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SUBMITTED PHOTO

An example of a rain garden in Prior Lake being used to collect runoff from a roof.

Families receive awards for water quality improvement

The Citizens Advisory Committee of the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District announced the winners of the first Water Quality Improvement Award on Monday. The award was created to recognize residents living within the district who are finding creative ways to protect water quality.

The four winning families won \$100 for their water management projects. They

include:

■ Pete and Elizabeth Guidarelli: The Guidarellis removed the grass from their front yard and created a rock and rain garden, fed directly by the house's gutters. They now use much less water and no chemicals.

■ John and Rondi Phillips: The Phillips family planted native plants in a few degraded areas, creating habitats for their local beehives.

■ Gene and Nicole Martens: The Martens family installed a rain garden and rain barrels on the bare soil surrounding their new home. They involved their children in the project to encourage them to become good water quality stewards.

■ Linda Wiecher: Wiecher installed five rain gardens to improve drainage, planted native plants and added rain barrels.