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Bureau of Land Management

Landscaping for Learners

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“The front lines of the battle for nature are not in the Amazon rain forest or the Alaskan Wilderness; the front lines are our backyards, medians, parking lots, and elementary schools.”

~Thomas Rainer and Claudia West, Planting in a Post-wild World.





These are the forgotten small spaces that when restored to natural landscapes have the potential to collectively provide significant habitat benefits for both wildlife and HUMANS. And these spaces are where we have real influence, not in far-flung wild areas.





Big Benefits for Students

- Better grades
- Decreased stress
- Improved motivation
- Better overall behavior
- Improved memory
- Increased health
- Environmental awareness and stewardship
- Pride in school



What is happening nationally with schoolyard habitat?

New York City, Philadelphia, & Newark – Trust for Public Land and Parks for People. Five complete playground overhauls and 20 more over the next 5 years.





What is happening nationally with schoolyard habitat?

Denver, Co. - Learning Landscapes Program – Partnership with University of Colorado, Architecture and Planning Department. Over 15 years, transformed 96 public elementary schools in Denver.





What is happening nationally with schoolyard habitat?

San Francisco, CA. - Education Outside. Supports a strong school district garden program that adapts to changing needs of schools. Raises funds and trains teachers to teach outside.





Successful Programs had:

- Diversified and often non-traditional funding
- Large partnerships
- Non-profit or formalized alliances that supported the school district
- Clear guidelines for school participation
- Intensive involvement in school and community in the design process



Teaching Gardens at the Bureau of Land Management

Ethnobotany Garden





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Sage-grouse Habitat Demonstration Garden





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Schoolyard Habitats in Southwest Idaho

