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# Taking a Ride



**A**s the calendar year draws to a close, it's a good time to reflect on the past 12 months. There were plenty of ups and downs for storm water and erosion control

professionals in 2015: state and federal legislative developments such as the Waters of the U.S. imbroglio; ongoing arguments over issues like the "rain tax" and other ways to fund infrastructure maintenance and improvement costs; budget fluctuations, both good and bad, on both national and local levels; erratic weather patterns that caused flooding in some areas and extreme drought in others—it's been a roller coaster of a year for the industry.

One decidedly positive event the end of the year always brings is SWS' feature on Top Projects: the best-of-the-best reader-nominated storm water and erosion control projects that were in design or construction over the past 18 months. The submissions this year were very strong, and it was difficult for the judges to choose just 10, but after some tough decisions, our winners were selected.

I noticed a theme across this year's winning projects: Many of them involved various entities working together for a common goal despite disparate interests and motivations. The diverse lineup of Top Projects for 2015 ran the gamut from an after-school group partnering with local government to educate the public about watershed protection, to

community leaders successfully getting residents to agree to a bank stabilization project after decades of trying, to a city and school teaming up to install a detention basin to ease flooding. You can read about all 10 projects beginning on page 16.

Another note of positivity can be found in our State of the Industry survey, which we send out every year to a random selection of readers. Respondents project that 2016 will be a profitable business year: 72.5% of respondents think it will be either "excellent" or "very good." You can find other information from the survey, including whether respondents plan on new storm water construction or upgrades and their most-used products and services, on page 10.

And finally, sometimes things aren't either good or bad, but instead are bitter-sweet. This will be my last editorial letter as managing editor for SWS as I move on to a new opportunity. I have truly enjoyed representing SWS and learning about an industry with such an exciting future. Your readership has meant a lot to me and it has been great to meet or correspond with many of you over the past four years. I leave the magazine in capable hands and hope you will continue to look to SWS as the industry leader for storm water and erosion control information. **SWS**

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See additional photos of this year's Top Projects and check out past winners.  
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