Keyser Middle School

Students Plant Wildlife Habitat on Campus

Keyser Middle School, Keyser, WV, participated in Cacapon Institute's Potomac Headwaters Leaders of Watersheds (PHLOW) Grow-a-Garden project. Under the leadership of science teacher, Roy Boyle, 7th graders participated in four hours of classroom education leading up to the installation of a 300 square foot rain garden and planting of a sycamore tree on the school campus.

The educational programs focused on non-point source pollution issues within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Students learned to identify point and non-point source pollution, stormwater runoff, and erosion. Students participated in activities such as defining watershed boundaries and mimicking a stream sampling activity. The students studied benthic macroinvertebrates and how they are affected by stream pollution. They also learned about native plants and focused on species that were included in the design of their rain garden.

Planting day was April 26th. As storms threatened in the distance, the 75 students worked in 30 minute rotations to plant the 50 native plants and sycamore tree on campus. Students were excited to get their hands dirty and play a role in reducing stormwater runoff. The rain garden is located in a place where large amounts of water runs from impervious areas, or hard surfaces such as pavement and sidewalks.

The rain garden will provide many benefits beyond collecting stormwater runoff. The garden will provide an outdoor learning space for the school. Additionally, the plants were carefully considered for the conditions along with environmental citizen science initiatives the school takes part in, such as the Monarch Watch.

The school plans to install a large rain cistern that will collect and store rainwater for use of watering the rain garden during the years to come. This will further reduce stormwater runoff pollution to the local stream.

Keyser Middle School is making a positive impact for the community and environment.

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