Paw Paw Schools

School Grows Trees for the Community and Healthier Rivers

Students from grades 4th, 5th, and 11th participated in Growing Native this spring. All three grade levels spent four classroom education hours learning about their local watershed within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, stormwater runoff pollution and erosion, and the role trees play on cleaner and colder streams. Education sessions were led by Potomac Valley Audubon Society.

Students in 4th and 5th grade were responsible for potting tree seedlings while the older students in 11th grade planned and assisted in assembling the caged grow-out station at the school to store the

tree seedlings for Morgan County.

On planting day, the younger students reviewed the parts of a tree while looking at their two- to three-year-old tree seedling (whip). The students identified the roots, trunk, branches, and leaves prior to identifying the most important location on a tree for planting—the root collar. The root collar is located where the trunk transitions to the root system. This location when planted too deep in the ground will begin to rot leading to the death of the tree. When the root collar is planted between one to two inches above the soil line the tree has the largest chance for survival.

The students checked and double checked the depth of their tree during the potting process. Students planted the trees in five-gallon pots so they can easily be placed in the caged grow-out station at the school. These trees will grow in the station for roughly a year before being made available to the community for planting.

The grow-out station is twenty feet long by ten feet wide and positioned off the school building which

composes the final side of the station. This structure provides a safe growing environment for the young trees and an automated watering system ensures ample water during the hot summer months.

When planted in the community these trees will capture stormwater runoff pollution, increase the tree canopy, add ascetics to the surrounding area, and provide habitat for wildlife.

Growing Native is a program of the Potomac Watershed Partnership funded by the USDA Forest Service.