Grant Middle School

Blanche Lake Buffer Zone Project

Creating a Buffer Zone at Blanche Lake

Students at Grant Middle School have worked very hard this year on improving their community park. Blanche Lake has a city owned park along one side of the lake. There is a ball field, playground, swimming beach, dock, picnic shelter, and walking trails.

The problem that the Grant Middle School students saw at the park was large amounts of storm water entering the lake. Along with the storm water comes pollutants and debris. Much of the park is mowed right to the edge of the lake. The solution that the students came up with was planting a buffer zone along the edge of the lake.

The students contacted the city to see if they could plant a buffer zone. They explained that the buffer zone would slow storm water, stop debris, and create more biodiversity. The City agreed and the students got to work planning and ordering supplies.

On May 19, the Grant students started their work day by raking leaves and cleaning the planting site. They then planted over 600 native plants and 8 native bushes along the lake edge. The students also made plant markers to help identify the plants. Fifth grade students created bookmarks for the Grant Area District Library to educate our community about the buffer zone.

Our Community Partners:

- City of Grant
- Weesies Brothers Farms, Inc.
- Mellema's Nursery
- Grant Public Schools
- West Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative

WEESIES BROTHERS FARMS INC. GARDEN CENTER LANDSCAPING

Grant Public Schools

2013-2014

3 Teachers
Grades 5 and 7
150 students involved

"I had a lot of fun working with everyone. The best thing about today was helping the community."

Denise

"We helped the community out by cleaning up the lake and making it look nice. We planted lots of different plants and a few bushes."

Carlie

What does community-based education look like?

- Planning and designing
- Student presentations
- Learning about community and working with community partners
- Analyzing and graphing data
- Mentoring students

Students explore possible stewardship projects at Blanche Lake. A rain garden and buffer zone are discussed

Students decide to create a buffer zone.

Plants, bushes, and mulch or ordered and delivered to the worksite.

Fall Winter Spring

Students create a design and make final decisions on native plant choices. Bookmarks are made for the grant library.

Students rake along the lake edge, plant, and mulch. They create plant identification markers to educate the community about the native plants.