



# FOUR WINDS

## NATURE INSTITUTE

*Community-based Natural Science Education and Research*

### Schoolyard Habitat Improvement Grant Program

Four Winds Nature Institute is pleased to be able to offer a limited number of small grants (up to \$500) to help make schools better places to study nature year-around, to promote school-community interaction, and to enhance the outdoor learning opportunities provided through the Four Winds Nature Program. Projects from previous years have included planting a bird or butterfly garden with native plants; building a rustic outdoor instruction area; developing a nature trail; or making an outdoor area more accessible. Please visit our [Schoolyard Habitat Minigrant page](#) on our website ([www.fwni.org](http://www.fwni.org)) for a [sample report](#) and answers to [frequently asked questions](#). Email [erika@fwni.org](mailto:erika@fwni.org) for more information.

**Eligibility:** Schools that are currently enrolled in the Four Winds Nature Program and have not received a Four Winds grant in the past three years are eligible. Enrollment in the Nature Program for the 2026-27 school year is required to receive the award.

**Criteria:** Projects that support a) year-round nature study; b) increased school-community-nature interaction; and c) enhanced outdoor learning opportunities in the Nature Program will be considered. Projects may involve improvements to the school grounds or other outdoor community spaces (parks, woods, streams, ponds, etc.) used for outdoor learning. Collaboration between nearby schools on a common project is permitted. Awards cannot be used for computer equipment, salaries or wages, or travel. Priority will be given to projects that engage students from multiple grade levels and members from the community in the project's planning, execution, and long-term maintenance.

**A complete application includes:**

- a description of the proposed project
- an itemized budget for how the award will be spent (up to \$500)
- a description for how the project will be maintained after the first year
- a letter of support from the school principal

**Submission:** Please use the attached application form, or fill out [this google form](#) (preferred method) to submit a proposal. Applications must be received by March 31, 2026. Completed applications may be emailed to [erika@fwni.org](mailto:erika@fwni.org), or mailed to: **Four Winds Nature Institute, 4 Casey Road, Chittenden, VT 05737**.

**Awards:** Awardees will be notified in mid-late April, 2026. Awards will be sent to successful applicants in May, 2026. A signed Nature Program enrollment form for the 2026-27 school year must be submitted prior to receiving an award.

**Final report:** Deadline to complete projects is October 15, 2026; deadline to submit final reports is October 30, 2026. Reports must include a description of the work and at least one photograph of the process or final result. Final reports can be emailed to [info@fourwindsinstitute.org](mailto:info@fourwindsinstitute.org) or mailed to **Four Winds Nature Institute, 4 Casey Road, Chittenden, VT 05737**. A newspaper article from a local newspaper may substitute for the final report. Four Winds reserves the right to display photographs on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).



## **Schoolyard Habitat Improvement Grant Proposal Application**

School Name:

Person submitting proposal (contact if there are questions):

Address:

Telephone:

E-mail:

School Principal:

**Part 1:** Describe the project you wish to do. Be specific about any student or community involvement. (Attach an additional page, if necessary.) Maximum award is \$ 500.

**Part 2:** Describe how the money will be spent. Please include an itemized budget.

**Part 3:** Describe how your project will be maintained after the first year.

**Part 4:** Include a statement of support from your school principal.

### **Signatures:**

Person submitting proposal \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Principal \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_