

Project Description

Naturescape

Our goals were to provide inner-city students and their community a daily experience with a diverse plant and animal area, to educate students and their community about the relationships among humans and the natural environment to foster an individual sense of and responsibility for natural resources.

Our intended results are: to establish a native plant Naturescape on school grounds as a hands-on outdoor laboratory; to incorporate environmental education throughout the curriculum; to enhance biological diversity in the neighborhood; to establish a neighborhood green space and habitat demonstration area that will encourage similar efforts at schools and in peoples' yards; to provide the opportunity for citizens of all backgrounds and abilities to share in the development and continuation of the area, and to study the natural history of East Portland with an emphasis on the Sunnyside neighborhood area.

The long term benefits will include an attractive neighborhood garden area, increased understanding of human, plant and animal interactions; and an enhanced desire for urban natural areas.

Project time line:

In the **Spring 1996** students conducted a baseline survey of the vegetation, soil, water, and wildlife on school property.

In **Autumn of 1996**, a group of 26, six through ten year old students met weekly for 6 weeks, researching and then designing both a native shade garden for a currently concrete courtyard on the northeast side of the school and a sun loving butterfly garden for the southwest corner of the school grounds. Barb Ruben, teacher and Jen Lieber a community volunteer facilitated the research project. They visited Bosky Dell's native plant nursery for a tour of native plants. On another occasion they met with Gretchen Vadnais, a landscape architect as they designed the layouts for their gardens. Students learned how to make scale maps of the proposed gardens with a key. These plans were presented to the school district architects in December of 1996.

In **Winter 1997** a group of about 25 parents and students met on a Saturday to dig up the butterfly garden - an area about 300 square feet. Riverview Cemetery and McFarlene's Bark Dust donated compost. Pumilite Building Products Building Supplies donated bricks for the border.

In **Spring, 1997** a number of activities have taken place revolving around the Naturescape Project. On April 4, 1997 we had our first planting party. Lori Laws, a friend of one of the teachers opened up her family's 23 acres for us to dig up native plants to transplant in our garden that day. Eleven families showed up on this teacher planning day to help plant. We purchased what ever plants we were not able to acquire from this property. The property is scheduled to be clear cut and developed in the Fall. The kindergarten class started lupine and aster flowers from seed which we placed in the garden as well.

Two parents, Mary Jo Long and Sarah Ferguson offered a mini-class

for students to design and construct mosaic butterfly stepping stones so children will be able to walk through the garden. Over 30 stepping stones were built by the students.

On May Day we released some painted lady butterflies that the kindergartners had raised in their room into our new garden. A kindergartner and two first graders read poems they had written for the occasion. Four of the kindergartner's held up signs stating the 4 elements needed to create a wildlife habitat: water, food, shelter, fresh air. Then we sang a Navajo Indian Chant as we released the butterflies.

Paul Tweten, a professional photographer and parent offered another mini-class for students to learn how to take nature photos while documenting the progress of the garden.

Samuel Stanton, one of the teacher's teenage son's skilled with technology worked with a group of students to create and maintain a web site for sharing information about this on-going project.

Cordelia Shea, another parent has started a mini-class for students interested in investigating the historical environment of the Sunnyside Neighborhood. This will continue into next autumn.

Betsy Toll, another parent is designing and has been piloting a weekly environmental studies course for the intermediate grades. She is presently writing a grant to seek funding for coordinating the course. She is planing to incorporate the creation of an annual Environmental Fair on campus as part of the course curriculum in which our butterfly garden will on display.

The Benson High School Graphics Department volunteered to create the signage for the garden. A Sunnyside parent came on a weekend and cemented to sign into the garden.

On June 3, 1997, Annie Painter with the Creative Art Institute came and taught an all day art workshop integrating art and science. She worked directly with the kindergarten and 4-5th grade classrooms- the children most involved in the Butterfly Garden. The students worked cooperatively and a major art display of butterflies decorates the school library.

During the summer of 1997, 10 different families came to the school and to responsibility for watering the garden for a week at a time. The consequence was we lost virtually no plants over the hot long summer. The first week of September a small group of parent volunteers did a major weeding of the garden.

In September 1997, a 3rd and 4th grade class constructed a mathematical grid of the garden and mapped out the location and size of each plant. This will be used for comparison work next year as we note the progress of the garden. They met with a professional botanist for help in identifying all the plants on the grid. They labeled most of the plants. In addition the students planted some camus bulbs in the garden as part of a study of native people of the Northwest.

