

CASE STUDY

January 2011

PROJECT: Creekside Commons Business Park
LOCATION: 8175 Creeksdie Drive, Portage, Mich.
DEVELOPER: Rick DeKam, Owner, Midwest Realty Group



SERF stands for a Society of Environmentally Responsible Facilities. At SERF, we promote *Practical Environmental Stewardship™*. We are a coalition of property owners, businesses and professionals certifying

and promoting environmentally responsible homes and buildings. Creekside Commons Business Park, located in Portage, Mich., is a textbook example of *Practical Environmental Stewardship™*.

SERF learned about this office campus when the developer requested a copy of our property scoring application for SERF certification. After some additional conversation with developer Rick DeKam, owner of Midwest Realty Group, we scheduled a property tour.

We observed the care that had been taken with the landscaping, the property's unique setbacks, an unusual amount of green space and other non-traditional improvements to the park. What we learned from our visit was so compelling that we wanted to showcase the developer's story and promote these practices for consideration by other developers.

The 32-acre subject property, acquired in 1998, was a densely wooded land tract on West Centre Avenue in the city of Portage, Mich., with approximately 1,200 feet of frontage along Portage Creek. This property was one of the last large commercially zoned tracts remaining on West Centre, but it posed a significant development challenge: Adrian muck at a depth of 12 feet across, equaling approximately two-thirds of the site.

Adrian muck is an unstable soil that needs to be removed and backfilled with sand or gravel before a property can be developed. Further investigation revealed that the property was used as a celery farm 100 years ago and still contained an extensive amount of subsurface drain tiles.

Due to the complexity of the existing soil conditions, the proximity to the recently restored Portage Creek and intense public interest in the reuse of the property, the developer assembled a diverse team to study and devise a plan that would be both economically feasible and environmentally sensitive. In addition to a civil engineer, the developer engaged an eco-minded independent landscape planner, a well-respected wetlands consultant and members of neighboring Western Michigan University's biology and hydrology departments.



The resulting development plan included several remarkable solutions including:

- Roughly 300,000 cubic yards of muck displaced on-site in barrow pits dug strategically along the property boundaries also used to mine sand for suitable foundation backfill
- A large central sand pit developed as a common storm water basin for the entire park
- Seven acres of wetlands were restored as a buffer and designed to protect the existing Portage Creek
- A condominium land division process used to further limit the size, setback and conceptual development plan of all future buildings within the development

The condominium also helped establish and protect the development's shared amenities such as smaller shared parking fields, common underground irrigation piped from the storm pond, reduced-

energy lighting fixtures throughout the park and common roadways to better control future land use and operating care requirements.

