

Mountain Ridge Middle School



Students Reduce Runoff and Plant an Outdoor Classroom

Mountain Ridge Middle School participated in Cacapon Institute's Potomac Headwaters Leaders of Watersheds (PHLOW) Grow-a-Garden project under the leadership of teacher Rebecca Ellis. Grow-a-Garden teaches students about watersheds and non-point source water pollution, especially stormwater runoff pollution, harmful materials carried to streams by rain water. Students learn the benefits a rain garden has on their local watershed and the broader Chesapeake Bay.



Mountain Ridge Middle School is a new school in Berkeley County, WV. The school faces erosion issues and ponding water throughout the campus. It is located uphill from local

Mill Creek which joins Opequon Creek, then drains to the Potomac River. Students knew the rain garden installed at school would create a positive impact on the local river system and beyond.

One-hundred-twenty-five 8th grade students braved the rain on planting day, April 22nd—Earth Day! Students worked in teams to plant their native plant in the garden. The rain garden is located in an area that water would pond and slowly travel downhill to a storm drain. The rain garden acts a barrier causing the water to soak into the ground rather than traveling to the storm drain. This keeps sediments, excess water, and any pollutants from entering the drain and out of Mill Creek.

An 8th grade history teacher, Sherry Tucker, has plans for the rain garden. She plans to work with students to conduct a legacy planting in a section of the rain garden. Students will research and plant seeds of native plants throughout history. This is the first example of how the rain garden will be used as an education resource into the future.



One-hundred-forty volunteer hours were contributed to the making the Grow-a-Garden project a success.

In the weeks following planting day, staff, parents, students, and guests all commented on the success of the project for increasing beauty, decreasing flooding, and the overall function of the rain garden on the area.



Before