During winter of 1998 a mini class of 8 to 12 students met after school on Mondays with Annie Winn , a parent who has a horticulture background. They designed the expanded butterfly garden. A weekend work party took place in

March and the garden was doubled in size.

In Spring 1998, two benches were ordered for the garden. A second butterfly release took place in the garden in April. A compost bin was purchased for maintaining the garden. Plans have been made for another summer watering and weeding schedule.

Partners in the project and their roles:

- Portland Family Cooperative Program at Sunnyside School (\$200 plus 100's of volunteer hours of parents with expertise)
- Metro Green spaces (\$1,800)
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (curriculum materials)
- Riverview Cemetery (compost)
- McFarlanes Bark Dust (compost)
- Pumilite Building Supplies (bricks)
- Mazamas (\$500)
- The Sunnyside Neighborhood Association (historical information)
- The Backyard Bird Shop (presentation on conditions for bird habitat)
- The Garden Center (at cost plants)
- Powell's books (at cost books)
- Bosky Dell Nursery (information and tour of native plant gardens)
- OSU Extension : Master Garden Program,(volunteer consultants)

Names and grades/subjects of the teacher whose classrooms involved in the project, total number of children participating:

The project uses a core of seven classroom - seven teachers.

Barb Ruben (kindergarten classroom) (project coordinator)
Muriel Bennett (4th-5th mixed age classroom)
Ann Grant (1st-3rd mixed age classroom)
Lael Pinney (4th-5th mixed age classroom)
Steve Reardon (2nd-3rd mixed age classroom)
Ann Torgeson (4th-5th mixed age classroom)
Bob Tourtillot (1st-3rd mixed age classroom)

The following **parent volunteers** continue to be extremely involved in the entire process and in the teaching of mini-classes for interested students:

Cordelia Shea (environmental planner)
Sarah Ferguson(professional artist, gardener)
Mary Jo Long (artist,newsletter editor)
Paul Tweten (professional photographer, master gardener)
Rebecca Pepper (technology consultant)
Kim Lakin (historical preservationist)
Jan Kahn (natural construction projects)
Annie Winn (horticulturist)

Approximately 150 students, parents in the school, the neighborhood association and others have been involved. The entire school community continues to benefit from the project, and through Internet links and newsletters, a much broader audience will be informed.

Plans/Ideas for integrating the habitat into Sunnyside's curriculum:

The school's philosophy is to teach thematic integrated curriculum. Math, science, art, reading, social studies, and writing are all integrated within this project's scope. The project has resulted in creating a demonstration area for neighborhood habitat efforts. Progress and results will be communicated through signage, newsletters, Worldwide Web links and an annual plant sale. These project activities, both indoor and out, incorporate directly into each of the Portland Public Schools' curriculum strands: a) historical understandings, b) geographic understanding, c) political understandings, d) social/cultural understandings, e) economic understandings and f) environmental understandings, thus highlighting that the environment is not restricted to one class. Through the creation of the butterfly garden students we are able to have concrete hands-on experimental learning in the science, art, math, writing, and reading.

Metro Greenspaces Environmental Education Grant

Sunnyside Elementary School Naturescape Garden

Status Report, May 1995

Project Objective

To use development of a naturescape on school grounds as the focal point for incorporating environmental education and appreciation into the daily lives of students, their families and the Sunnyside neighborhood.

Project Setting

The project is taking place on the grounds of Sunnyside Elementary School, 3421 S.E. Salmon Street in Portland. Fairly typical of many urban school settings, the site currently provides little habitat diversity. The primary components are grass, camellia bushes and blacktop, with a limited number of trees.

Sunnyside School Community

The Sunnyside School community includes students of diverse abilities and backgrounds. Programs at the school include: Vietnamese ESL, Project SAIL, Hearing Impaired Program, American Sign Language Program and the Family Cooperative School. The naturescape will provide learning opportunities for students from all parts of the school.

Status

Small groups of students from six classrooms have mapped the school grounds and are completing a baseline inventory. The inventory includes:

- existing plants, animals and insects
- soil types and conditions
- light exposure
- ground and air temperatures
- wet and dry areas

Information from these studies are being recorded and noted on the map of the grounds.

In the participating classrooms, teachers, students and parent volunteers are discussing key components of habitat and what the baseline inventory reveals about the existing habitat.

