

## **Greenspaces Environmental Education Projects Final Report**

### **Kraxberger Middle School**

Our Wetland project truly began over two years ago when Bob Stewart, a district administrator in charge of school grounds, and a few teachers discussed the possibility of converting a drainage ditch on Kraxberger Middle School's back lot into a wetland. That idea led us to applying for the Metro Greenspaces Educational Grant, as we needed funds to help this become reality. Fortunately, our request for funds was granted by Metro in 1996, and soon thereafter, we went to work on our "new wetland".

Our first activities were to educate and build a respect for wetland areas with our students, as they were to be part of all planning and activities related to our wetland from this point on. Several speakers visited our classrooms to inform students and teachers alike about wetland plants, soil, and many other aspects of wetland life. Teachers took their classes to the wetland area to observe, record, and discuss activity already beginning to take place around the wetland area. Also, plans were made for future plantings, cleanings, etc. In the spring, our district hired an excavator to enlarge and grade the wetland area. This was a huge improvement!

In the fall of 1997, a work party was formed to clean, add mulch to the soil, and rototill in preparation for planting wetland plants. A few weeks later, a team made up of students, teachers, Gladstone citizens, the EnviroCorps, husbands, and Lynn Wilson spent a few morning hours planting hundreds of wetland plants purchased from Boski Dell Nursery. After these two work-party activities, our Kraxberger Wetland was beginning to take great shape!

A month or so later, more wetland plants were added. And then winter set in. We watched as the wetland filled with water, and the plants held on. However, there was a mortality rate due to trampling feet that didn't notice plants in their way. We recognized a great need for a fence and an observation deck, both ideas included in our original plan. That is when Jeff Jaren, a scout on his way to earning his Eagle Scout rank, approached us asking if there was a project he could complete to enhance our wetland. We suggested the observation deck, and he agreed to build it for his Eagle Scout project. Jeff completed this beautiful deck near the end of February.

Soon after, John Bell, another scout wishing to earn his Eagle Scout rank, met with us and asked if he could complete a wetland project. We suggested a split rail fence to protect the wetland area, and he agreed. John's project was completed the first week in June.

This past week, we met with Phil Evans, a third scout working on his Eagle Scout rank, and planned a path around the wetland that includes a bench for his project. He will finish his path and bench this summer.

Other future projects to ensure the success of our wetland area are described in another part of this report.

