

## **News from the FCPS Schoolyard habitat Program**

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The Frederick County Public School's (FCPS) Schoolyard Habitat Program (SYH) is funded by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) Bay Watershed Education Training (B-WET) Grant. The goal of the Program is to create meaningful Bay experiences in Frederick County through schoolyard habitat projects.

**The Schoolyard Habitat Celebration** will be held December 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5-7pm at the FCPS Hayward Rd. building (7630 Hayward Rd, Frederick, MD, 21702). Schools will have a display and teachers will be present to discuss their projects. Organizations related to water quality and schoolyard habitat projects are invited to attend and set up an information table.

### **Maryland Green School Award**

Walkersville High and Walkersville Elementary Schools received this award in May 2008 for excellence in environmental education. Thurmont Middle School received its second recertification. See [www.maeoe.org](http://www.maeoe.org) for more information about the award program.

Four new schools that joined the SYH program this year. They include: Middletown High, Monocacy Middle, Windsor Knolls Middle, and Oakdale Elementary Schools. Welcome!

### **Fall 2008 SYH planting events:**

- October 13th – Tree Planting at Valley Elementary
- October 27th – Tree Planting at Middletown High
- TBD – Tree Planting at Monocacy Middle

The schools were very busy with their projects during the Spring 2008 semester. The projects included:

**Urbana Middle School** completed several projects as well as continuing to maintain their fall tree planting. On May 31<sup>st</sup> they planted 70 native plants in a storm water management pond. They also removed nonnative plants and planted 30 native trees along a forest edge. Ecology club students planted approximately 50 bare root seedlings in their grow-out station. The Growing Native program, sponsored by the Potomac Conservancy, donated the seedlings. The trees will be used to plant in other areas on campus and replace any trees in the planting area that may be lost due to mortality. Over 1000 native plants were added to their existing wildflower meadow. The plants were grown at the

school from seeds then transplanted to the meadow. Teachers wrote and received a project grant for \$500 from Maryland Association of Science Teachers (MAST).

**Tuscarora Elementary** had a whole school Schoolyard Habitat event on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Students rotated through several educational stations including “Adopt a Tree” and “Who Polluted the Potomac?” Everyone participated in planting 2 large trees near the benches in the outdoor classroom where 7 smaller trees had been planted the previous fall. They received \$180 from a Washington Post Grant for the trees, and T-shirts for students in the ecology club to wear while they assisted with the event. The T-shirts were designed and made by the FCPS Career technology Center Students. AP Environmental Science students and their teacher from Tuscarora High also assisted with the day. The school received a Maryland Instructors Computer Coordinators Association (MICCA) technology grant for \$681 to purchase a digital camera and other supplies to use photostory and podcasting to educate their school community about their SYH projects.

**Valley Elementary School** completed their wetland enhancement project and continued working on plans for the adjacent outdoor education area. The existing wet area was excavated by John Harrison, local landscaper, according to a design made by the local Soil Conservation District technician. Two berms, several observation areas, and frog holes were added to the wetland and the area was deepened and widened. Grasses and weeds were removed by volunteer Boy and Girl Scout groups the week prior to the planting. Approximately 1000 native herbaceous plants and 10 shrubs were planted in the area on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Each student planted 1-2 plants then cleaned up and had a snack provided by the PTA. Teachers completed wetland activities in class during the week of the planting. A kit of wetland activities was created by the SYH team and the Elementary Science Teacher Specialist. Parent volunteers helped in the cleanup station, snack station and planting area. Future plans include a paved platform with a shed for storing tools and educational materials and tables to be used for educational activities. Funding for the project included the following sources: \$4907 from a Chesapeake Bay Trust grant, \$2000 from the PTA, \$500 from Stadler Nursery, 10 shrubs from Chapel Valley Landscaping, \$50 and a 10% discount on tools from Lowes, \$25 from Wal-Mart and donation of labor and supplies from the landscaper who excavated the area at a value of \$2050. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade class donated \$150 to purchase a “Legacy Tree” through the Potomac Conservancy and had it planted next to the wetland.

The **Myersville Elementary School** SYH team continued to maintain the wildflower meadow planted last May with parent volunteers. They installed 6 Bluebird boxes with the help of an Eagle Scout. Two high school students and the Eagle Scout did presentations about Bluebirds to the elementary school students. The SYH team developed activities and identification cards that everyone in the school could use with the meadow and bluebird boxes.

The **Wolfsville Elementary School** SYH team planted 105 trees and shrubs. The entire school participated in the planting. The area planted will be a transition area between the existing wooded riparian area and the planned wildflower meadow. The trees and

planting materials were provided by Potomac Conservancy. Parent volunteers assisted with the planting and a parent pre-augured the holes for the trees.

**Walkersville High School** continued to maintain their tree planting and wildflower meadow areas. The meadow was weeded, mulched, and more plants were added to fill in the bare spots. 100 bare root seedlings were planted in their grow-out station for future plantings. The PTA donated \$200 for mulch for the meadow.