

News from the FCPS Schoolyard Habitat Program Funded by a NOAA BWET Grant

Frederick Count Public Schools (FCPS) Schoolyard Habitat Program received a \$300,000 National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's Bay Watershed Education and Training Program (NOAA BWET) grant to continue the Schoolyard Habitat Program for the next 3 years (pending final funding approval). This program works to educate students about the important connections between the water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and their local watersheds and land use on their school campuses.

Congratulations to the schools that received the Maryland's statewide Community **PLANT** Award (**P**eople **L**oving **A**nd **N**urturing **T**rees.)

Bronze Award Certificate: Middletown HS

Silver Award Plaque: Catoctin HS, Tuscarora ES, Urbana MS, Valley ES, Walkersville HS, Wolfsville ES

For a list of the 2008 Awardees by region visit:

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/programs/plantinfo.html>

Last fall FCPS Schools were very busy planning and completing Schoolyard Habitat projects to help improve water quality and educate students.

Middletown High School planted 88 trees and shrubs on 10/28, a brutally cold and windy day. Four teachers, their 250 students, 2 volunteers, 1 Potomac Conservancy project coordinator, and custodians assisted with the tree planting. The Environmental Club planted 8 more trees within the next few weeks. Trees from a grow-out station and extra trees that could not be planted in the area were placed in a new grow-out station to be planted in the spring. A tree planting of 145 trees is planned for the spring. Funding for the trees, mulch and soil amendment was provided through the Potomac Conservancy.

Monocacy Middle School planted 42 trees from their tree grow-out station. They had planned to plant more, but a vole infestation wiped out a large number of their trees. Two teachers with their 90 students planted the trees during their classes 10/21-30/08. The grow-out station had been built and started with approximately 100 bare root seedlings. The planting pots, seedlings, soil and supplies for the grow-out station were donated or purchased through a grant. Last fall they started their plan to renovate a courtyard area by removing the weeds, planting native plants, and putting in picnic tables for students to use as a study area. They received a \$1,313 grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust for plants and planting supplies and a \$400 grant from the Community Foundation

for tools and supplies to build picnic tables. The students have started to build the picnic tables.

Windsor Knolls Middle School is planning a retention pond/ wetland renovation project for the spring. They are working with the Fredrick County Division of Public Works, on the project. Bluebird boxes will be put up on campus and monitored this spring. The Bluebirds have already been spotted flying around looking for homes. Teachers and students are also working on their Maryland Green School Award application to be submitted on 4/15/09.

Oakdale Elementary School is planning a native plant garden and tree planting for 4/22/09. They have received a \$500 grant from Stadler Nursery and have submitted a \$1,250 grant to the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Last fall, they conducted a fundraiser for 6 larger "Legacy" trees and have collected \$490. The rest of the money for the trees will be matched by Potomac Conservancy.

Urbana Middle School continues to develop their trail in the wooded riparian area along their stream and is continuing to maintain their tree plantings, tree grow-out station, and wildflower meadow. The students are becoming experts in invasive plant removal which occurs on a regular schedule. Cameras on their trail have captured deer in the area. They collected seeds from the perennials in their meadow to grow and add to the area in the spring. They plan to do another tree planting in the spring. Teachers and students are working on their Maryland Green School Award application to be submitted on 4/15/09.

Tuscarora Elementary School had a fundraiser to raise \$1,365 to plant 12 larger sized "Legacy" trees around their playground in December. Their fundraiser was matched with funding from the Potomac Conservancy. Due to the larger size of the trees, they were planted by a local nursery, Stadler Nursery. The trees will eventually provide much needed shade on their desert like playground in addition to improving the water quality in the watershed. A \$500 grant was also awarded by Stadler Nursery for a native plant garden planned for the spring in the outdoor school area.

Valley Elementary School planted 42 trees in and around their wetland project which was planted in spring 2008. Each class planted 2 trees and was responsible for watering and caring for their trees. The whole school of 465 students, 24 teachers, and 16 volunteers were involved in the event. A Boy Scout troop dug the holes for the trees the Sunday before the planting. Some of the holes filled with water during the planting day even though they had been dry overnight. The elementary school students enjoyed getting muddy, dirty, and wet. Funding for their trees, mulch, and soil amendment was provided by the Potomac Conservancy. Teachers are also working on their Maryland Green School Award application to be submitted on 4/15/09. A dedication for their Schoolyard Habitat Projects is planned for April 22nd. A larger area seedling planting and a 12 tree

arboretum perpendicular to the wetland funded through the Potomac Conservancy is also planned for the spring.

Walkersville High School continued to maintain their tree planting and wildflower meadow areas. They received a \$500 grant from Stadler's Nursery and a \$500 grant from the Maryland Audubon Society to purchase plants to add to their meadow and tree planting area. They started the ground prep for a no mow wildflower meadow area which will be started from seeds collected from their wildflower meadow. They are also starting perennials from seeds to transfer to their schoolyard habitat projects in the spring.

Many of the Schoolyard Habitat projects are being completed with grant funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust and in collaboration with Heather Montgomery at the Potomac Conservancy, Jessica Hunicke from the Frederick County Division of Public Works, and Terry Welsh from the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Spring Projects

4/3 - 7:30-2:15 – Middletown High School Tree Planting – Rain date 4/7
4/16 – 11:30-2:00 – Catocin High School/TES/TPS Tree Planting
4/22 – 8:00- 3:00 – Oakdale Elementary School - Butterfly/Native Plant Garden Planting – Rain date 4/27
4/22 – Valley Elementary School Dedication Ceremony
5/26,27,28 – Urbana High School – Retention Pond Planting and Renovation
5/29, 30 – Windsor Knolls Middle School – Retention Pond/ Wetland Enhancement Planting

Valley Elementary School – Seedling and arboretum planting
Oakdale Elementary School – Legacy Tree planting
Middletown High School – Legacy Tree planting
Monocacy Middle School – Legacy Tree planting
Monocacy Elementary School – Legacy Tree Planting
UMS – Tree planting

For more information on the FCPS Schoolyard Habitat program or any of the projects, contact April Wells at april.wells@fcps.org