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Green Solutions for Freshwater Management:
Understanding the link between Stormwater Management & Plastic Pollution Reduction

Mahone Bay, NS: The *Green Solutions for Freshwater Management* Project addresses two environmental concerns currently impacting the health of freshwater in South Shore communities and municipalities: stormwater runoff and plastic pollution. The project's primary goals are to develop natural infrastructure and educate youth on how to address and mitigate the impacts of harmful substances and plastic waste (specifically microplastics) on freshwater in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia.

The natural infrastructure component of the project includes the design and installation of two medium-scale vegetated bioswales that capture, absorb, and filter stormwater runoff from large impervious surfaces. New research has shown that natural infrastructure can act as sinks for microplastic pollution, capturing particles before they enter a freshwater body. Plastic pollution from parking lots (e.g., tire fragments) and storm drains (e.g., degraded plastics) can be collected in natural infrastructure and diverted before entering a nearby river or lake, in turn preventing physical and chemical impacts to freshwater habitat and species. Once completed, bioswales will act as community demonstration sites featuring interpretive panels to promote education and awareness on the issue of stormwater management and plastic pollution for students, residents, and visitors. The environmental education component includes hosting a workshop series for youth groups to learn about microplastic sampling, bioswale installation, and adaptive management. Workshops will create hands-on learning opportunities to communicate the sources, types, and impacts of plastics and stormwater runoff in freshwater environments. Education and demonstrations will focus on how natural infrastructure solutions like bioswales help to mitigate these impacts and improve water quality.

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