Roosevelt Elementary, Boise





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Roosevelt Elementary, Boise

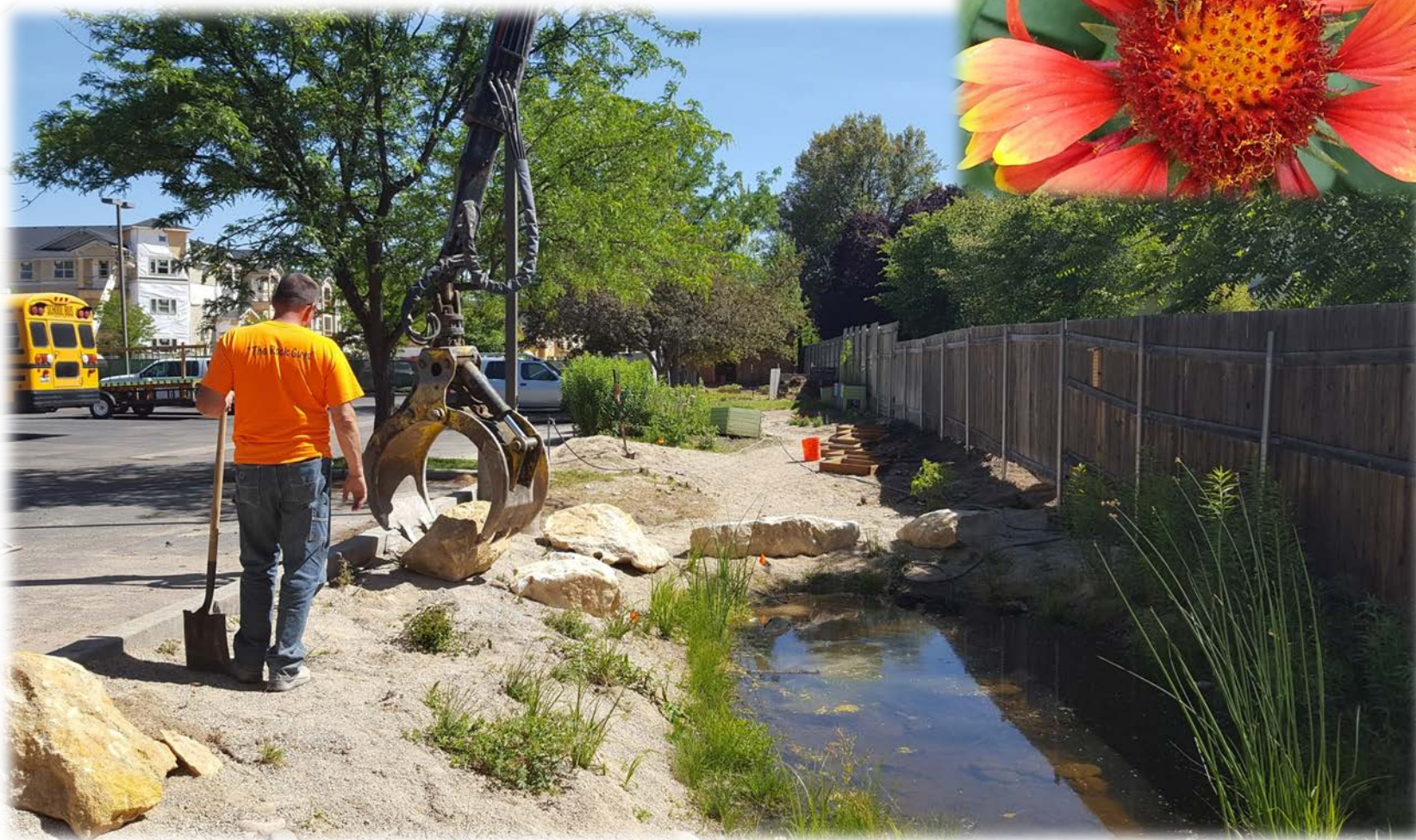




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Schoolyard Habitats in Southwest Idaho

Sage International School, Boise





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Schoolyard Habitats in Southwest Idaho

Hawthorne Elementary School, Boise



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Schoolyard Habitats in Southwest Idaho

Hawthorne Elementary School, Boise





Outdoor Classrooms in Alaska

Nunaka Valley Elementary School, Anchorage





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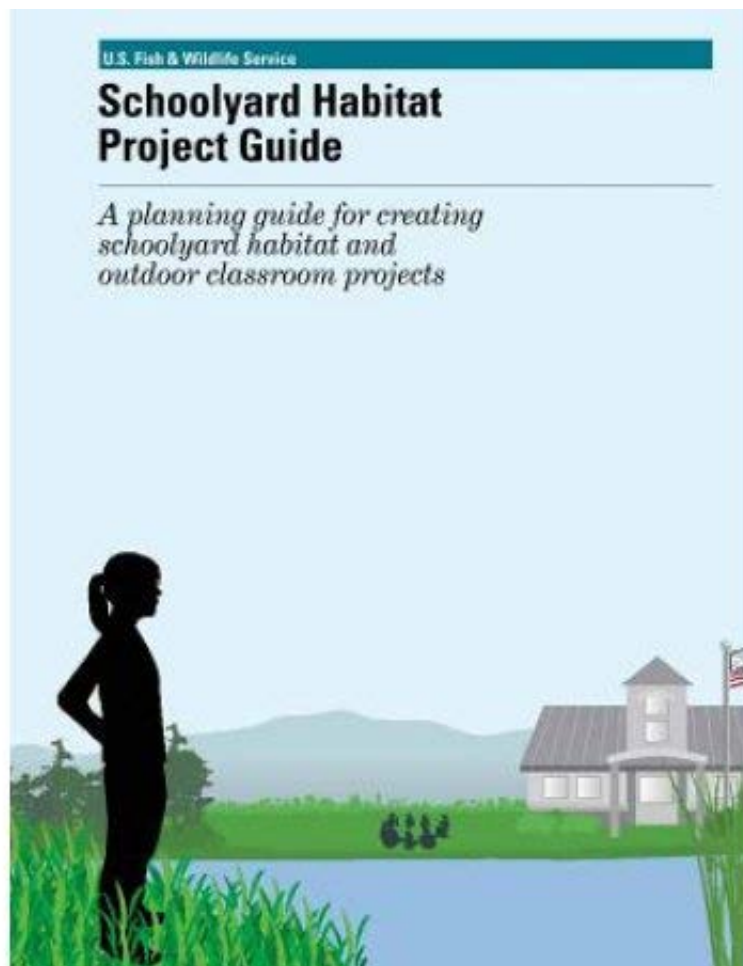
Outdoor Classrooms in Alaska

Alaska Native Cultural Charter Elementary School, Anchorage





How to get started...





In development: Guide and training for creating native gardens for schools and other community spaces in southwest Idaho.

Partnership effort by US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Boise School District, Chinden Garden Club, Idaho Native Plant Society, and Boise Parks and Recreation Department.



The Steps...

Allow for **1 to 1.5 years** prior to implementation*

Basic Steps:

- Form team and partners
- Solicit input from school community
- Create design
- Present design to school and district operations staff for approval
- Develop schedule and coordinate with operations staff for irrigation installation
- Write grant proposals
- Fundraise



The Steps...

Once funding is awarded:

- Refine plant list based on availability and order plants
- Remove any existing sod
- Install hardscaping such as boulders and seating – hire a professional.
- Add topsoil if needed
- Install irrigation – If you are working with the Boise School District, the irrigation must be installed by them, not a contractor.
- Plant (ideal times are either April/May or September/October)
- Protect plantings with temporary fencing
- Develop interpretive signs



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