

Recruitment has helped people access RainWise by:

- Reducing customer wait-time to see a contractor
- Bringing the program to a broader audience by reducing language and cultural barriers
- Growing minority-owned and small business



To learn more about RainWise or schedule a **free consultation**, contact Ruben Chi Bertoni: 206-762-0432, ext. 1003, or email ruben@ecoss.org.

For other **stormwater assistance for businesses**, contact Frances Kuo: 206-762-0432, ext. 1009, or email frances@ecoss.org.

Visit us at ecoss.org.

