

## **Bethel Education Foundation Grant Report**

Molly Bullock, Kalapuya high School

### **Projects and outcomes**

Because of funds awarded through the BEF/Waste Reduction grant, we were able to accomplish many projects on the Bethel Farm. All projects we completed had involvement from students on both the planning and implementation level.

#### **Building picnic tables and birdhouse boxes for farm**

- Seven Kalapuya High School students signed up to be part of an elective week this winter where they spent 20 hours learning how to build picnic tables and bird boxes for the Bethel Farm. Students had the opportunity to build boxes for either blue birds or owls and learned about why it is important to have wildlife habitat on sustainable farms. The picnic tables are now part of our outdoor classroom and were utilized by visiting students from across the district this spring. The bird boxes have become a feature of our field trip program on the farm. Two Kalapuya high school students created and implemented a lesson on wildlife habitats on farms and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students on the field trip had the opportunity to explore our bird boxes (now homes to several bird families). Students on the field trips leave with a greater understanding of the importance of creating wildlife areas on farms.

#### **Compost bins**

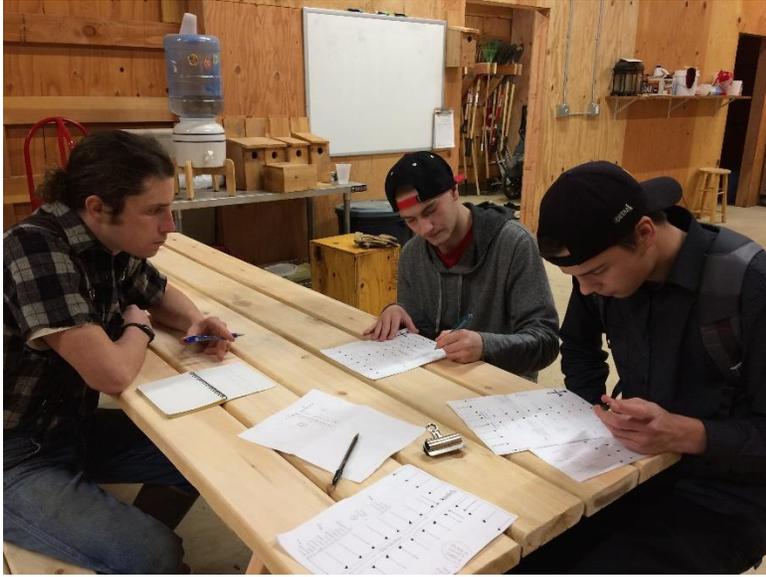
- Kalapuya High School students were involved in designing and building a demonstration compost site this year with BEF funds. Twelve students at the high school completed the project. Our visiting 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders utilized this project this spring. Hundreds more students will have the opportunity to explore this compost demonstration site next year on field trips. The farm hosted 10 classrooms of students, totaling 325 students, to the farm this spring. All of these students participated in a compost exploration activity using the newly built compost bins. With the BEF funds, we were also able to reactivate our worm compost system; our 325 visiting 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders received a lesson on the importance of vermicompost. Students left with a greater understanding of what compost is and how we use it on the farm. We also hosted OSU master gardener compost specialists to the compost demonstration site for a lesson on hot compost and vermicompost. This class was presented to a group of 12 Kalapuya high school students.



## Fruit trees and irrigation

- This year we planted many fruit bearing trees on the farm. We were focused on planting varieties, which ripen in the fall and would be new and interesting for students to try in their cooking class. With BEF funds, we were able to plant a persimmon tree, quince tree, fig tree, and paw paw tree. In addition to these four unique varieties, we planted 40 pear, apple and plum trees. As well, students planted eight hardy kiwis. We will use the fruit from these trees to feed students in our school lunch program for many years to come. Students across the district will have education materials available to them in the cafeteria about the fruit they are eating and where it comes from. In this way, the project will reach all 5,600 students in the district. Additionally 12 Kalapuya high school students helped in the planning, soil preparation and planting of all the trees planted this year.







### **Life lab signs**

- With the BEF funds we were additionally able to invest in signage for our learning garden on the farm. Our visiting field trip students, community garden families and Kalapuya high school students use the learning garden area. The aim of our learning gardening is to inspire curiosity. With the addition of information signs, anyone can come to the garden, do a self-guided tour of the area, and learn about topics such as- composting, vermicomposting, pollinators, and weather. Twelve Kalapuya high school students helped to decide which signs to use in the garden and where we should place them. We also had all the informational signs translated into Spanish, these signs were edited ourselves and a student from Willamette High School helped with this process. In the future hundreds of students and families will use these signs. We had 12 students from the Kalapuya High School help in the planning process. To see the signs we used follow this link: <http://www.lifelab.org/store/garden-signs/>

### **Tools for student field trips- microscopes, pop ups**

- In order to explore our new composting system better we invested some of our BEF funds into tools for students to look at the macro-organisms in our active compost pile. We bought six field

microscopes in an effort to further demonstrate the importance of composting and all of the activity happening as the materials decompose. We additionally purchased shade structures, which can be utilized to cover our compost pile in the heat of summer or to shade students as they explore the composting station.

### **Flower seeds**

- Lastly, we used some of the BEF funds to purchase seeds for the farm. These flower seeds will be started, maintained, harvested and arranged by the seven Kalapuya and Willamette High students who will be working on the farm this summer through our internship program. Through the process of planting seeds students will learn about soil health, irrigation needs and harvesting techniques.