

## Meijer Unveils Rain Gardens at Benton Harbor Store in Effort to Improve Water Quality in Nearby Ox Creek

**Project represents area's largest retailer-led green infrastructure installation**

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Sept. 28, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- In an effort to improve the water quality in Ox Creek and support pollinators that are critical for local agriculture, Meijer partnered with the Berrien County Drain Commission and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission on the installation of four rain gardens throughout its Benton Harbor Meijer parking lot.

The project is comprised of three small rain gardens in the retailer's main parking lot, and a fourth – nearly a ½ acre in size – on property located next to the store and represents the largest retailer-led green infrastructure installation in the area.

"Meijer is committed to Great Lakes stewardship because our waterways are vital to our everyday lives," said Erik Petrovskis, Director of Environmental Compliance and Sustainability for Meijer. "Improving the water quality in local watersheds, like Ox Creek, is not only the right thing to do from an environmental standpoint but will ultimately benefit everyone as it improves overall quality in the Great Lakes."

Meijer donated a portion of its property to the Berrien County Drain Commission for the project, which is being managed by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission. It was funded by EGLE and developed by Wightman, B&Z Company and Arcadia Gardens.

Installation of the main garden, which had previously been used for overflow parking, began this summer when crews dug up the parking lot. It was then filled with compost soil to help infiltrate stormwater and grow native plants, and finally, planted with about 20 different species of trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers, including purple coneflower, butterfly weed and goldenrod, which will support pollinators.

"Ox Creek does not meet state water quality standards because of sediment and flashy flows, which cause erosion and destroy habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms," said Marcy Hamilton, Senior Planner/Deputy Executive Director of the SWMPC. "The Benton Harbor community is interested in improving Ox Creek and also improving the vitality of the retail area along Pipestone Road/Interstate 94. A rain garden not only brings beauty to an area filled with many parking lots, but also soaks water into the ground, cleanses the water and slows it down, lessening the impact to Ox Creek."

This is the largest rain garden installed on any of the retailer's properties, Petrovskis said. Rain gardens were previously installed at six other stores, and one more will be constructed this year at the Traverse City Meijer.


The project also represents the latest in a concerted effort the retailer is making to protect the Great Lakes and rid them of litter, specifically plastics. Earlier this month, Meijer was the first retailer to unveil [innovative beach and water cleaning drones](#) in the Great Lakes in partnership with the Council of the Great Lakes Region, and on Sept. 17, [sponsored two Adopt-a-Beach cleanup events](#) at Traverse City State Park near downtown Traverse City and at Headland Dunes State Park near Cleveland, Ohio.

**About Meijer:** Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer that operates 262 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive apparel departments, pet departments, garden centers, toys and electronics. For additional information on Meijer, please visit [www.meijer.com](http://www.meijer.com). Follow Meijer on Twitter at [twitter.com/Meijer](https://twitter.com/Meijer) and [twitter.com/MeijerPR](https://twitter.com/MeijerPR) or become a fan at [www.facebook.com/meijer](https://www.facebook.com/meijer).

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