

# GREENING OF SCHOOLYARDS

## CREATING HANDS-ON FIELD STATIONS FOR STUDENTS

PREPARED BY:



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### CHALLENGE

**HOW TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE HANDS-ON LEARNING TO MEET NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS AT THEIR SCHOOL?**



**Many school campus look like this:**

- Very little natural settings
- Landscaping is minimal to parking lot trees, street trees and minimal landscaping
- Very little habitat and nature, therefore very small chance for direct observations and hands-on learning of science and STEM principals
- Limited places to sit and gather as a class, no outdoor classroom
- Limited access to features to support learning like specific gardens, sink/water spigot, display panels, interpretive signage
- Many curriculum lessons teach about non-local species, such as polar bears, whales,

### WHAT WE KNOW.....

**Kids have less and less chances to experience NATURE, an "extinction of experience"**

As Robert Michael Pyle stated at this conference a couple of years ago, kids are lacking spaces, places and opportunities to explore and fall in love with nature, to understand it on a level where they feel safe.

We have the opportunities to partner with local agencies and non-profits to increase access to nature on school campuses. Green Schoolyards is now a movement with lots of support and backing by science for its benefits:

- Improves academic performance
- Provides equitable and inclusive nature experiences for all
- Reduces stress and calms
- Promotes hands-on learning
- Creates skills building and career-focused learning for the next generation of us!

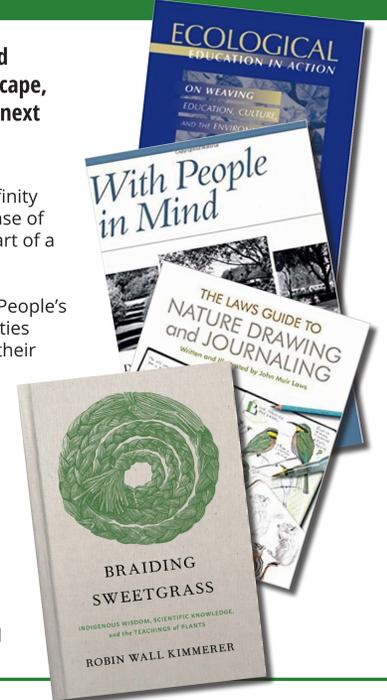
**Books and resources that showcase and encourage US to help change our landscape, share our love of nature to inspire the next generation:**

"What are the principles of ecological education.....Development of personal affinity with the earth.....Ground learning in a sense of place.....Create an experience of being part of a larger community"

"People care deeply about information....People's fatigued mental state is restored by activities that are fascinating and compatible with their purposes. All of us rely on mental maps...."

"You can train yourself to be more curious. Be active, bold, intentional, and playful in your questioning. Seek out mysteries and the world opens itself to you."