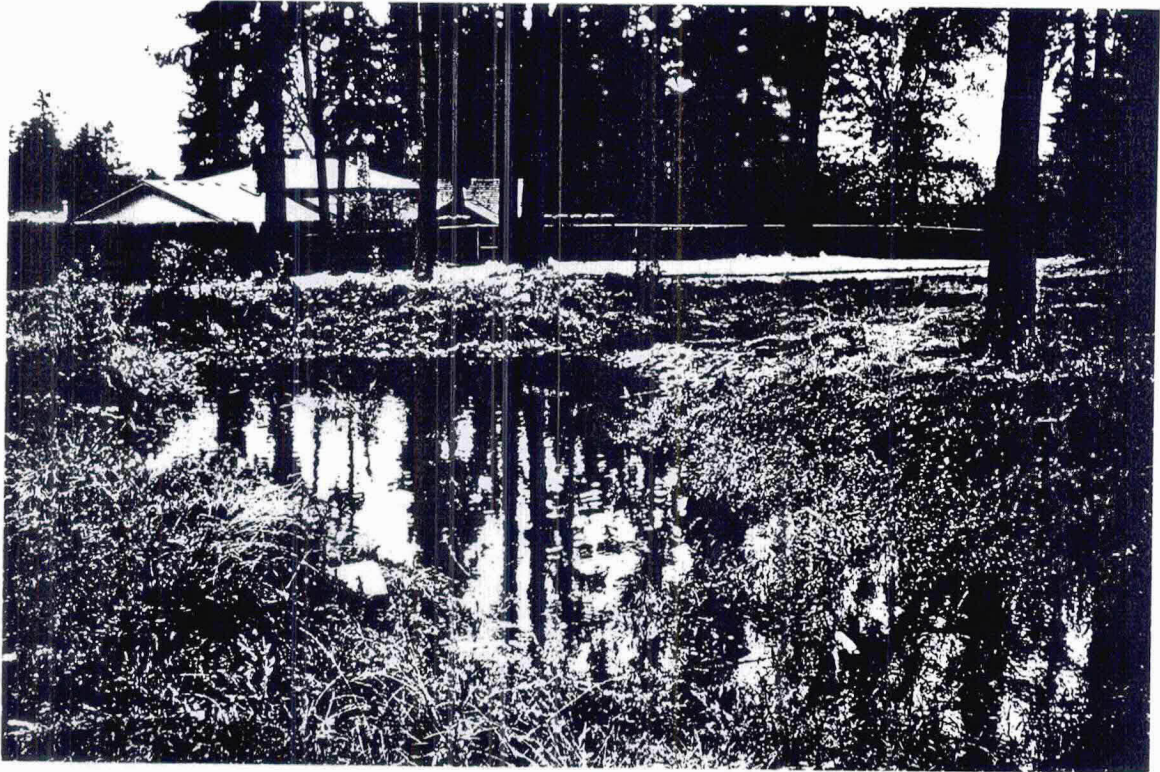
The Kraxberger Wetland Project has been very successful. In the last year and a half, we have seen an idea develop into a reality. The Kraxberger wetland is now a natural area attracting a variety of wetland life. In the spring, ducks are seen daily using the water and feeding nearby. In addition to its natural use as a wetland, it has also enhanced the beauty of the Kraxberger school grounds. The students look upon it with pride and the classes enjoy both its beauty and learning resources.

Other positive aspects of this project have been school-wide and community-wide participation in planning and developing this area. Especially helpful and deserving of recognition have been the EnviroCorps, Eagle Scouts, and Metro (particularly Lynn Wilson who was always available to answer questions and help out). Local merchants, such as Parr Lumber, contributed as well.

You asked us to report what did not work. A couple of things come to mind. One, we already mentioned: we needed a fence to protect the plants we had planted, and because they weren't protected, we lost several of them. Secondly, we found that reimbursement from Metro was difficult and time consuming because we had to spend first and apply for reimbursement. It is hard to ask people to spend their own money and then wait for months to be reimbursed. Thankfully, the Gladstone School District was able to provide assistance in some situations. To be honest, we feel that the reimbursement process is cumbersome and could be modified to make it more responsive to the grantees.



