

# Klausing Group uses low impact to make a big impact



Landscape and grounds company Klausing Group has certainly grown from its humble beginnings as a two-man operation, but its managers have held on to one thing from those days: a commitment to integrating environmentally-responsible practices into their everyday work.

Landscape maintenance can often be water-intensive, utilizing large amounts of otherwise potable water. Klausing Group understands this and strives to minimize the impact of its work on water use and quality – a commitment that is apparent in recent improvements to its building and grounds on Cahill Drive.

In 2010, the company wanted to add an additional employee parking lot in an unpaved area. Owner Roscoe Klausing knew that adding an impervious surface, such as traditional concrete or asphalt, could contribute to stormwater quality and quantity issues downstream. To avoid this, he looked for options which would keep as much stormwater as possible on his property, limit potable water consumption and replenish surface and groundwater in his immediate area. Klausing began design work with local landscape architecture firm CDP Engineers with a goal to apply for one of the City of Lexington's Stormwater Incentive grants. These grants provide financial assistance for projects in the community that improve water quality, address stormwater runoff and educate the public about these issues.



***"Even businesses in a traditional office space can participate just as easily as landowners in doing small things that can make a big difference."  
-Roscoe Klausing***

For Klausing, the grant offered an opportunity to look at more than just improving the design of the parking lot. "We decided to try to modify our project to focus on what we could do better, and how we could use the grant to expand beyond the employee lot to look at water quality and water quantity management on the entire property."

In partnership with CDP, Klausing was able to develop a proposal that would help reduce stormwater runoff, lessen the amount of water flowing through Lexington's storm sewer system and improve local water quality. The submission proposed installing permeable paving on the employee lot which would allow rain to seep into the pavement's surface. Klausing and CDP also requested funding for a detention basin, a swale, and a water quality device that would filter debris, sediment and oil in stormwater runoff from the building and grounds.

In addition, they proposed converting the existing front parking lot to a permeable system and adding a green roof over the front entrance.

The proposal from Klausing and CDP was awarded a grant for over \$321,000 and the projects are now nearly complete. In recent months, Klausing has seen a significant decrease in the amount of water leaving his site. Even with the heavy rains this year, the features have had no problem handling the runoff. Seeing the results of these measures first-hand has also helped Klausing educate his clients about the benefits of this low-impact approach. He is currently looking at the possibility of adding a vertical green (vegetated) wall to the front of the building sometime in the future.

Klausing Group's work to improve the environment doesn't stop at their property line. The company also works with clients to improve their irrigation systems' efficiency which reduces water consumption. In addition, their "Naturally Better" lawn care program has eliminated about 70 tons of synthetic fertilizers and herbicides from the lawns they have maintained in the last calendar year alone.

Klausing and his staff have also taken steps to reduce landfill waste generated by the business. Working with Lexington's Division of Waste Management and Bluegrass Greensource, they revitalized their recycling program by placing bins to capture recyclables at each desk and in common areas of the office. In addition, the organization composts all of its yard waste and the leaf litter it collects during the fall is donated to area nurseries and to local nonprofit Seedleaf.

Klausing points out that any business can find ways to go green. "Even businesses in a traditional office space can participate just as easily as landowners in doing small things that make a big difference."

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