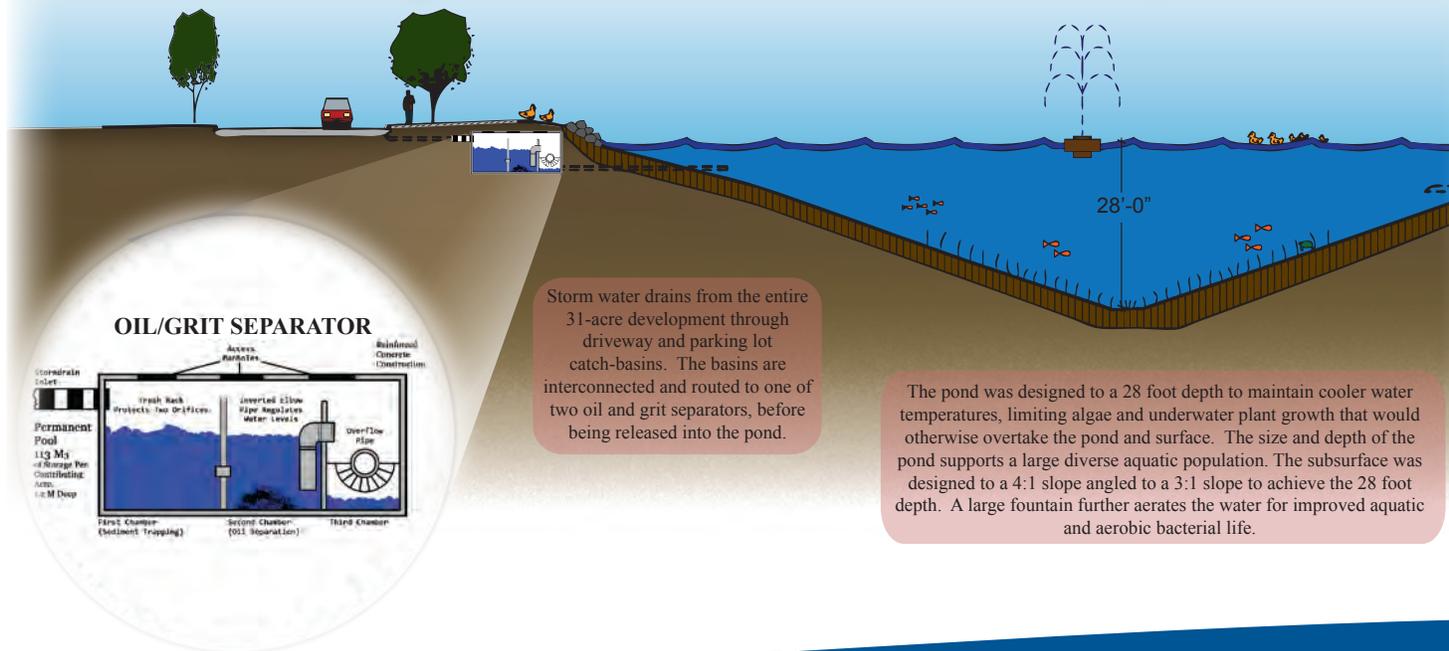
The developer's "Storm Water Reclamation System" diagram (below) illustrates how Creekside Commons' storm water is collected, cleaned, stored, reused for park irrigation and managed to limit erosion and contamination of the adjacent Portage Creek.

While the grounds and common elements within Creekside Commons are the real story of *Practical Environmental Stewardship™*, the existing multiple-tenant buildings were also developed with a similar concern toward environmental sensitivity. They easily scored passing grades for SERF certification.

But the story didn't end there. Rick DeKam and his team at Midwest Realty Group realized that, through the SERF scoring process, there were still a number of environmentally conscious improvements that could be made to his buildings.

Creekside Commons Business Park

Ecological Storm Water Reclamation System



These improvements are being implemented throughout the year at a reasonable cost and will further reduce the development's impact on the surrounding environment.

Creekside Commons Business Park is a magnificent example of an environmentally sensitive corporate office campus:

