

Rain Gardens Welcome Parkview Students Back to School

Rain garden at Parkview Elementary School in Milltown. *Credits: Doriann Kerber*



Parkview Elementary School's new rain garden. *Credits: Doriann Kerber*
By DAWN MILLER

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MILLTOWN, NJ - Two new rain gardens will welcome students back to Parkview Elementary School on Sept. 2. On Aug. 15, volunteers along with Milltown Councilwoman Doriann Kerber spent a warm Saturday afternoon working with Enviroscapes Inc. and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Water Resources Program to install the rain gardens.

The project aims to give 54 municipalities that are located in the Raritan River Basin green ways to reduce the potentially damaging effects of stormwater on the community. A grant was procured by the RCE Water Resources Program through the Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program to discover environmentally friendly solutions in managing the impact of stormwater runoff. The grant is managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Councilwoman Kerber approached the RCE about bringing the project to Milltown after attending a meeting where the project was being detailed by Dr. Christopher Obropta. Obropta is an Extension Specialist with the RCE. After some discussion and planning the two rain gardens were designed by the RCE Water Resources Program and implemented.

One rain garden was installed in the back of Parkview Elementary School while a second was placed on the street adjacent to the school. Rain gardens are an attractive and functional way to "capture, treat and infiltrate stormwater runoff."

The rain garden in the back of the school will catch the runoff from the railroad tracks directly behind the school while the one in the front will receive the stormwater that comes from Violet Terrace.

Perennials native to the area were planted along with the landscaping layout that incorporates a layered design in the front garden. The plants in both rain gardens will generate "a natural wildlife habitat" in addition to treating the stormwater runoff.

The new rain gardens serve both an aesthetic and functional purpose for the school and the surrounding neighborhood. Parkview Elementary students will also receive a presentation by the RCE Water Resource Program titled, "Stormwater Management in Your Schoolyard" in the fall. Students will learn all about rain gardens and how they benefit the environment and the community through a one-day program.

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