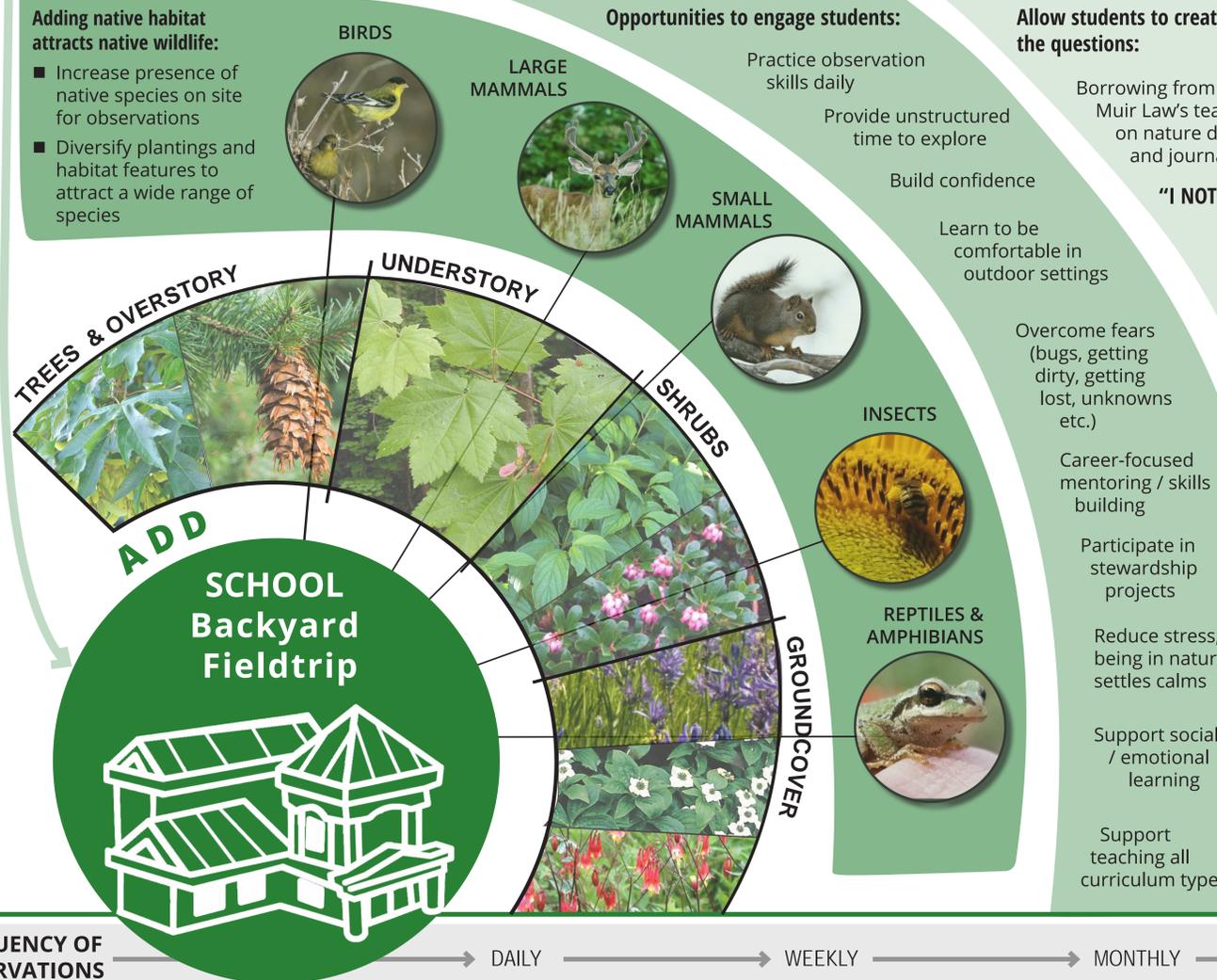
"Philosophers call this state of isolation and disconnection "species loneliness" - a deep, unnamed sadness stemming from .....the loss of relationship." (to plants and



### OPPORTUNITY

**Adding native habitat attracts native wildlife:**

- Increase presence of native species on site for observations
- Diversify plantings and habitat features to attract a wide range of species



**REFERENCES:**

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- 2 Children & Nature Network - Schoolyards Hub. <https://www.childrenandnature.org/initiatives/schoolyards/hub/>
- 3 US Fish & Wildlife Service - Schoolyard Habitat Project Guide - <https://www.fws.gov/external-affairs/marketing-communications/printing-and-publishing/publications/2012-Schoolyard-Habitat-Guide.pdf>
- 4 Terrain.org - Interview with Robert Michael Pyle - <https://www.terrain.org/2015/interviews/robert-michael-pyle/>
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- 7 Gregory Smith & Dilafuz Williams. 1999. *Ecological Education in Action - On Weaving Education, Culture and the Environment*. State University of New York Press.
- 8 Robin Wall Kimmerer. 2020. *Braiding Sweetgrass - Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants*. Milkweed Editions.

**PHOTO CREDITS:**

- 1 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (J. Cummins, T. Sirdegas)
- 2 Google Earth (aerial view)
- 3 Partner organizations, as noted by their logo
- 4 Hough Elementary Green Team and Garden Club (J. Kleiner)