Students will be working in small groups to:

- research historical presence of plants and animals in the area to compare with the baseline results
- identify habitat requirements of indigenous and migratory birds, mammals, butterflies, insects and amphibians
- identify suitable plants
- develop initial proposals for target species and appropriate habitat construction
- document the project and
- communicate plans, activities and results.

Parents and teachers have collected curriculum materials and books to assist student activities. In addition, representatives of the Wild School Sites program have met with project representatives to discuss support and plans.

Metro Naturescape Grant Evaluation
Sunnyside School
Spring 1998
Barbara Ruben: Project Coordinator

Successes:

We were able to meet a number of the goals we had set out for ourselves. Number One we involved members of all four of the different programs based at Sunnyside School in the various aspects of the process: the neighborhood, the Vietnamese Bilingual, and the Regional Deaf and Family Cooperative School. Students learned about the importance of wildlife habitat, participated in the planning of the garden, helped in the preparing the ground, planting and maintaining the garden. We were able to involve members of the Sunnyside Community in the process as well. Teachers were able to integrate art, literacy, math, and science into the learning process. We have now an established habitat for wildlife on our school grounds that can be used for ecosystem study for years to come. We were fortunate to have a number of highly skilled dedicated families who donated their services to make this garden happen. Almost all the work was accomplished through the time and energy of families, frequently giving up their Saturdays. The garden was watered daily during the summer of 1997 by different families in the Family Cooperative School. We had no loss of plants during the first hot summer! We have started a tradition of now two years of raising butterflies and releasing them in our butterfly garden. The garden was doubled during the second year and redesigned by a parent and student group. Having the money from Metro enabled us to buy native plants, have topsoil delivered, a bird bath and benches, and the materials to have students make tile stepping stones.

Barriers and struggles along the way.

Primarily a parent wrote this grant but then the family left the school soon after the grant was awarded. The grant sat for almost a year before the principal asked me to take it on and get it running. The whole process took much longer than had expected. We were faced with a number of bureaucratic barriers at the school district level and were never allowed to build the shade garden originally designed by the students. Fortunately each year new families came on board adding their skills and energy to do the hard work necessary to get this off the ground.

Cautions for others:

When writing a grant examine who will be "in charge." Has it been clearly defined? Is that person probably going to be around throughout the course of the grant's operations? Is there a corps of backup people who also have an interest and willingly to take it on if necessary? Is someone on board who knows how to work with "the system"? If it is within a school environment have teachers been included in any part of the process? Will they be open to integrating the project into their curriculum? Basically do you have "buy-in" by those needed to make it happen?

BUTTERFLIES set tree in Sunnyside garden



Jordan releases a butterfly at Sunnyside school's butterfly garden

By NANCY TANNER

A special project began at Sunnyside school in 1996, one that combines the process of science with the beauty of nature. Barb Rubin, a teacher at Sunnyside, decided to take the children through the transformation of a caterpillar to butterfly.

Since that time the learning project has expanded. On June 10, 1998, another butterfly release party took place in the Sunnyside garden. This time, nine Painted Lady butterflies flew into an even bigger and more nature friendly garden. Thanks to the efforts of people like Annie Winn, Metro and the parents and teachers of Sunnyside co-op school.

Sunnyside co-op school requires parents to donate 100

hours of volunteer time a year. That's how Annie became involved in the garden and why the garden has grown. Her son attends the school. Metro gives special grants for projects that they feel enhance livability in the city. Several other parents spent time working on this grant which helped with the money to purchase plants for the garden. It now contains many native plants (like salal and evergreen huckleberry) that keep the gardening simple along with Buddleia (butterfly plant), hardy fuchsias and other insect and bird attracting plants.

They hope to combine efforts with the National Wildlife Federation and do an entire school yard habitat in the near future.

The larvae were purchased from The Nature Conser-

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vancy and kept alive by the children until they hatched on Monday June 8. Their release party was perfectly timed for the following Wednesday.

Butterflies
By Kathryn Coulterpark

Butterflies
Fluttering, flying,
Smelling, gathering, sleeping
Looking like a little blur
Moth.

The Caterpillar
By Christina G. Rossetti

Brown and furry
Caterpillar in a hurry;
Take your walk
To the sturdy leaf or stalk.

