

MECHS Adds an Outdoor Classroom

By Erin Ingle Long (or Ms. Long) *Joe, you decide how you want to credit me*

Ms. Oshen Wallin's project that began last year with a native plants garden on the northern side of the early college building has entered phase II. This time, the project involves not simply plants, but also the hardscaping required of an outdoor classroom. The new space will occupy the circle in front of the school and provide an outdoor space for learning as well as a pollinator garden to help offset the school's environmental footprint.

Ms. Wallin applied for grants to pay for the space and received \$2000 from the Pigeon River Fund through the Mountain Valleys Resource and Conservation Development and Ivy River Partnership as well as \$250 from the Madison County Rotary. In addition, many local businesses and individuals have donated their time and product to make the space possible.

MS. Oshen Wallin's Earth/Environmental Science students from the spring of 2019 designed the outdoor classroom which this year's students have begun production on. Although the bulk of the physical work has fallen to this semester's Earth Science students, Ms. Wallin has also called upon her Chemistry students to step up when deliveries have arrived during class time.

Mother Nature has thus far been cooperative, providing warm sunny days for landscaping duties, but fall is quickly approaching and Ms. Wallin hopes to have the hardscape complete by the time the weather turns bad. "It's easy to get the students to pitch in," she says, "especially when it involves being outside and working on a project like this garden."

The master plan, as inspired by Spring 2019 Earth Science students and drawn by Ed McNally with Marshall Native Gardens Initiative.



Installation of the gravel path, thanks to the shoveling expertise of Ms. Wallin's science courses.

MECHS wishes to acknowledge the following for their generous donations:

Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation and Development

Ivy River Partners

Pigeon River Fund

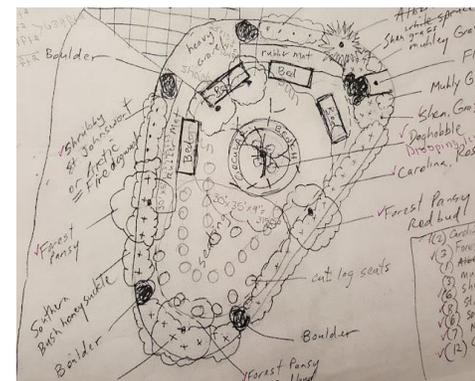
Marshall Native Gardens Initiative (Ed McNally)

Wild Bud Natives (Nathan Buchanan)

The Longest Yard Mulch and More

Marshall Stone Sales

Sawyer's Mulch (Truett Sawyer)



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