

Widmyer Elementary School



2nd Graders Brighten School Entrance with Two Rain Gardens

Widmyer Elementary School, Berkeley Springs, WV, participated in Cacapon Institute's Potomac Headwaters Leaders of Watersheds (PHLOW) Grow-a-Garden project. The project was led by Principal Rhett Beckman and teachers Aimee Golden, Ashley Schnebly, Rochelle Price, Lesan Lucas and Linda Roberts.



The five 2nd grade classes took part in four educational classes leading up to the planting of the rain gardens on their school campus. The educational programs focused on how water travels from our land, to the streams, and beyond. Students participated in activities such as building their own landscape out of playdough, reading

stories about pollution, and discussing where the water travels when it rains. Before planting day, students learning about native plants and neat patterns created in nature.

After delays from weather, students participated in the planting on May 17th. Despite some light rain showers, the one-hundred-twenty 2nd graders planted eighty-six native plants in the two rain gardens at the entrance of the school. Enthusiastic students got their hands dirty and played a role in reducing stormwater runoff. The students were especially excited that their rain garden was located at the main entrance of their school for all to enjoy!

The rain garden will not only be a talking point for all that visit the school, it was essential in reducing pollution to the stream that runs through the campus. During the harsh winter snow storms, snow removal efforts rendered the front without any plants to keep sediment (soil) from traveling off the land to the stream causing problems both locally and downstream. The decision to install two mirrored rain gardens



at the entrance was to stop the sediment from traveling to the stream, increase the overall beauty of the main entrance, serve as an outdoor classroom for the school, and provide habitat and food for native insects.

