

## School Garden Report 2024

# McKinley Elementary



In 2024, a rain garden, using Wisconsin native plants, was installed at McKinley Elementary. The project was funded by the City of Stevens Point Public Utilities & Transportation Department and coordinated by the local non-profit, Recycling Connections. The project directly impacted approximately all students (372 students) attending McKinley. This report summarizes the outcomes of this garden installation.



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# Site Selection

Two potential sites were reviewed on February 20th, 2024: Blaine St. and Cleveland Ave. Cleveland Ave would receive only afternoon sun and would be narrow and smaller to accommodate for mowers and salt in winter time. Blaine St. had some concerns with snow piling, but there was a possible option of reshaping water run off from building into garden. Blaine St. was chosen as the best location for this native rain garden.



## Site Preparation



Chris Budzinski & the district crew did the preparation work for the garden site that was really helpful. Boulders were added and an effort of diverting rain from the room into the garden was done. A down spout may be added next year to create a direct draining system to the garden for capturing the rain.

Thank you  
District Staff  
for your hard  
work!

## Plant Species

Students and teachers consulted with local partners from UWSP Extension Lakes and Central WI Wild Ones to select suitable plants for the soil type and conditions. The following plants were selected for the garden.

- Blue Cardinal Flower, *Lobelia siphilitica*
- Butterfly Weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*
- Cardinal Flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*
- Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*
- Golden Alexanders, *Zizia aurea*
- Hoary Vervain, *Verbena stricta*
- Ironweed, *Vernonia fasciculata*
- Lance-leaf Coreopsis, *Coreopsis lanceolata*
- Little Bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*
- New England Aster, *Symphotrichum novae-angliae*
- Nodding Onion, *Allium cernuum*
- Prairie Dropseed, *Sporobolus heterolepis*
- Side Oats Grama, *Bouteloua curtipendula*
- Spiked Blazing Star, *Liatris spicata*
- Stiff Goldenrod, *Oligoneuron rigidum*
- Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*
- White Beardtongue, *Penstemon digitalis*
- Wild Bergamont, *Monarda fistulosa*
- Wild Lupine, *Lupinus perennis*
- Wild Quinine, *Parthenium integrifolium*

# Stats

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500

Plants

372

Students Planting

5

Cubic Yards of Compost

## Installation Day



## Progress

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Dan O'Connell, Susan Schuller, & Michelle Nieuwenhuis prep the site for the garden installation.



5/23/2024 - Installation Complete



8/12/2024 - Portage County Master Gardeners did a fantastic job keeping site weeded during the summer months.



## Certified as a Native Garden by the National Wildlife Federation

- 500 plants
- Materials Purchased: edging, compost, hose, plant journals, liquid fence
- Compost bin installed
- Laminated plant identification cards printed

More than 60 hours of time spent between volunteers, McKinley educators, & community partners

## Special Thanks

**Funding:** City of Stevens Point, Public Utilities & Transportation Dept.

### Community Partners McKinley Planning Team

- **Joel Lemke**, Director of Public Utilities and Transportation, City of Stevens Point
- **Dan O'Connell**, Portage County Land & Water Conservation District
- **Amberle Schwartz**, Wild Ones Central WI
- **Susan Schuller**, Recycling Connections
- **Libby Shudarek & Lesley Sheridan**, Portage County Master Gardeners
- **Chris Radford**, North Central Conservancy Trust
- **Paul Skawinski**, UWSP Lakes
- **Chris Budzinski**, Stevens Point Area School District
- **Amanda Zanchetti-Mayo**, *Principal*
- **Tammy Young**, *Teacher*
- **Terri Pinter**, *Teacher*
- **Emily Kiefer**, *Teacher*
- **Karlene Giese**, *Teacher*
- **Dawn Kerske**, *Teacher*



## Supporters

This is a partnership project between the City of Stevens Point Public Utilities and Recycling Connections with the additional community partners listed here:



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