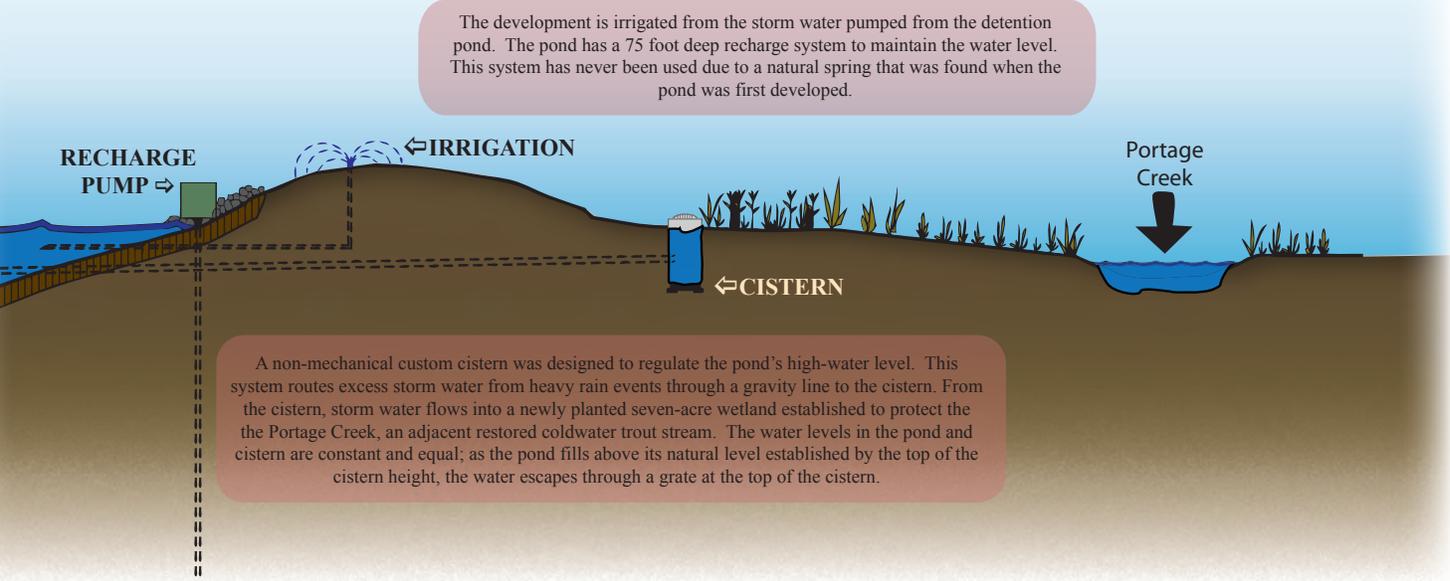
- Situated in nature, it sits adjacent to a restored wetland and cold water stream that supports a diverse range of wildlife.
- The surrounding land features have been restored and enhanced, and are now utilized to better highlight the natural setting of the park.
- Creekside Commons' tenants regularly comment on the natural surrounding as one of the development's greatest selling points.

Creekside Commons exhibits environmental responsibility through efficient and sophisticated



designs and a lowimpact development scheme, displaying thoughtful development standards for future business parks to emulate.

For more information about Creekside Commons Business Park, please contact Rick DeKam, CCIM, at Midwest Realty Group: 269-323-0717 or rick@midwestrealty.com.



The development is irrigated from the storm water pumped from the detention pond. The pond has a 75 foot deep recharge system to maintain the water level. This system has never been used due to a natural spring that was found when the pond was first developed.

A non-mechanical custom cistern was designed to regulate the pond's high-water level. This system routes excess storm water from heavy rain events through a gravity line to the cistern. From the cistern, storm water flows into a newly planted seven-acre wetland established to protect the the Portage Creek, an adjacent restored coldwater trout stream. The water levels in the pond and cistern are constant and equal; as the pond fills above its natural level established by the top of the cistern height, the water escapes through a grate at the top of the cistern.

PRACTICAL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

SERF is a coalition of property owners and professionals certifying and promoting environmentally responsible homes and buildings.

SERF affirms that with private property rights come *responsibilities* — not least of which is the responsibility to construct, rehabilitate and operate our homes and facilities to enhance our communities and minimize environmental impact.

SERF recognizes that protection of our environment is the duty of every steward of the land, and that such stewards who act accordingly should be recognized and encouraged.

SERF holds that honest cost-benefit analysis should be applied to building improvements and systems intended to help the environment. To endure, sustainability must be affordable.

SERF is an inclusive organization which provides live and online forums for members to share methods to cost-effectively meet our goals.

SERF builds future generations of environmentally responsible property owners. Our examples and support teach and endow future generations to live in harmony with our planet and to conserve its precious resources.

SERF: *Catch the wave — get certified!*

Society of Environmentally Responsible Facilities
1350 E. Lake Lansing Road
East Lansing, MI 48823
Tel: 517-337-8367

