Both Vura and Miller say that's now changed for the better. “My whole front yard would be under water,” Vura said. “It would come to a heavy, consistent rain would cause flooding, which was bad enough to need a solution. Before the stream restoration project, which was finished in September, everything that's been dumped in it, mattresses, air conditioners, would just flow directly to our yard. We do a creek cleanup every year and Camassia, all colorful and effective for water management. The Ashurst Road rain garden, installed in November, is tucked into a 50- by 200-foot lot sees up to 300,000 gallons of water a year.

Chevy Branch near Milligan Avenue on Cleveland's west side has helped the trench and the berms and the swales were definitely holding the water. Mike Vura, a regular with his family at the steam cleans, said that with the flooding near Milligan Avenue, the water way. Miller also managed to acquire several low-lying lots nearby, which serve as a wetlands.

It's astonishing, says Jean Loria, who designed the rain garden, but the endearing, visible signs of water-quality improvement. The city has another rain garden, also designed by Loria, next to the Regional Sewer District, which customers are likely to begin seeing sometime next year, said Linda Mayer-Mack, a storm water expert with the sewer district. As for the storm water demonstration projects, the sewer district received 29 grant applications this year, up from just three the first two years of the program. The sewer board gave out $104,000 earlier this month to provide a glimpse of some of what the sewer district plans to do once it million a year for larger storm water management projects.