

Getting Ready for the Rain

-Submitted by: Kay Schultz
Community Restoration Coordinator

Parents, teachers and kids helped install and plant a Rain Garden at Deer Crossing Elementary in May that will slow down rainwater, filter pollutants, recharge ground water, and provide habitat for birds and butterflies as well as an aesthetically pleasing outdoor classroom for primary school children.

The garden is a community restoration project in the Linganore watershed where Monocacy & Catoctin Watershed Alliance partners are seeking to reduce sediment and phosphorus impacting Lake Linganore and beyond. Other restoration projects have been planted in East West and Village Gate Parks in Mt. Airy and in Libertytown District Park in Libertytown. DPW's Watershed Management Section administers a grant that supports the work of the Restoration Coordinator and supplies the materials and services needed to complete such projects. Funds are provided by EPA through the Maryland Department of the Environment under its Section 319(h) program to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Bryan Seipp of the Potomac Conservancy designed and directed construction of the garden. Local contractors and suppliers completed the excavation and supplied the special soil-sand mix for the garden. The Audubon Society of Central Maryland and Stadler and Clear Ridge Nurseries supplied native trees and shrubs. On May 16th eight volunteers helped shape the garden using rakes and shovels in order to direct the flow of water properly. On Sunday, May 20th, a larger group of 15 adults and 10 children helped arrange river rock into two channels to the garden from school downspouts and plant, mulch and water the garden.

The garden was constructed by excavating a 20' x 30' hole four feet deep. The area was then filled with 1 foot of gravel covered with heavy filter cloth, followed by 80 tons of a sand-soil mix. A one foot berm was built on the downhill side of the garden to create a shallow pool for the garden; the garden is designed to hold ponded water no longer than 24 hours.

Funding for the project was provided under a grant under the federal Clean Water Act that the County Division of Public Works secured from the Maryland Department of the Environment to support demonstration projects that will improve water quality and habitat in the Linganore Watershed.

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