

Sustainable Master Landscape Plan for Cook-Wissahickon Elementary School

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Cost: \$1.4 million
Client: Cook-Wissahickon Elementary School Status: 2008
Size: 3.9 acres

Viridian Landscape Studio and the Community Design Collaborative were selected to develop a conceptual design for a Sustainable Master Landscape Plan for Cook-Wissahickon Elementary School. The school serves 350 kindergarten through eighth grade students in the Philadelphia School District. Viridian worked with a dedicated task force comprised of parents, students, teachers, and community members who are committed to making the school more sustainable, environmentally-responsible, beautiful and fun.

The plan calls for improving the school grounds in a sustainable way to provide rich educational opportunities for the students and community. A variety of landscape types - meadow, woodland grove, orchard, rain gardens, and teaching gardens - provide settings for school lessons, beautify the campus and improve the environment through species diversity and restoration of natural systems. Students can circulate through the space that provides a variety of settings for play, chase and exploration. The plan looks beyond the school boundaries and encourages linkages between the school and adjacent Fairmount Park. Connections can be made through trips to the park to observe the mature forms of species planted in the orchard and woodland entry grove, allowing students to take their lessons from the classroom to the real world.



Inset: Raised beds are used for teaching gardens. The adjacent picnic tables serve as outdoor classroom desk space, prep areas, or a place to sit and enjoy the playground that is open seven days a week. A stone dust path leads students past a rain garden and through an orchard of fruit and nut bearing trees. This area encompasses the existing storm inlet and helps filter stormwater and reduce stormwater runoff flow.

Illustrative Landscape Master Plan