

In the news:

- [Beautiful Garden at Governor Livingston HS Serves a Practical Purpose](#) - *TAP into Berkeley Heights*, 8/11/2017
- [Gov. Livingston High School New Rain Garden Works to Reduce Stormwater Flooding](#) - *TAP into Berkeley Heights*, 9/7/2016
- [Schools focus on technology, environment](#) - *North South Brunswick Sentinel*, 9/17/2015
- [Rain gardens welcome Parkview students back to school](#) - *TAP into Milltown/Spotswood*, 9/1/2015
- [Project plans to prevent groundwater pollution](#) - *Sentinel North South Brunswick*, 12/4/2014

EDUCATION

Beautiful Garden at Governor Livingston HS Serves a Practical Purpose

By RICHARD LEISTER
August 11, 2017 at 5:53 PM



From left to right: Lara Mendenhall, GLIS Science Teacher; Joe Pulkowski, Sara Mellor, and Alex Corlian from Rutgers Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources worked on the rain garden.



Weeding the rain garden in front of Governor Livingston High School.

BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NJ - Deep red cardinal flowers, purple cone flowers, black-eyed Susans, and bright orange butterfly weed along with native shrubs and grasses create a beautiful pollinator garden at Governor Livingston High School. While the perennials attract bumblebees and butterflies, they also help in capturing stormwater runoff from the adjacent parking lot.

This type of garden, called a rain garden, is designed to capture and filter runoff water, reduce the amount of stormwater that goes into the drain, and, by allowing water to slowly infiltrate the ground, recharge the groundwater supply.

The rain garden, which was first installed **last year**, can collect more than 130,000 gallons of rainwater.

The rain garden would not have been created without the help of a National Fish and Wildlife Service grant obtained through the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program. Rutgers supervised the installation of the rain garden and on Tuesday installed a sign that describes the purpose of the rain garden.

From: TAP into.net - Berkeley Heights Your Neighborhood News Online

2015-09-17 / Schools



Schools focus on technology, environment

By KATHY CHANG
Staff Writer

MILLTOWN — Moving instruction toward the 21st century and maintaining the district's new rain gardens are top priorities for Milltown schools as the 2015-16 school year goes into full swing.

Schools Superintendent Stephanie Brown along with 193 teachers and staff welcomed the 716 students enrolled in the Milltown School District back to school on Sept. 2.

The district's two schools are Parkview Elementary School and Joyce Kilmer Middle School.

Brown said the district has purchased additional Chromebooks for use at both schools.

"We have replaced aging SmartBoards with Smart TVs," she said. "A student technology club will also begin this year for Joyce Kilmer students."

The Google platform will be the focus of the club.

"Students will be learning to use Google Docs, slides and other Google tools," said Brown. "Google is also a very large training initiative for our teachers this year. A certified Google educator trainer will work with our teachers through a year-long professional development series in the use of Google Classroom and the other features of Google to enhance instruction."

Brown said the middle school's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) elective this school year will benefit from updated software used as the basis of the program's instruction.

"The teachers have also worked hard to meet a challenging state deadline to have eight separate curriculum guides updated this September," she said. "The updated guides reflect the new state standards in music, art, social studies, physical education and health, science, technology, world language and 21st century skills."

Brown said the district is looking forward to a close working relationship with the North Brunswick Township School District, which has opened a Pre-K Annex in the Our Lady of Lourdes (OLOL) school site on Cleveland Avenue. The Diocese of Metuchen school had closed in 2013.

Janet Ferlazzo, principal at Parkview, said in her welcome letter to parents and guardians that the teachers, staff and students plan to build on last year's successes.

"We know the importance of setting ambitious goals and maintaining our focus in support of our students," she said. "Together we work to support students with a well-rounded program focused on high academic standards. We expect all of our students to succeed and our commitment is to provide them with the tools they will need to meet those expectations."

William Veit, principal at Joyce Kilmer, shared similar sentiments in his welcome letter to parents and guardians.

He said the staff has been carefully reviewing and planning the school's academic goals and objectives over the summer as well as making sure the school building and grounds are safe, clean and a healthy environment for the students to learn and have fun.

Parkview School has new rain gardens this school year, which are a demonstration project chosen to be implemented as part of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Water Resources Program.

Milltown Councilwoman Doriann Kerber was instrumental in making the project happen after attending a meeting when project concepts were being explained by Dr. Christopher Obropta, extension specialist in water resources with RCE.

The program had received funding to implement a Climate Resilient Green Infrastructure for the Raritan River Basin Project from the Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program, a grant administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The project seeks to provide 54 municipalities in the Raritan River Basin with ways of reducing storm water impacts through climate resilient green infrastructure practices.

The RCE Water Resources program prepared construction designs for two rain gardens — one on the school property on Violet Terrace and one along the road next to the school.

Rain gardens are shallow landscaped depressions that capture, treat and infiltrate storm water runoff.

