

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Greening Initiative & Tree Canopy Goal

The Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Greening Initiative—a PWP project funded by the US Forest Service and Chesapeake Bay Trust—continues to gain momentum this spring with the planned implementation of a 1.5 acre reforestation and arboretum project at Valley Elementary School in Jefferson, Maryland. Potomac Conservancy hopes that the 1.25 acres of new seedlings will grow to create a 60 foot-wide forested buffer between the school's expansive recreational fields and US Route 340. Ideally, the acreage can eventually be taken out of mowing rotation and provide beneficial habitat for wildlife and educational opportunities for students. An arboretum consisting of 12 different native tree species and educational signage will also be established to increase tree canopy on the school site and enhance Valley Elementary School's expanding "schoolyard habitat." The schoolyard habitat currently consists of a newly constructed wetland, forty-plus native tree saplings, and educational signage.

Valley Elementary is not the only school that will be increasing its tree canopy this spring- Monocacy Middle School, Monocacy Elementary School, Oakdale Elementary School, and Middletown High School all participated in Potomac Conservancy's Legacy Tree pilot program and will have large-caliper trees planted this spring thanks to donations from the school and surrounding community. In addition, Middletown High School will be planting an extra 105 trees on their school grounds- adding to the 80 trees that students planted at MHS this past fall. Catocin High School will be teaming up with Thurmont Elementary School and Primary School to plant a number of trees this spring as well.

To assist Frederick County Public Schools in achieving their 20% tree canopy goal, Potomac Conservancy will create an implementation guide for the school district, complete with at least 20 planting plans and other helpful resources. So far, Potomac Conservancy and FCPS Facilities Services Division have identified two school sites that will be planted to result in 10 new acres of tree canopy. By this summer, PC and FCPS will identify at least 4 additional school sites on which tree canopy will be increased through spring 2010. By spring 2010, the remaining planting plans will be prepared to assist FCPS in efficiently implementing tree planting projects over the next several years.

Since fall 2007, Potomac Conservancy and local partners have engaged over 3,000 students and volunteers in planting nearly 850 native shrubs and trees on Frederick County public school grounds.

