

Mid Valley Elementary School
Phone: (570) 489-1976
Project Manager: Rosann Moskel
Grant Award: \$15,000

A Living Laboratory - Nature Trail and Wildlife Habitat at the Mid Valley Elementary School is located on 14-acres in the heart of the anthracite fields and is surrounded by environmental hazards. Lead contamination, habitat destruction, landfills, co-generation plants, mine acid pollution, culm banks, mine fires, mine subsidence, and strip mine scarification are all a part of each student's milieu. There was clearly a need for a safe area where students could explore and observe flora, fauna, and natural change. In an effort to fulfill this need, Mid Valley School began the "Living Laboratory Project." The focus of the project was to develop a 1,200-foot nature trail within a remnant 3-acre oak forest and create wildlife habitat that serves as a protected science sanctuary.

Accomplishments greatly exceeded the original goals. The physical area nearly doubled in size with the inclusion of a wetland area. School and community participation and enthusiasm was far greater than anticipated. The number and quality of resources, cooperating agencies, and partners far exceeded expectations.

The living laboratory has created hands-on and academic opportunities for approximately 800 elementary school students. Over 25 diverse partners have contributed to the project. Its success continues to grow as many new funding sources recognize this unique and successful approach to education and environmental education.

Project Value and Match

Grant Award	\$15,000
Cash Contributions	\$19,100
In-kind Contributions	\$37,435
Total Project Cost	\$71,535



Project Accomplishments

- Planted 18 canopy trees, 61 evergreen trees, 156 seedlings, 105 shrubs, and 525 herbaceous plants on 3.5-acres of school grounds.
- Improved 1.5-acres of remnant oak forest.
- Enhanced 2-acres of culm-based soils with native species.
- Integrated 5 hands-on student plantings into the curriculum.
- Constructed a 1,200 l.ft. trail.
- Enhanced trail edges with native trees, shrubs and wetland plants.
- Documented over 50 plant species.
- Increased annual environmental activities from 5 to 25.
- Provided hands-on planting for 800 students.
- Constructed 4 bird feeding stations and 3 butterfly gardens.
- Constructed a Fire Forest Monitoring Station for the site in partnership with the PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry.
- Incorporated supplemental training programs such as Project WET, Project WILD, Nature Quest, Project Food, and Land and People.
- Students participated in “Journey North,” “For the Birds,” “Cornell Feeder Watch,” “Branching Out,” “Trailblazer Activities,” “Forestry and Me,” and “Grounds for Learning.”
- Received an Environmental Partnership Award in recognition of Mid Valley’s commitment to partnerships.
- Achieved a 1 to 3.76 cost share ratio for the grant.



Partners' Contributions

Business Contributions – Supplies
Cornell University, Ornithological Lab – Bird feeder watch
Institute of Service Learning – \$500 grant
Lackawanna Career Technology Center – Bird houses
NEIU#19 – \$5,000 in School to Career Grants
NIER – Wetland plantings
Office of Surface Mining – Mine Fire Workshop
PA Game Commission – Technical Assistance
Red Line Towing – Aerial photography
Scranton Chamber of Commerce – \$2,500 from 5 small grants
Toyota Tapestry Grant – \$9,000 cash match