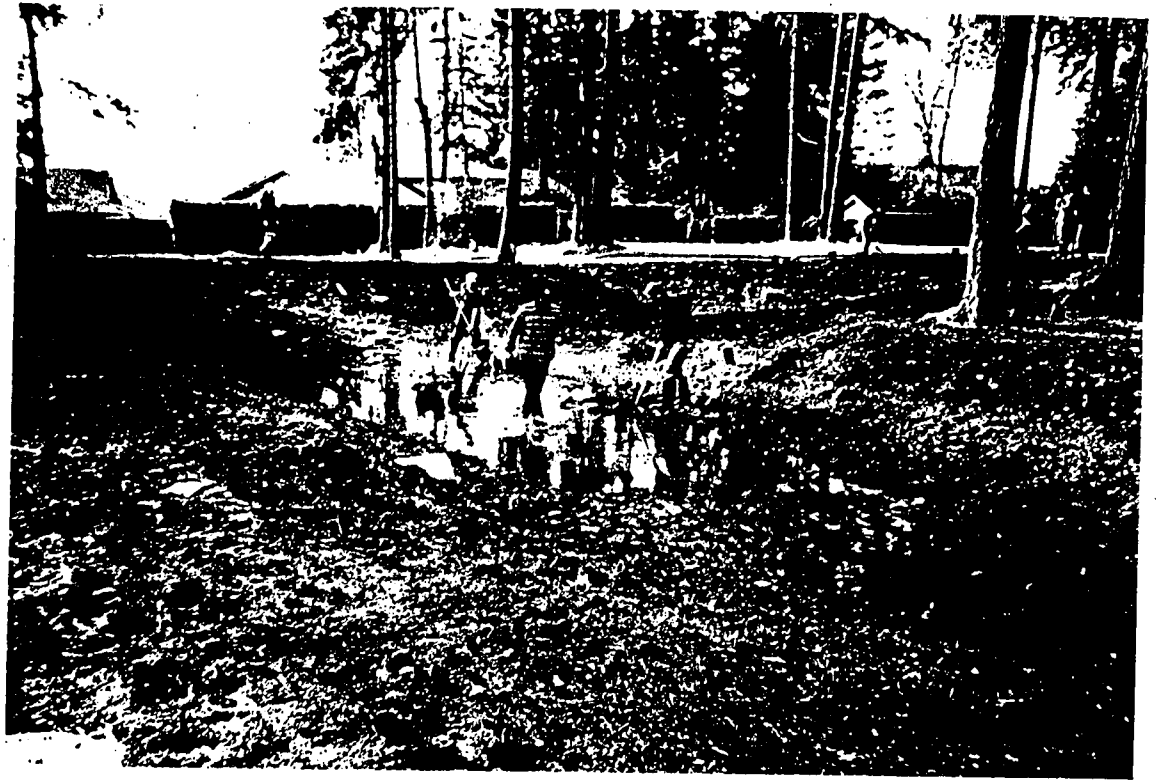
KRAXBERGER Middle School  
*Wetlands Project*



