

Stormwater Projects at AVUSD School Campuses

The Anderson Valley Unified School District (AVUSD), in partnership with the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD), implemented Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater retrofit projects at both the AV Elementary School and AV Jr/Sr High School campuses through a State Water Resources Control Board, Prop 13 grant called DROPS (Drought Response Outreach Program for Schools).

AVUSD was one of 32 schools in California to receive competitive grant funds along with Ukiah Unified School District. The project elements are designed to capture stormwater from the parking lots and roofs at both AVUSD campuses in filter basins, rain gardens, and water storage tanks that allow the water to spread out, sink into the soil to recharge groundwater basins, and/or be stored in tanks for use during the dry season.

Stormwater at both campuses drains directly into adjoining creeks, Robinson Creek at AV Jr/Sr High and Con Creek at AV Elementary School, which provide critical habitat for threatened steelhead trout and other aquatic species. Boonville receives an average of 37 inches of rain a year. By installing just over 6,000 square feet of low impact development (LID) infrastructure and capturing water from over 70,000 square feet of impervious surfaces, the project enables the infiltration of approximately 1.4 million gallons of stormwater per year.

A goal of the project, along with managing stormwater, is to increase the knowledge of basic watershed dynamics and proactive ecological problem solving among K-12 grades. The project provides opportunities for students to learn about stormwater management and pervious vs. impervious surfaces. Students also learn about watershed dynamics including, soils, water, flows, slope, and the effects of pollution. The students assisted with planting the rain gardens and stormwater basins which taught them about the value of California native/Mediterranean, drought tolerant, pollinator friendly plants and the role they play in filtering water and pollutants. Finally, the students had opportunities to participate in rainwater catchment projects by designing and painting murals on the water tanks that reflect the principles of “slow it, spread it, sink it, and store it”.

The DROPS project more broadly offers Anderson Valley and Navarro watershed residents examples of LID stormwater strategies. It also helps beautify AVUSD campuses and offers students, and the public, relatively simple drought resilient, climate beneficial practices to bring home.

For more information about stormwater projects and the DROPS Program call:

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