# *Thank you for your commitment to green initiatives at the University of Illinois. One of the ongoing requirements listed in the terms of the funding agreement for your project is the submission of semesterly reports with key information about your project. In addition to this form, please provide additional financial documentation and/or progress photos if available.*

# *Please be as accurate as possible in describing the project (including possible setbacks or challenges in meeting the initial goals of the project). Not fully meeting your project's goals will not disqualify you from making future funding requests as long as your reports are as complete and accurate as possible. If you have any questions, please contact the Student Sustainability Committee, at* [*sustainability-committee@illinois.edu*](mailto:sustainability-committee@illinois.edu)*.*

**Project Name:** Red Oak Rain Garden 2.0 (Including Red Oak Rain Garden Sidewalk Phase)

**Date of Report Submission:** 1/10/2019

**Project Purpose:**

The goal for this project is to replant the Red Oak Rain Garden with several key outcomes in mind. First, the garden will continue to be effective in its role of absorbing and filtering stormwater. Second, the plantings will be 100% native to Illinois. This increases their hardiness and attractiveness to pollinators and birds. Plants have been chosen based on their seasonal interest to ensure the garden’s visual appeal over all four seasons. Finally, the garden will be an inspirational and educational resource for students (in and out of the classroom), faculty, visitors, and community members.

During the design phase, issues became apparent that require additional funding so that the project could go forward successfully. This resulted in the sidewalk phase of the project – the additions/modifications that must happen before plant installation.

**Detailed Accounting of Expenditures to Date:**

$19.90 Converting garden artwork into digital format

$182.40 Standard size BioNet S75BN Erosion Control Blanket, 6” U-shaped metal staples (box of 1000), and shipping

**Project Progress to Date:**

**Spring 2017:** Landscape Architecture student Cameron Letterly submitted proposal to SSC, along with Illinois Extension’s Eliana Brown. Cameron graduated.

**Summer 2017:** Cameron completed initial design work for garden

**Fall 2017:** Staff turnover; Cameron left to start MBA program and Katherine Gardiner was brought on as Communications Lead

**Winter 2017-2018:** Staff addition of Landscape Architect student Layne Knoche

**Spring 2018:** Layne designing Extension pamphlets to base future RORG communications products upon, with assistance from Eliana and Katherine

**Summer 2018:** Staff addition of Landscape Architect Master’s Candidate Kayla Myers; Layne and Kayla work to re-design garden.

**Fall 2018:** Grounds will remove rock and install erosion control fabric.

**Winter 2018-2019:** Kayla Myers and Layne Knoche to work with Architectural Review Committee for final design approval and plant suppliers to arrange spring planting**.**

**Spring 2019:** Cement finishers will install the sidewalk. Afterwards, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and the Red Bison student group will install the plantings.

**Student Involvement and Outreach to Date:**

As was detailed in the 2017 application, this project began with students, has continued with students, and is designed for the benefit of future students. The garden was built by NRES students 11 years ago. In 2016, when the revitalization project began, Master’s Candidate Cameron Letterly held two student-attended stakeholder meetings and did initial design work. The current RORG project manager is Master’s Candidate Kayla Myers.

Project team member Katrina Widholm is a Master’s Candidate in Art Education. She is creating watercolors of animals that will benefit from the garden.

We are also working with Civil Engineering PhD student, Reshmina William, on an opportunity to install monitoring equipment.

Red Bison student group removed rock in the 2018 spring semester and will help plant the garden in spring 2019.

We will also form an Advisory Committee for the garden, which will include several student members. This will help us to ensure that the garden is meeting students’ needs and provides an opportunity for student leadership.

**Marketing and Promotion Efforts to Date:**

Our team brings awareness and publicizes our project using our three social media platforms - Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter - all with the handle @RainGardenUIUC. We have student, staff, and faculty followers on all three platforms and interact with them daily. Kate Gardiner is running these platforms as part of her job duties within Extension. We are in the beginning phase of developing a website as well, which can be found at redoakraingarden.org. Extension hired Irenka Carney to develop the website.

**Additional Comments:**

Once the sidewalk phase is completed, the rain garden can be planted. Students will have an opportunity to participate in building the garden side by side with experienced Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists during intergenerational work days. Once the garden is built, it will be a living learning laboratory – providing outdoor educational opportunities. Further, students will benefit from planned wellness programming that will center on the garden. We plan to work with our “neighbors” McKinley Health Center and CRCE Campus Rec to encourage students to incorporate the garden into their fitness/wellness self-care routines. Even if they never attend these events, the garden will directly benefit students by providing a natural place where students can relax and recharge. The benches around the garden, which are paid for by F&S, will allow students to sit and be immersed in nature, by hearing birds singing, seeing attracted pollinators such as butterflies and bees, and smelling the flowering native plants. Students can learn about green infrastructure by reading the educational sign that will be placed near the sidewalk. Students may also feel their anxiety lifted as they engage with nature. Indirectly, students will become more aware of the benefits of green infrastructure by witnessing the changes between now and post-restoration of the garden.

When the garden is complete, a ribbon cutting ceremony will bring the partners together to celebrate and tell the story across campus and in the larger community. In addition to the SSC, information about this project will be reported on the iCAP Portal, on social media, and in classrooms as the project gets incorporated into the curriculum.