

# Despite rain, library's parking lot flood-free

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The rain sloshing down on Long Island yesterday flooded roads and turned driveways into lakes.

But no water pooled in the new lot at Lindenhurst Memorial Library — even during the worst of the storm.

The parking lot is made of permeable paving stones atop a bed of absorbent gravel that soaks up excess water that would otherwise eventually end up in the Great South Bay. The lot was built last summer with the help of \$200,000 in federal stimulus money.

"It's amazing the way this thing sucks up water," said Peter Ward, the library's director. "Every time it rains like this I always check the parking lot."

It may be the first parking

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lot of its kind on Long Island. Nassau and Suffolk plan to build similar test sites this spring at county facilities.

It's one of the newer approaches to dealing with storm water runoff, which environmental officials say is one of the biggest pollution problems facing U.S. waters today.

Storm water is a particular problem along densely populated stretches of the South Shore, where pavement has replaced open space and storm sewers funnel rainwater to creeks and

estuaries. Excess water that would normally be soaked up by Long Island's sandy soils washes off roads and construction sites, picking up contaminants along the way that can lead to beach closures and prevent safe shellfish harvesting.

At the Lindenhurst library lot, the permeable paving stones themselves absorb some water; more is drained through the gravel that surrounds them. Precipitation trickles down through three progressively finer grades of gravel that help filter out pollutants before the rainwater reaches the soil, according to Bob Retnauer of RDA Landscape Architects in St. James, which designed the lot.

"We already have a great natural resource that has been severely compromised by storm water," Ward said. "This parking lot shows an alternative that is, in some part, an answer to a long-standing problem."

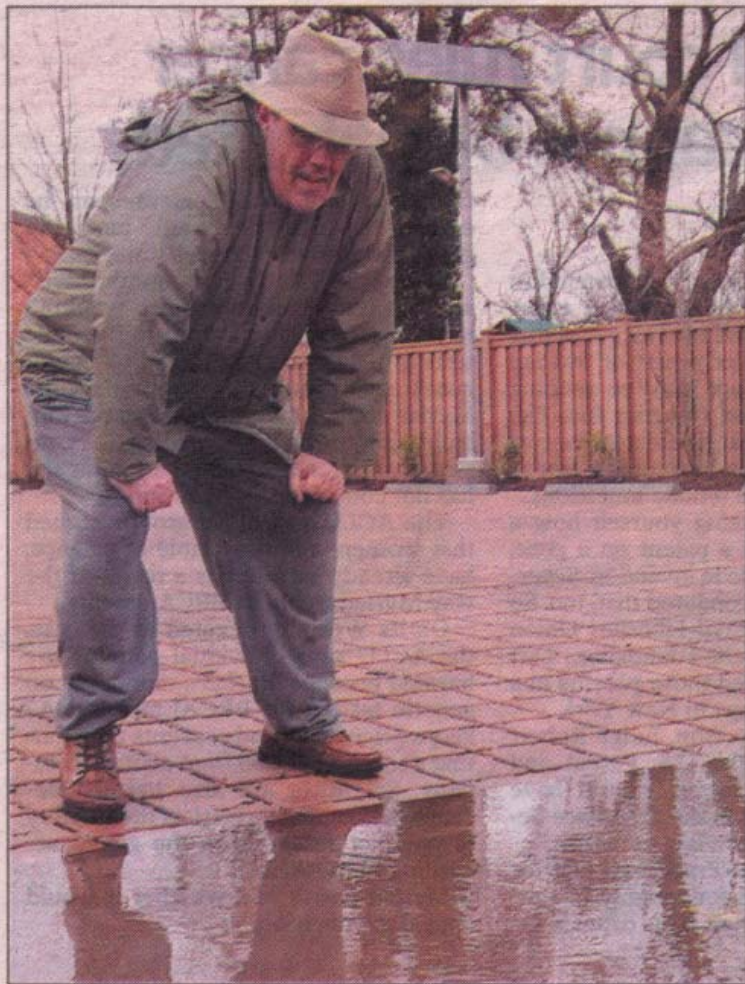


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Peter Ward, director of Lindenhurst library, calls new lot "amazing."