



Pleasant Hill Middle School gets Rain Garden

When school begins in late summer, students attending the Pleasant Hill Middle School will discover a new feature on their campus to address water quality—a rain garden. Several

Middle School and Intermediate School students and teachers, volunteers from the South Grand River Watershed Alliance (SGRWA), Cass County Sustainability Committee (CCSC) and Lincoln University met at the Middle School early on Thursday, May 27 to arrange plants, mulch and plant the rain garden.

Thanks to volunteers Miranda Yearington, Jeff Yearington, Sharon Sommer, Donna Clark Fuller, Nicole Nulsen, Lauren Hawkins, Danielle Bowen, Crystal Parson, Alexander T. Holt, Anthony Holt, Cindy McManis, Allysha Holt, Madalynn Rogers Stephen Van Rhein, Bob Sherrick, and Doris Sherrick who gave their time and efforts to install this rain garden. Thanks also to Assistant Superintendent John Griffith for his help in facilitating the rain garden project and the Public Works Department of Pleasant Hill for preparing the site.

The Pleasant Hill Middle School partnered with the SGRWA to implement the rain garden as a landscape feature to reduce nonpoint source pollution. The rain garden will be used in classroom curriculum to teach about nonpoint source pollution. This fall, Middle School students will also learn that a rain garden not only benefits water quality but that it also provides valuable habitat for a number of species from butterflies to birds and other critters that depend on the native plants of the rain garden for survival.

A rain garden is simply a shallow, scooped out area placed in the path of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as roofs and parking lots. Its purpose is to slow and retain the runoff temporarily in the garden where the plants will serve to filter out nonpoint source pollutants and infiltrate the waters into the aquifer. This will keep more stormwater where it falls instead of rushing it along with all the contaminants it carries, to a stream through the stormwater drain system.

The plants in the Middle School rain garden are native Missouri plants and are adapted to survive in both wet and dry conditions. The use of native plants is important because they have adapted to this climate and soils for thousands of years, have exceptionally long root systems and are hardy. The extensive roots of

native plants act as nature's water purifiers by facilitating the movement of water deep into the soil. In contrast, the turf grasses of typical lawns have very shallow root systems and do little to filter pollutants and infiltrate stormwater.

This project was made possible with grant funding awarded to the South Grand River Watershed Alliance through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

The \$9,450 in federal funding was awarded for the construction of two community rain gardens and a nonpoint source educational curriculum and is provided by the Environment Protection Agency, Region 7, 319 Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant through the department's Water Protection Program. For more information, contact Amanda Sappington in the department's Water Protection Program at (573) 751-8728.

For information about the SGRWA and for additional photos of the project, visit www.southgrandwatershed.com