

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

### WATERSHED PROGRAM – LIVING OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Conducted by: City of Fort Collins Utilities Department

On the Web: <http://www.fcgov.com/utilities/edu-watershed.php>

Contact: Marcee Camenson

Project Partners:

Contract Period: 2002-2003

NPS Funding: \$ 4,800

Matching Funds: \$10,558

The WaterSHED Program is part of the Fort Collins Utilities education program that provides outdoor education and direct program assistance to teachers. This project, utilizing a NPS Outreach Grant, was to develop an outdoor classroom near Beattie Elementary School.

The project involved storm water benefits and creation of a wetland. As project manager, the Utilities Department secured proper permission and right-of-way for use of the City's land and provided matching funds for much of the work involved in assessment, planning, construction and employee time.

A survey was sent to all residents within 500 feet of the proposed site. Seventy-five per cent of respondents supported the conceptual outdoor classroom, as did representatives from the school.

A storm water engineer designed the pond and boardwalk. Most of the materials utilized, including planks, were made from recycled materials.

The pond, boardwalk and trail were completed by a Utility Department crew.





The WaterSHED Program staff coordinated with Trees, Water, People to conduct two neighborhood tree and shrub plantings. Native trees, bushes and plants were co-purchased and volunteers participated in two events planting the outdoor classroom.

An interpretative sign, called "From Watershed to Waters Edge," explains how runoff from those living in the watershed affects the quality of the water. A digital photo helps readers to identify their home within the watershed.

The WaterSHED program purchased a poster size display case to be used throughout the year to provide information about watersheds, water quality, runoff, pesticide and fertilize use as well as information about native plants and animals.



This learning environment for students as well as community members will be the catalyst for a more comprehensive understanding of our local watershed. This project is an efficient and economical method of increasing awareness of wetland issues such as nonpoint source pollution.