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Marvin L. Martin
Principal

February 12, 2012

Dear Board of Directors,

As recipients of a NPSNM grant from winter 2010/2011, I am pleased to report to you the allocations of the funds received by Parkview Elementary. I apologize for the delay in my correspondence.

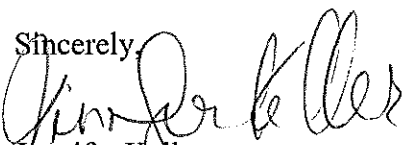
As written in the original grant request, our courtyard design is based on a watershed model with representative New Mexico ecosystems. A pollinator garden was also part of the courtyard plan. The grant money was used to purchase native flowers, shrubs and trees which were planted in the school's courtyard this past fall. In addition to the plants purchased with the grant money, donated plants also came from USFW and Plants of the Southwest. Socorro Soil and Water donated native grass seeds and an extensive variety of native wildflower seeds were donated. In accordance with our goals to connect children to nature and involve family and community in the development of the outdoor classroom, the work was completed on several weekend workdays primarily by staff, parents, and students.

The initial workdays involved weeding, non-native tree removal, sowing native grass and flower seeds, and pruning existing native trees. Support exceeded our expectations when planting time came, a testament to the excitement building in the students and staff! The pollinator garden and the riparian area were completed and with the abundance and variety of plants we were able carry over into the high desert zone and wetland area. We have even started an extensive herb garden.

The plants were chosen to provide habitat for birds and to attract pollinators. Trees and shrubs added to the former natives in the courtyard include Wolfberry, Golden Currant, False Indigo, Silver Buffaloberry, Woods Rose, NM Olive, NM Locust, Squawbush, Nettle Hackberry, Red-osier Dogwood, and Screwbean Mesquite. The wildflowers planted are too many to list but include a significant variety of native penstemons, columbines, primrose, asters, coneflowers, mallows, verbenas, flax, yarrow, yucca, chocolate flower, desert marigold, desert zinnia and several native grasses. The herb garden includes dill and fennel for swallowtail larva.

Your support made a significant impact on the completion of the courtyard design and is greatly appreciated! As spring is just around the corner, signs of growth are already evident. Students and staff are enthusiastic to see the results of their efforts unfold as our courtyard is transformed. The courtyard gardens will provide a multitude of experiences and opportunities.

I have included pictures of the workdays and an additional report from our USFW partners. Thank you again for contributing to the enrichment of New Mexico's youth.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Keller
Parkview Elementary Outdoor Classroom Coordinator



United States Department of the Interior

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Parkview Elementary School – Socorro, NM

January, 2012

Project Background:

In April 2009, Parkview Elementary School (Parkview) served as the host school and class project site for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Schoolyard Habitat and Outdoor Classroom Course - Parkview, as one of three elementary schools in Socorro, serves 420 students in kindergarten through third grade. The course participants created several outdoor classroom plans for Parkview with participation and input from the school administration, educators, staff, and the students themselves. Subsequent to the course, the staff from the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (Partners Program) continued to work with Parkview to assist in the development and partial funding of a viable project proposal that includes the Partners Program and multiple other community partners (including NM Native Plant Society).

Because the Rio Grande has a strong historical presence for the community, continues to serve as a source of irrigation water, and offers areas for recreation, the outdoor classroom plans revolved around habitat and ecosystems that included a river system. There is also a movement at all levels (Federal, State, municipal, public, and private), to restore the riparian habitat along the Rio Grande and manage the waters to sustain a more natural hydrology and native habitat. This movement includes educating the public, and part of this educational process is with the school children. The Parkview curriculum includes lessons on the Rio Grande and its multi-faceted web-of-life and the connections of water, land, wildlife, and people. The curriculum was provided by Friends of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. The outdoor classroom project enhances the studies of the Rio Grande and brings it to life in the school courtyard and on campus.

The outdoor classroom and planting workshops (Use of NM Native Plant Society funds):

The outdoor classroom – the faux river, riparian, wetland, transition zones, upland areas, and raised planting beds – requires a great diversity and number of native plants. Through a grant from the NM Native Plant Society, Parkview was awarded funding to purchase native plants for the outdoor classroom. The plants purchased with this grant, along with plant contributions from the Service's Partners Program and local donations, were planted during two (2) autumn weekend volunteer-workshops (October 2011). Educators, school staff, children, parents, relatives, community members, and staff from the Partners Program participated in the group effort to bring the various plant ecosystems to life.

