

6th,

Meadowbrook Elementary School Outdoor Classroom  
Project Proposal

April 29, 2009

**Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC)**

**Water Quality Education Grants Application**

*Please print or type*

Contact Name: Amy Segelbaum, Parent

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Authorized

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Amount Requested: \$1,000

Date: *April 29, 2009*

Project Title: Meadowbrook School Outdoor Classroom Project

*Please describe your proposal, specifying the activity or activities to be supported by the grant funds and detailing proposed expenses. Please be sure to address the following questions, using no more than two pages. You may attach other supporting documentation, such as photos (will not be returned).*

*Note: The BCWMC Grant Program Application Procedure and the Criteria information posted on the BCWMC Web site (<http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org>) provide details about the grant program and application qualifications.*

**Provide a brief, approximately 100 word, executive summary paragraph describing the main goals and activities of your project.**

The overall goals of the Meadowbrook Elementary Outdoor Classroom Project are to strengthen the connections between young people and nature in order to promote cognitive, emotional and physical health and stewardship of the land and world around us.

The project will achieve goals through a strategy referred to broadly as the "Meadowbrook Outdoor Classroom Project" including:

- Edible gardens,
- Native prairie plant area,
- Outdoor classroom seating area, and
- Water quality education and protection efforts.

Together, these strategies will provide opportunities for the community to increase their awareness to protect and improve the environment. If awarded, grant funds from the BCWMC will be used for efforts directly related to water quality education and protection efforts.

**How does the proposal improve knowledge about the Bassett Creek Watershed, water quality, or water resources?**

Meadowbrook Elementary School is located in the suburb of Golden Valley, Minnesota, an inner ring suburb of Minneapolis. The school grounds are located within the boundaries of the Bassett Creek Watershed next to the South Fork (Sweeney Branch) of Bassett Creek. This location affords us the opportunity to teach students about the connections between native prairie plants, natural water runoff, and the connection to the global environment.

The Meadowbrook native plant area will contain plants that hold and retain water. This will help to protect and enhance wildlife habitat and maintain the shore of Bassett Creek. Another goal of the plants is also to help prevent erosion of the creek. In addition, through the use of rain barrels and rain gauges, students will use math and science in the study of precipitation. Water from these collection vehicles will be used to maintain gardens. The native plant area will also have another effect, enhanced beauty of the school grounds and neighborhood.

A school-city partnership will be pursued to ensure that the broader Golden Valley community is aware of and can participate in the water quality education aspects of this proposal. Through our relationship with the mayor of the City of Golden Valley, Linda Loomis,(who is also a playground aide at Meadowbrook over the noon hour) we hope to continue to find new ways to reach out to our greater community.

Meadowbrook staff will participate in training to prepare them in the use of the water education aspects of this proposal. As they educate the students about the impact they have on the environment, students will change behaviors that may have a negative impact on the watershed and other water sources.

**What resources, new or existing, are you planning to use?**

As part of its Outdoor Classroom, Meadowbrook will dedicate a section of its backyard playground to the development of a native prairie plant area. This will allow for ample learning opportunities about native plant species, and will also attract butterflies, moths and other insects that will provide natural learning opportunities for students. Exploration tools such as butterfly nets, magnifying glasses and field guides will support group and individual discovery of prairie habitats. These supplies will be purchased with funds from fundraising plant sales, PTO funds, and in-kind donations.

PTO has committed to a \$1,000 grant to support this project for 2009-2010. Year round care will be provided by the in-house Community Education staff and students. Summer programs in the attached community center building will be willing to tend to the garden and native plant area. Maintenance, watering, and weeding will also be done by the school grounds volunteer committee.

**What are your timeline, work plan, and budget?**

The planning for the Meadowbrook Outdoor Classroom began in the 2008-2009 school year. To date, activities have included incorporating regular information into the school newsletter, developing the edible gardens and implementing an Earth Day Clean-Up event. This grant opportunity will allow us the opportunities to focus on water quality education and improvement as a component to the project. Without grant funds, this component will not be feasible.

The timeline for the water quality components of the grant will be the 2009-2010 school year. Planning will begin upon notification of grant award.

A \$1,000 cash match award is secured from the Meadowbrook PTO for the Outdoor Classroom Project. Additionally, significant in-kind donations will be secured this project as staff, parents and students lend their time and expertise to the project's implementation. *See the following chart for itemized description of program costs.*

	BCWMC grant request	PTO dollars (secured, unless noted)
<b>Edible garden:</b>		
Raised beds, dirt, compost, edible plants.		\$800
<b>Native prairie plant area:</b>		
Native plants	\$120	\$200
<b>Outdoor classroom area:</b>		
Seating (movable stumps)	\$200	
Materials to build pergola		donation -- pending
<b>Water quality education and protection efforts:</b>		
Rain barrel, rain gauge	\$130	
Teacher training	\$300	
Education materials	\$180	
Community event	\$70	donation -- pending (if needed)
	<b>Grant Request: \$1,000</b>	<b>Cash Match Secured: \$1,000</b>

**Who will be involved in implementing this proposal?**

A group of interested parents, educators and administrators have come together to promote increased physical activity and stronger connections to nature through a variety of strategies. This committee of parents, educators, and a certified naturalist will oversee the project, and manage the budget. The Meadowbrook School Principal, Dr. Evans-Becker has been involved from the project's conception, and will continue to oversee that school funds are used properly.

Teachers and staff will also be offered materials and training that relate to use of the outdoor classroom. Support from the committee of parents, educators, and naturalist will be provided as curriculum is developed. Members of the BCWMC will be invited in to speak to the staff and provide ideas for maintaining water quality.

**Who will be impacted by this proposal?**

We hope to have an impact on each and every student by having a highly visible native plant garden and outdoor classroom in school play areas. Each classroom will have an opportunity to conduct class lessons in the outdoor learning area. Lessons will also be conducted in the "Edible Gardens" and children will participate in the harvesting of food produced there. In addition, community members will be invited to participate in this neighborhood beautification and Watershed protection project, by helping to maintain the native plant area. Through this project we will be reaching many with information about the work that the BCWMC is completing.

**How will you measure your success?**

We will be evaluating how often classes use the outdoor classroom and collecting feedback from teachers and students on a regular basis. We will distribute curriculum surveys regarding how this project supports the current curriculum. We hope to use anecdotal evidence from children and families about the impact the project has on the educational experience at Meadowbrook.

**How do you plan to share your results?**

The curriculum will be organized and made available for sharing with other area schools. In order to educate the community about the work that the BCWMC does, local media outlets such as the Sun Sailor newspaper may be alerted about the children and their project. Among our school community, we plan on publicizing the work that that Bassett Creek Watershed Commission does through the school newsletter and other vehicles, and encourage community members to attend regularly scheduled public meetings.