 District Department of the Environment

Watershed Protection Division

 Schoolyard Conservation Site Program:

“RiverSmart Schools”

The District Department of the Environment, Watershed Protection Division (WPD) is proud to offer funding and training to schools selected through its **Schoolyard Conservation Site (SCS) Program** called, “**RiverSmart Schools**.” These innovative schoolyard greening projects focus on incorporating landscape design principles that create habitat for wildlife, emphasize the use of native plants, highlight water conservation, and/or retain and filter stormwater runoff, while having the added benefits of an outdoor classroom that supports effective teaching practices and promotes student learning. These projects will teach gardening and community service skills, provide wildlife habitat, improve the aesthetics of school grounds, and build student and community pride***.***

In addition to installing new schoolyard greenspace, the RiverSmart Schools program **provides teachers with the training they need to use their conservation site with confidence to teach lessons based on the DCPS Standards** (especially those focused on science, reading and math). The gardens will serve as a permanent outdoor learning tool for interested teachers that can enhance many areas of study.

Teachers and other instructional/professional development staff wishing to be involved in this exciting program must be 1) interested in using their school grounds as a hands-on classroom for teaching and 2) able to organize and participate in teams that are committed to long-term use and upkeep of the site.

Garden Team members, students, and the surrounding community are responsible for long-term maintenance of the site, ensuring that it continues to flourish beyond the first year of installation. If awarded this grant, in addition to the site installation the first year, $1000 will be provided for five consecutive years to ensure maintenance and sustainability of the site.

This year the WPD will provide between five schools with a minimum of **$3,500 and up to $70,000** in gardening and classroom resources, plus additional technical assistance and in-kind support. Teachers will also receive a minimum of 16 hours of professional development on watershed ecology, designing and installing a school garden/habitat, and lesson plans and curriculum that support DC content standards and allowed teachers to work with their students outdoors. A portion of the training will be outdoors and requires hands-on participation.

**What is required to participate?** If your school is selected, your school must:

* *Have three teachers participate in professional development workshops which include four paid four-hour training sessions in the spring (other Garden Team members are encouraged to attend)*
* *Organize and participate in two to four community action days per year – for preparation and installation of your schoolyard site (Plants will be purchased and brought to you and experts will be on hand to assist during the action days.)*
* *Meet at least four times per year with your schoolyard team*
* *Provide verbal periodic project updates to the grantees*
* *Incorporate the schoolyard garden into your existing curriculum*

To participate fill out the application and return it to:

P. Trinh Doan, Watershed Protection Specialist (patricia.doan@dc.gov)

*District Department of the Environment - Watershed Protection Division,
1200 First Street, NE. 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20002*

*Fax: 202-535-1364*

**The application due date is every year at the end of October.**

**For additional information, contact Trinh at 202-535-1653.**



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 **Application Form**

*(Please Note: This application must be type and contain good grammar and spelling. Hand written and/or illegible applications will be disqualified.)*

Name of School:

School Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone:

**Participating Team** - Teams must include at least **three teachers** and two to three other concerned individuals such as a principal, parent, maintenance/grounds representative, or community member. Please indicate a project leader/head contact with an asterisk (\*).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| First and Last Name | Relationship to school (teacher, parent) | Grade/Subject Taught | Email Address | Home Phone Number |
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**Note: At least two participating teachers from the Garden Team must attend each training (trainings include four paid four-hour training sessions in the spring and two days of training in the summer).**

The Current State of your Schoolyard:

1) Are there any plans for construction at your school or on your school grounds in the near future? (Answering “yes” to this question disqualifies your school as a RiverSmart Schools applicant)

2) Provide a rough estimate of the size of your schoolyard.

a. What percentage of the grounds is covered in asphalt?

b. What percentage is greenspace?

c. How close is the nearest source of water?

3) Is there greenspace of any kind (i.e. city parks, athletic fields, etc.) surrounding your school in which students have access to during and/or after school?

4) Please briefly describe the current state of the school grounds. If possible, provide pictures of your school grounds, specifically areas that you believe would benefit from a greening project (maximum of 3 photos).

Educational Vision:

5) What schoolyard greening projects would you like to create and how do you hope your school will benefit from a schoolyard greening project?

6) How do you hope to engage your students in the schooolyard greening project? What type of educational activities and/or youth programs do you envision developing and/or using?

Community Support:

7) Please list any organizations, community members, or businesses from the surrounding community that could be involved with your project. Have they already agreed to participate? (Please attach any letters of support.)

8) How do you envision maintaining your schoolyard greening project? Who will participate and how will they be involved?

9) What other funding sources (if any) has your schoolyard green project received and/or solicited for this coming year?

Part of the success of a schoolyard conservation site depends on the help and approval of a school’s principal and grounds maintenance staff. As such, the Schoolyard Conservation Staff will occasionally meet with involved teachers, their principal, and the school’s maintenance crew in order to foster communication and understanding about the project, its importance, and its care and maintenance needs.

**Principal Approval -** Please have your principal sign below or attach a letter with their signature indicating that they are aware of your application and support your potential involvement in the schoolyard program.

Principal Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principal Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Facilities/Grounds Maintenance Acknowledgement -** Please have your maintenance supervisor sign below indicating that they are aware of your application and support the installation of a schoolyard conservation site.

Maintenance Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Maintenance Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_