Parkview Elementary School – Socorro, NM

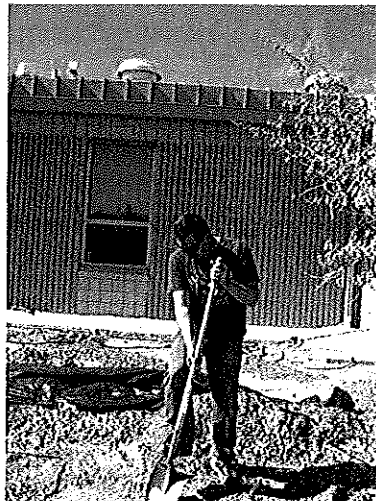
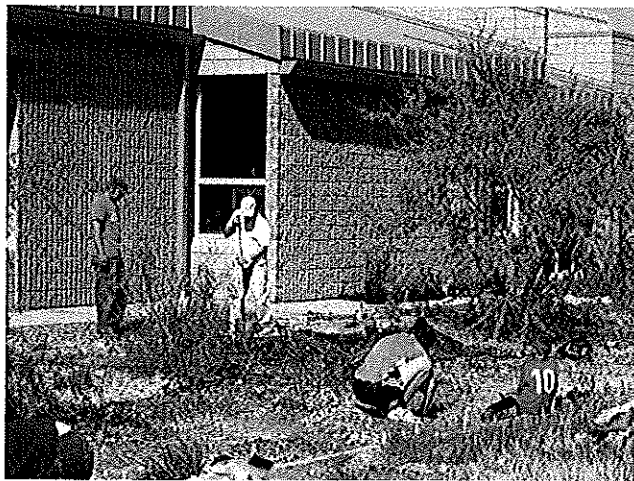
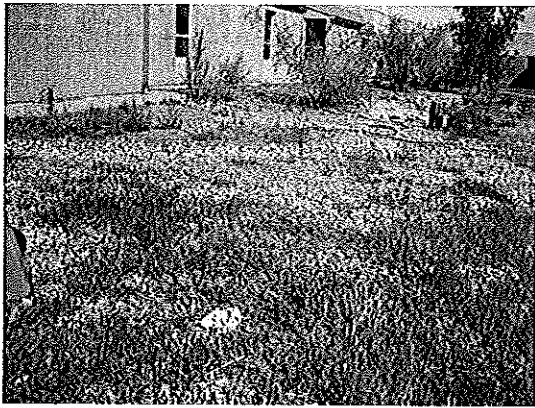
The faux river system, the wetland area, a gazebo, and the habitat areas had already been developed or defined. The native plants filled the defined habitat areas.

This is an ongoing project involving tremendous dedication and a time commitment from the school administration, educators, and staff. The main leader, coordinator, planner, and participant from Parkview is Jennifer Keller (educator). There is still more to do for the project: an irrigation system, shade structures, work tables and chairs, an art wall, wetland boardwalk, and the refurbishment of a greenhouse - the greenhouse could be used to propagate native plants.

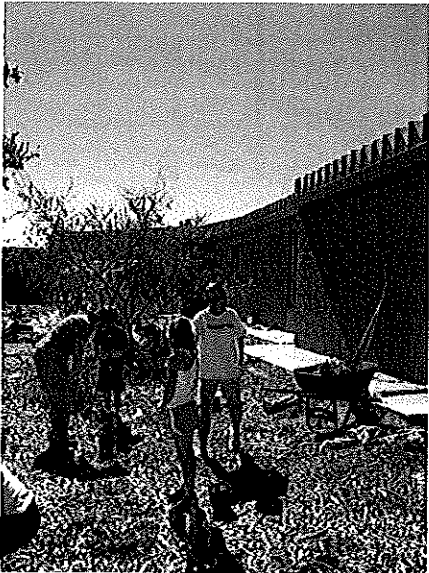
All interest, support, contributions, and participation have been greatly appreciated and we hope to see this project continue to evolve with continued support.

Thank you to the NM Native Plant Society, Albuquerque Chapter.

Preparing the beds



Planting native trees, shrubs and wildflowers



Planting the pollinator garden