A three-tiered rain garden with a trench drain was installed on the grounds of Parkview School and directs storm water runoff coming from Violet Terrace and the other rain garden installed in the rear of the school receives runoff from the train tracks.

Enviroscapes, Inc. partnered with the RCE Water Resources program and Milltown Borough to install the rain gardens.

“These rain gardens were planted with native perennials and will not only treat runoff, but will also create natural wildlife habitat for beneficial pollinators,” said Sara Mellor, program associate at the RCE Water Resources program.

Brown said the students in the Green Clubs at both schools will be maintaining the plants in the rain gardens to ensure that they continue to be a viable deterrent to storm water runoff.

This fall, the RCE Water Resources program will work with the Milltown Board of Education to provide a one-day program, “Stormwater Management in Your Schoolyard,” to educate students about the rain gardens.

http://eb.gmnews.com/news/2015-09-17/Schools/Schools_focus_on_technology_environment.html

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

September 1, 2015 at 9:33 AM

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 Envirosapes 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.

<https://www.tapinto.net/articles/rain-gardens-welcome-parkview-students-back-to-sc>

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Project plans to prevent groundwater pollution

By KATHY CHANG

Staff Writer

MILLTOWN — Efforts are underway to reduce pollution in local waterways.

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program has conducted assessments for [East Brunswick](#), [Milltown](#), [New Brunswick](#), [North Brunswick](#) and [South Brunswick](#).

The project involved providing suggestions to intercept and treat water runoff with porous asphalt, rain gardens and other techniques before runoff goes into waterways such as the [Lawrence Brook](#), [Farrington Lake](#) and other bodies of water.



Chris Obropta, extension specialist in water resources for the Rutgers Cooperative Extension and an associate professor with the Department of Environmental Sciences at the School of Environmental & Biological Sciences at Rutgers University, presented the assessments Nov. 25 at the monthly meeting of the Lawrence Brook Watershed Partnership at the Milltown Senior Center.

Obropta said four reports on stormwater management have shown the pollution that goes into the water is due in some part to urbanization, geese and agriculture.

The largest source of the pollution problem is urbanization, which was found to exist in varying degrees in the five municipalities analyzed.

In [East Brunswick](#), 61.4 percent of the township is urbanized.

The [Lawrence Brook](#) stretches 10 miles in [East Brunswick](#), which has some 14,340 acres of pavement. Of that coverage, runoff from 640 acres is from impervious surfaces. Many other bodies of water also take runoff from [East Brunswick](#) surfaces.

In [Milltown](#), 88.1 percent of the borough is urbanized and 5.7 percent is made up of forest. All runoff drains into the [Lawrence Brook](#).

Of the 1,021 acres of pavement in the borough, some 407 acres is impervious surfaces.

Obropta said that if porous asphalt is replaced at the Milltown Public Library and trench drains and rain gardens are placed at [Parkview Elementary School](#) and [Joyce Kilmer Middle School](#), some 41 acres — or 13.8 millions of gallons of runoff water — can be treated before it enters the [Lawrence Brook](#).

"These numbers are huge," Obropta said.

In [South Brunswick](#), an analysis found that the township is a diverse community and is divided pretty evenly across the board between urbanization; forest areas; and small-, medium- and large-density units. Several bodies of water receive runoff, including [Lawrence Brook](#), [Heathcote Brook](#) and [Devils Brook](#).

In June, Obropta and a team of interns identified three to four projects in each town. The projects range from churches and schools to firehouses and Elk lodges.

"We were looking for large parking lots with grass," he said, adding that there are many more projects identified in the municipalities.

The projects that were chosen in [South Brunswick](#) included [St. Barnabas Episcopal Church](#) in [Monmouth Junction](#), [Grace Community Chapel](#) in [Monmouth Junction](#) and the [South Brunswick Public Library](#).

The assessments came out of water restoration plans from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for phosphorous impairment, which included a last chapter of how to treat water. A TMDL is the maximum amount of a pollutant that a body of water can receive while still meeting surface water quality standards.

Obropta said those TMDL plans cost \$200,000-\$400,000 to conduct. After money ran dry, the Rutgers Cooperative Extension decided to take the last chapter and develop proposed projects that could be presented to municipalities.

Obropta said the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife granted \$175,000 for projects involving 54 towns. In [Middlesex County](#), projects are underway in [Perth Amboy](#) and [Woodbridge](#).

"The projects will be on a first-come, first-served basis," Obropta said, adding that the funding only goes only so far. "We want to stretch the \$175,000 as far as we can and get as many towns engaged."

The effort provides opportunities for schools, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, honor societies and other organizations to get involved.

Obropta said the ultimate goal is to work with business administrators, mayors, council members, green teams and communities as a whole to turn these proposed projects into a reality.

For more information, visit www.water.rutgers.edu or contact Obropta at obropta@envisci.rutgers.edu.

[Return to top](#)