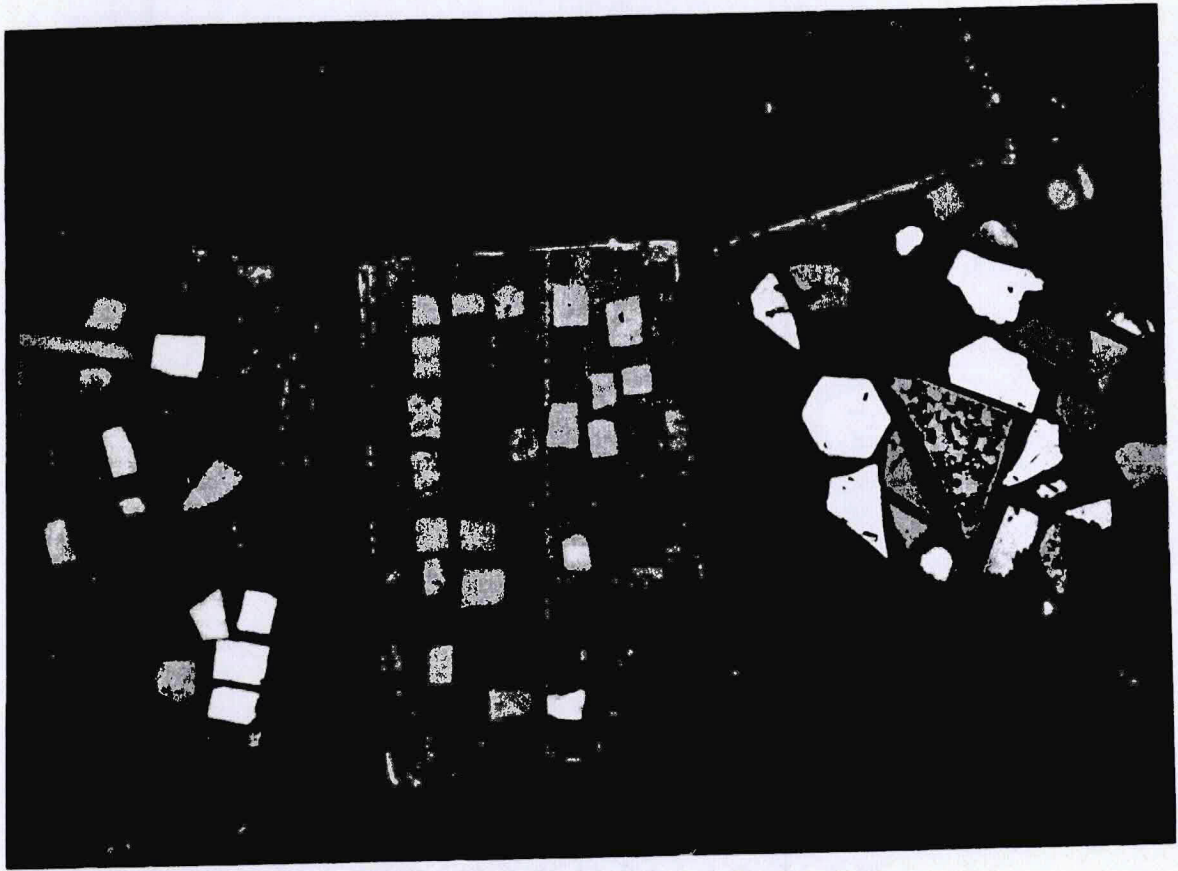
May no toad spy you,
May the little birds pass you by;
Spin and die,
To live again a butterfly.



