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HOT

Hill Behind High School Tennis Court to Become 4.5 Acre Meadow

By MEGAN WILLIAMS Daily News-Record Dec 3, 2018 Updated 8 hrs ago



The hill above the tennis courts at Harrisonburg High School will be converted into a 4.5-acre meadow of native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees. [Buy Now](#)

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HARRISONBURG — The hill behind the tennis courts at Harrisonburg High School will be converted into a 4.5-acre meadow of native grasses, plants and flowers over the next two years.

Trevor Chase, a science teacher at HHS, has teamed up with On the Road Collaborative, a nonprofit after-school program, to take on the project.

He's also working with professors at James Madison University to create the natural garden. The meadow will be a place for students to learn and relax in a peaceful setting should they need it, Chase said.

The meadow also will attract pollinators and different bird species.

Organizers are still in the planning phase for developing the meadow. In the spring, Chase and his students will kill the grass on the hill by covering it. They will monitor the hillside for a year before planting the native grasses and plants.

They are looking to plant five grass species, including Indian grass. About eight wildflower species will be planted, including black-eyed Susan. Shrubs also will be added along with trees.

"A lot of our research has yet to be done," Chase said. "It is a main goal for the students to carry out as we start our design."

In spring 2020, planting will take place, and the native vegetation will take a year to mature.

The school received a \$3,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, as well as a \$1,000 grant from the Harrisonburg Education Foundation, to fund the project.

Chase got the idea for the native meadow from Myron Blosser, co-director of the HHS STEM Academy, who Chase said always had a plan for doing something on the unused hillside.

It was during a trip to Eastern Mennonite University, where a similar native meadow has been planted, that Chase began formulating a plan for a meadow at Harrisonburg High School.

Chase will give a presentation on the project to the Harrisonburg School Board during its regular meeting tonight.

The board will meet in City Council Chambers in City Hall at 7 p.m.

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