

# Elk Garden Primary School



## School Makes a Difference for the Potomac River Headwaters

Elk Garden Primary School participated in Cacapon Institute's Potomac Headwaters Leaders of Watersheds (PHLOW) Grow-a-Garden program under the leadership of Principal Mike Saturday. 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.

Elk Garden is located at the headwaters of the Potomac River in Mineral County, WV. Students Kindergarten to 4<sup>th</sup> grade engaged in

four classroom lessons. Students participated in hands-on learning of topography and how water travels from their school on the mountaintop to the local river and beyond. Students built watersheds out of playdough, read stories, and arrange their plants in the garden.

Following the last snow storm of the season, students enjoyed the sunshine and got their hands dirty to protect the Potomac. Students worked in teams to install a native plant in the school rain garden. Many of the older students identified specific plants by name based on the work done in the class.

In total, seventy-five students and seven teachers contributed to the success of the Grow-a-Garden project.

The rain garden is collecting stormwater runoff from a steep hill before it can reach a storm drain. It provides habitat and food for native wildlife, and serves as an outdoor



classroom.

Every student left with a feeling of accomplishment for making a positive impact at their school, in the community, and protected the local river system.