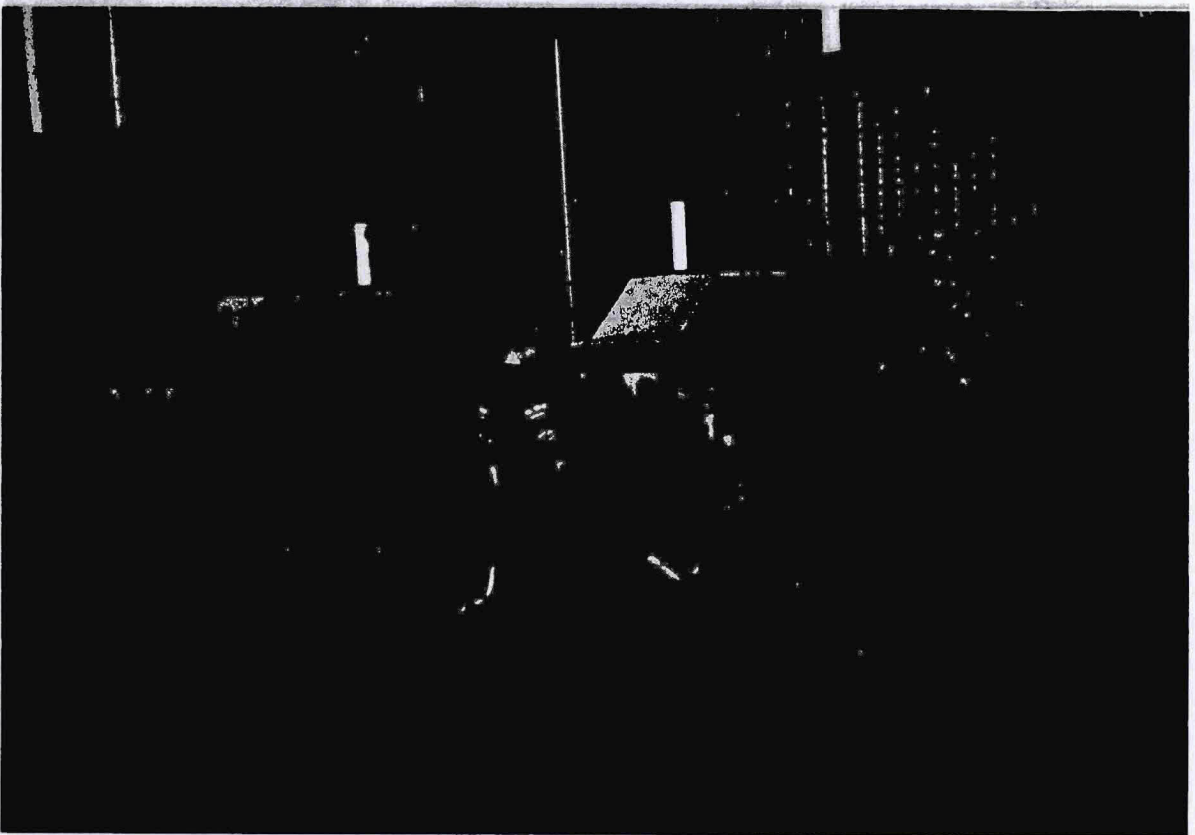
Release day in the butterfly garden at Sunnyside School

