

Final Report

Do-It-Yourself Vermiculture Composting in the School

2016

The North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council received grant funding from the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency to conduct a vermiculture composting program in Sonoma County. The Council also raised matching funds from the Sunshine Rotary Club of Santa Rosa and private donors to conduct the program, which included both outreach and on-the-ground change through school classroom presentations and by deploying worm compost bins at selected schools.

The Council commenced this project in October of 2015 and completed the project on December 31, 2016. The project called for conducting 30 “*Recycling Changes Everything*” presentations in schools in Sonoma County, introducing 20 small classroom size worm bins into schools, and placing seven school-wide vermiculture bins at seven schools. These activities were completed by the end of the grant period (extended until December 31, 2016 with an approved extension request).

The project included outreach to the media to announce America Recycles Day on November 15, 2016. To celebrate this national day of recycling, a press release and e-letters were sent to invite media and other guests to visit a classroom during a presentation as well as view a demonstration of an onsite compost worm bin at Apple Blossom School in Sebastopol on November 14.

The outreach presentations reached over 1,300 students along with their teachers, and others whom the students told about the experience. Eight schools started schoolwide worm bin composting, additionally forming onsite groups to handle the waste for an ongoing composting program. Diverting garbage waste from the schools to aerobic worm bins producing rich garden compost both reduces the waste footprint of the school as well as reduces the school’s methane contribution to climate change.



Typical worm bin

Table 1 lists the 30 schools which received the presentations, and Table 2 lists schools where additional classrooms received bonus presentations under this program as part of increased matching contribution—these additional resources allowed us to expand the program to other classrooms at the same school where presentations were already scheduled. Table 3 lists the schools where school-wide worm bins were placed—eight schools were served, an increase of one school due to the additional matching funds.

Twenty classrooms also received small classroom bins, as shown in Table 4. Additional schools have expressed interest in this project, and the Council is maintaining a waiting list pending receipt of potential additional funding. The project has been renamed *Worm Wizards of Waste*, and now has a website under construction—www.wormwizards.org.

Table 1. List of Schools Receiving Presentations

Abraham Lincoln Elementary School	Piner Olivet Charter School
Alexander Valley Elementary School	Prestwood Elementary School
Apple Blossom School	Reach School
Brook Haven School	Rincon Valley Charter School
Credo High School	Roseland Elementary School
Crossroads Community Day School	Sequoia Elementary School
El Molino High School	Sonoma Charter School
Grant Elementary School	Spring Creek School
Healdsburg Charter School K Class 1	Steele Lane Elementary School
Luther Burbank Elementary School	SunRidge Charter School
Madrone Elementary School	Thomas Page Academy
Mary Collins Charter School	Two Rock Elementary School
Miwok Valley School	Westside Elementary School
Orchard View School	Wilson Elementary School
Penngrove Elementary School	Windsor Elementary School

Table 2. Added Classrooms using additional matching funds.
Spring Creek Third Grade Class No. 2
Spring Creek Second Grade Class No. 1
Rincon Valey Charter School 8th Grade Class No. 2
Brook Haven 5th Grade Class No. 2
Miwok Valley 5th Grade Class No. 2
Madrone Elementary K Class No. 2
Healdsburg Charter School K Class No. 2
Wilson Elementary 5th Grade

Table 3. Locations of School-Wide Dual Bin Systems	
El Molino High School	Piner-Olivet Charter School
Miwok Valley School	Mary Collins School

Grant Elementary School	Two Rock Elementary School
Steele Lane Elementary (2 school-wide bin systems)	Penngrove Elementary

Table 4. List of Schools Receiving Classroom bins

Abraham Lincoln Elementary School	Reach School
Apple Blossom School	Rincon Valley Charter School
Brook Haven School	Roseland Elementary School
Credo High School	Sequoia Elementary School
Crossroads Community Day School	Spring Creek School
Healdsburg Charter School K Class 1	SunRidge Charter School
Luther Burbank Elementary School	Thomas Page Academy
Madrone Elementary School	Westside Elementary School
Orchard View School	Wilson Elementary School
Prestwood Elementary School	Windsor Elementary School

A “Lessons Learned” from this project was the need to have our staff work with the school to establish an on-site Compost Club of students and faculty to carry on the program over time. We also identified the need to have quarterly followup sessions with the school during the first year, and annually thereafter in order to support the composting effort.