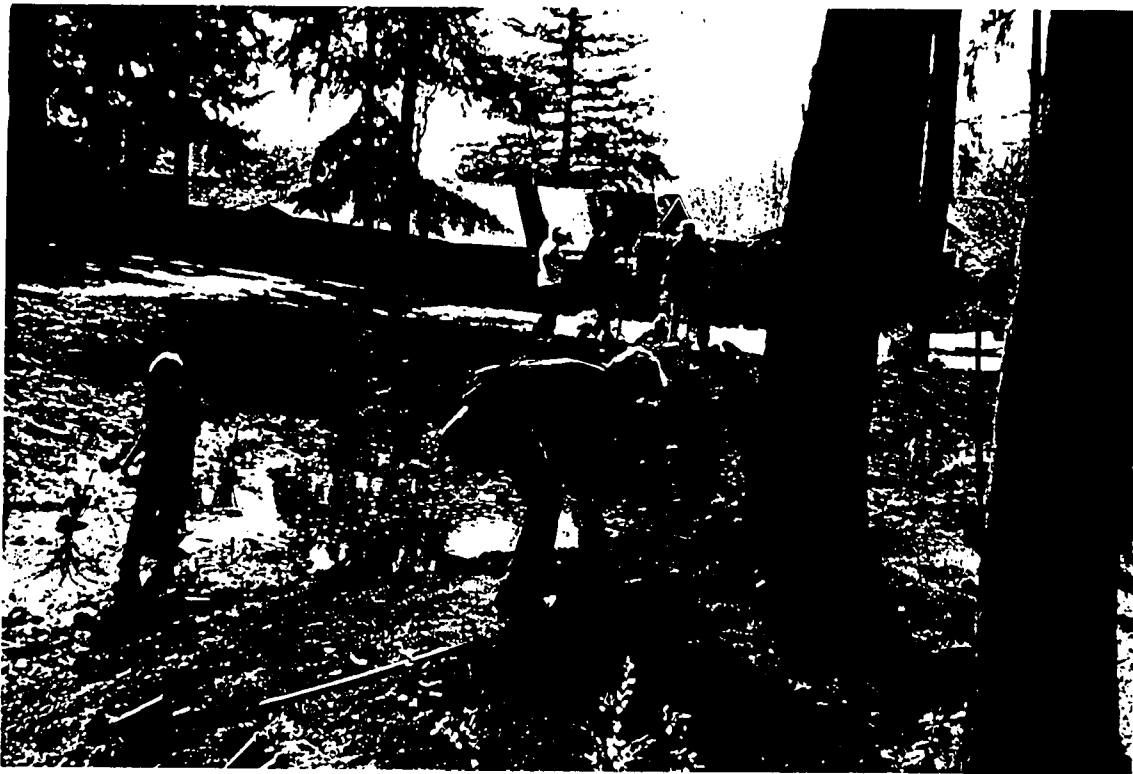
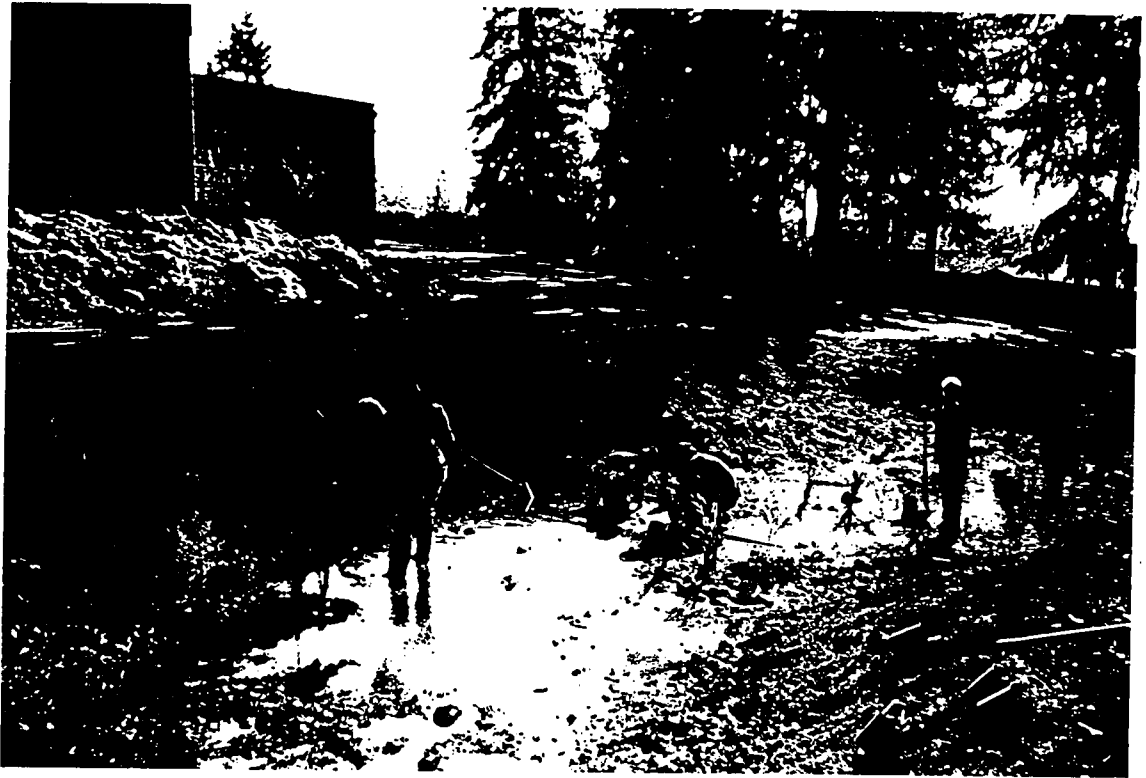
Where we began...



After a student and parent team rototilled the area, a group of teachers, staff and students cleaned up and added mulch to the soil.

