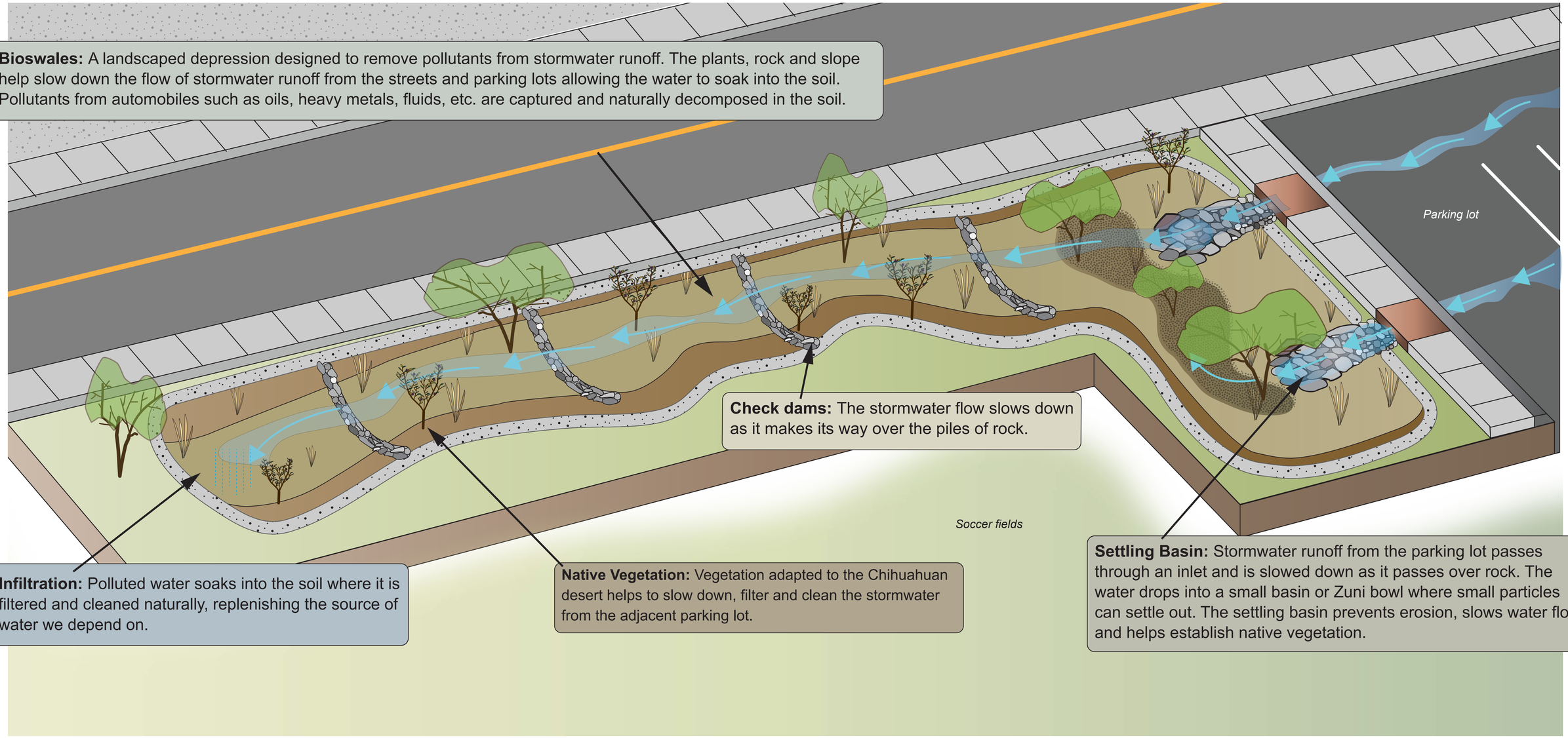
# Making the Most of Desert Rains

With less than 10 inches of rain a year falling in one monsoon season, Las Cruces struggles with either too little water or too much; especially in urban areas. The miles of paved surfaces to support our dependence on cars prevents water from soaking into the ground. When rainfall runs off these surfaces it floods streets, increases erosion, and carries away pollutants like oil, herbicides and pet waste to waterways. Green infrastructure is a cost-effective technique of using nature's services to address wet and dry season impacts. Green infrastructure captures, cleans and allows stormwater to soak into the ground. Vegetation thrives with this deep watering and provides the added benefits of beautiful landscape features, shade, wildlife habitat and cool streets and buildings year-round.




**Bioswales:** A landscaped depression designed to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff. The plants, rock and slope help slow down the flow of stormwater runoff from the streets and parking lots allowing the water to soak into the soil. Pollutants from automobiles such as oils, heavy metals, fluids, etc. are captured and naturally decomposed in the soil.

**Check dams:** The stormwater flow slows down as it makes its way over the piles of rock.

**Infiltration:** Polluted water soaks into the soil where it is filtered and cleaned naturally, replenishing the source of water we depend on.

**Native Vegetation:** Vegetation adapted to the Chihuahuan desert helps to slow down, filter and clean the stormwater from the adjacent parking lot.

**Settling Basin:** Stormwater runoff from the parking lot passes through an inlet and is slowed down as it passes over rock. The water drops into a small basin or Zuni bowl where small particles can settle out. The settling basin prevents erosion, slows water flow, and helps establish native vegetation.