



The 4th Graders Tackle Playground Flooding Issues

The Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition partnered with Blue Ridge Elementary School to install a 300-square-foot rain garden on their playground. For years, this area has been subject to drainage issues resulting in flooding after minor storms. The large puddle that formed as a result caused outdoor recess to be cancelled on many occasions.



The entire 4th grade took part in four one-hour classroom education sessions led by Cacapon Institute's watershed education specialist. Students learned about their local watershed within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and discovered hands-on the affects stormwater runoff has on our landscape and the harmful pollutants it dispenses in our local rivers. Students designed their rain

garden to be a colorful collection of native flowering plants that increase habitat for many insects including butterflies.

Carl Drumgoole from the Blue

Ridge Watershed Coalition helped with preparation of the rain garden. A tiller was used to turn over the soil and blend in a mixture of sand to increase the porosity, allowing more water to infiltrate into the ground. The rain garden was strategically placed at the base of the hill and around the edge of the paved area. This location allows water to collect in the garden instead of flowing down on the pavement. The pavement also drains off into the garden area.

The first planting took place on Earth Day. One of the three classes had the opportunity to say they planted their portion of the garden on Earth Day; however, an afternoon thunderstorm caused the remainder of the planting



to be postponed to the following day. We saw first-hand how the rain garden is creating a positive impact on the school grounds.

Sixty-five students and

nineteen adult volunteers assisted in planting the 300-square-foot rain garden with 128 native plants and two black chokeberry shrubs. The students also added their thumb print to a 250-gallon cistern that will be attached to the downspout of an adjacent building to collect rain.