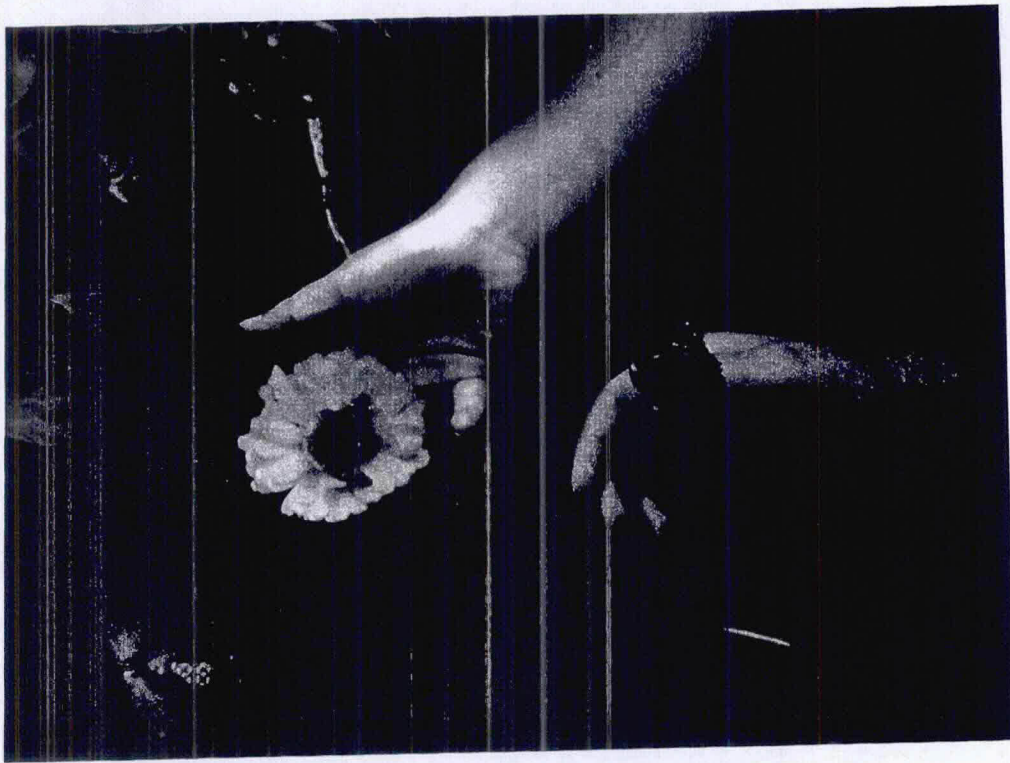
SE Examiner July 1998







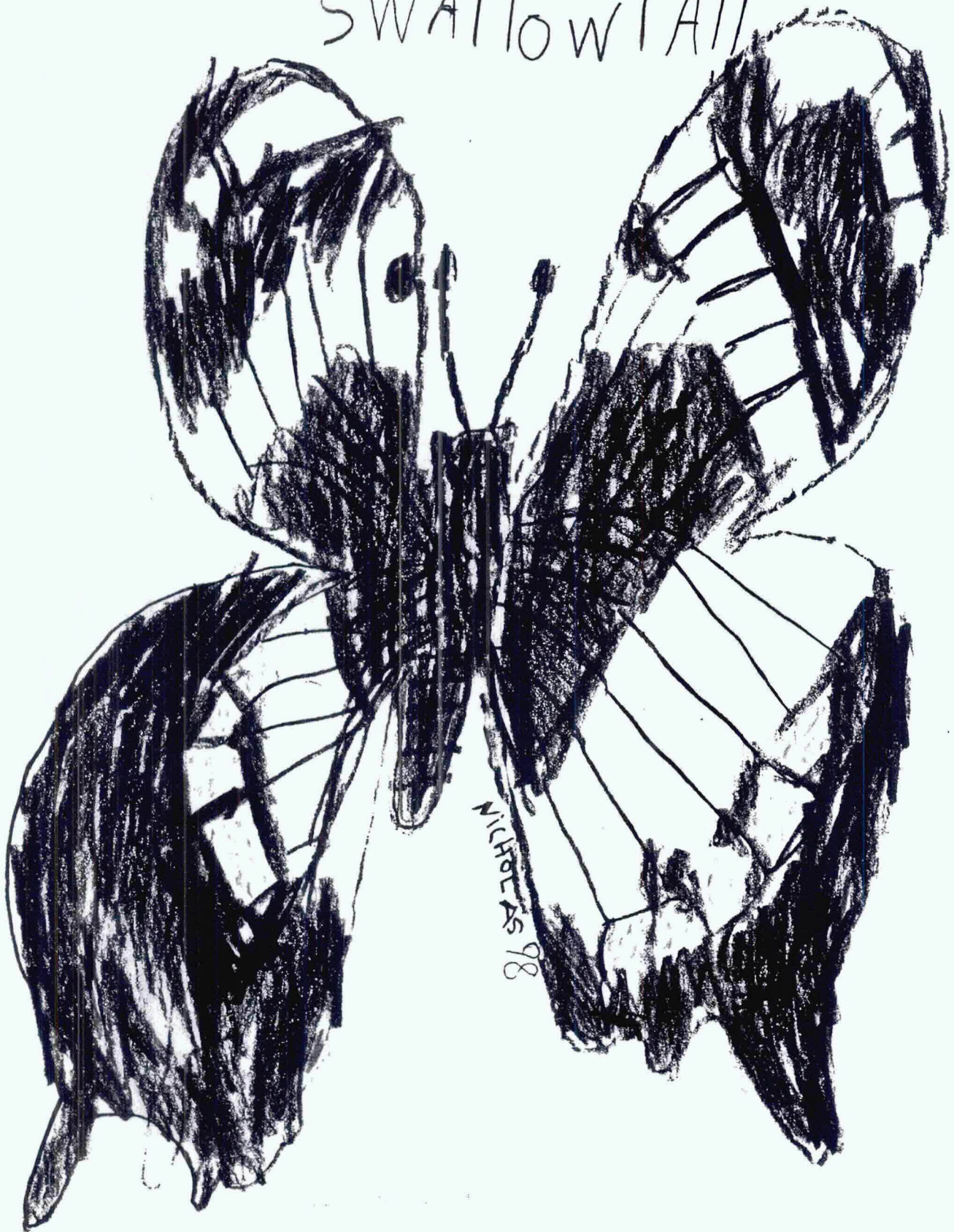




RUBY-THROATED
HUMMINGBIRD



SWALLOWTAIL



NICHOLS
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Scrub Jay, Coastal

Alec Vanrossum 5/13/98