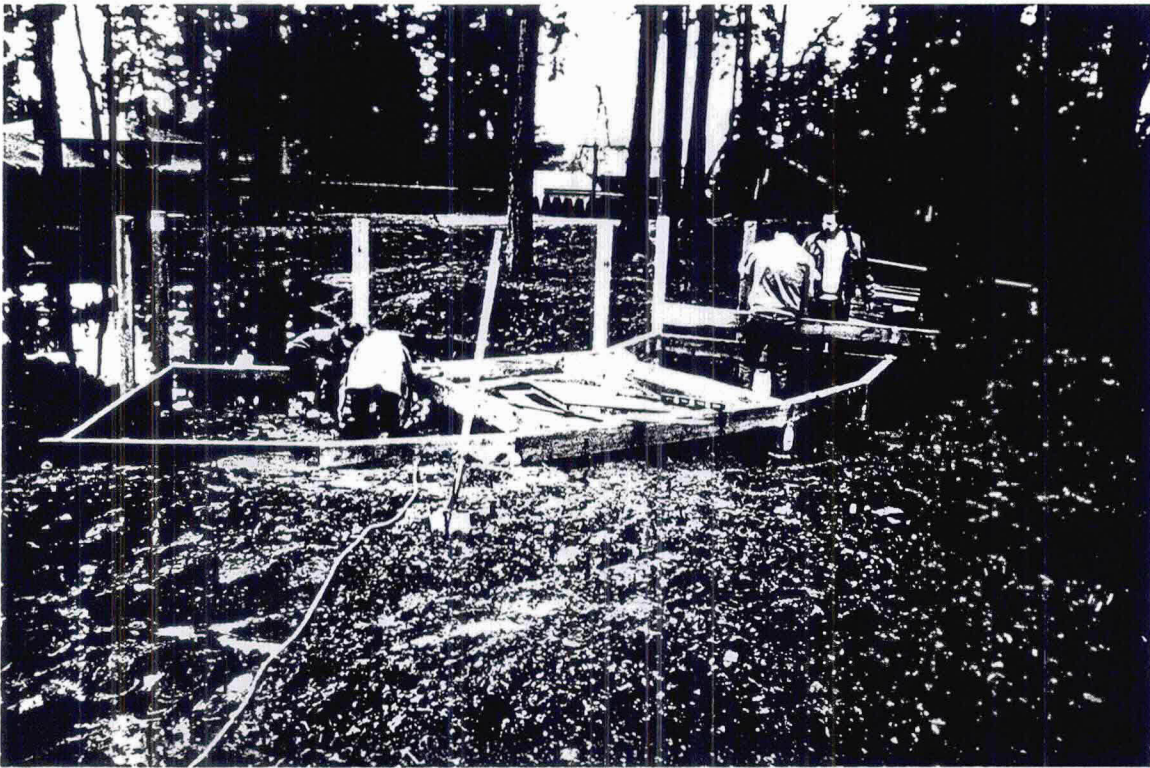


Next, students, teachers, staff, Gladstone community members, EnviroCorps volunteers and Lynn Wilson, METRO, spent a day of good, muddy fun planting native plants, trees and wildflowers to beautify and enhance the wetlands.



More planting and beautification images.



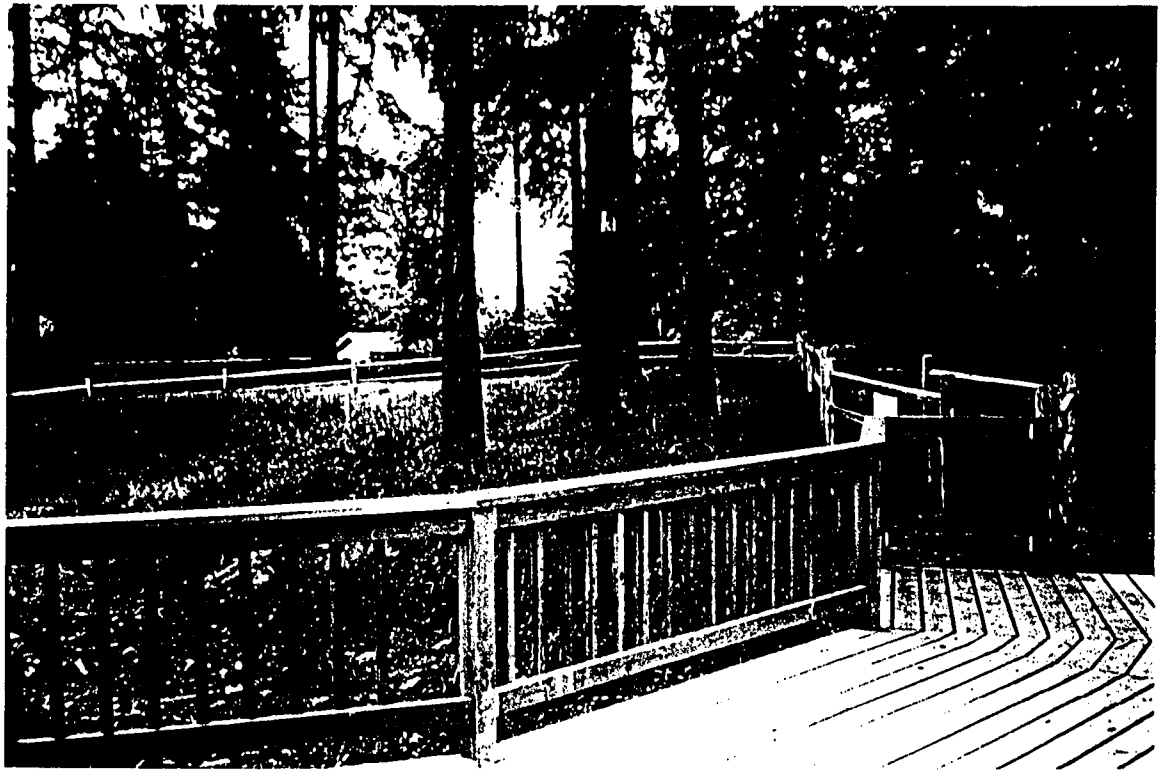


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and... observation deck for our wetlands.



A school-wide clean up and beautification day was organized in May and the wetlands received much attention with the addition of birdhouses and the planting of more native wildflowers and plants, as well as, the removal of garbage in the area.





In the first part of June, John Bell completed his Eagle Scout with the creation of a split-rail fence around the perimeter of the wetlands area. Finally, our wetlands was truly "established". Beautification, restoration, observation and education of the Kraxberger Wetlands will continue to take place when school resumes in the fall.

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### **Kraxberger Middle School Wetlands Project Future Success**

The future of the Kraxberger Middle School Wetlands Area is an exciting one of hands-on exploration and adventure by school, community and nature members. The wetlands will serve as an outdoor classroom to be used extensively by the 6th grade to prepare for Outdoor School, as well as, 7th and 8th grade science classes and a new class, 8th grade Advanced Art and Environment. The wetlands will also serve as an area of beauty and nature observation and education for the Gladstone community.

The Advanced Art and Environment Class (A &E) will primarily be responsible for maintaining, beautifying and educating the school and community about the wetlands. The class will facilitate various maintenance and beautification issues like, additional plantings, constructing birdhouses, birdfeeders, bathhouses, squirrel houses and duck boxes, and Naturescaping the surrounding areas, as well as, organizing school-wide clean-up and beautification days.

The A & E class will also be responsible for the education aspect of the wetlands, their own education, the school's and the community's. In the fall, students will be learning all about wetlands, conducting tests, making observations, recording information and making action plans. Students will be creating a visual and written field guide to the wetlands, as well as, painting signs with graphics and text to educate the public that comes to visit about wetlands, native plants and animals. The idea is to create a hands-on, user-friendly and educational wetlands by students for everyone.

There is much enthusiasm in the school and community for the wetlands; this is visible through the endless support and volunteers that make things happen. Students are excited to work more extensively in the wetlands this fall. The Kraxberger Wetlands Project has truly helped shaped the school community; students have a lot pride, respect, care and interest in their environment.

KRAXBERGER Middle School  
*Wetlands Project*



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In February 1998, Jeff [redacted] earned his Eagle Scout by designing and constructing an amazing observation deck for our wetlands.



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