

Community involvement needed for outdoor classroom



Step *by* step

This master plan drawing for the Brickey Outdoor Classroom area shows phases of construction, starting with the stormwater mitigation and educational overlook area shown just south of the school. Future phases include greenway trails, educational garden areas, creek access points and an amphitheater.

By Shannon Carey

Hallsdale-Powell Utility District has taken the first step towards a complete outdoor classroom for Brickey-McCloud Elementary School.

Through a \$350,000 grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, HPUD will create a stormwater mitigation wetland area and educational overlook near BMES, the first in a number of elements that may one day complete the school's outdoor classroom.

HPUD CEO Darren Cardwell

said the project will capture all stormwater runoff from the school roof and parking lot which now drains directly into Beaver Creek. A meandering wetland area with wetland plantings will treat the water, removing sediment and automobile fluids before they go into the creek.

Pollutant-reducing outreach projects can give HPUD credits on its permit for the Beaver Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, what Cardwell called a "holistic" approach to pollution control.

Bids for the project will be opened in early November.

This wetland is just one component in a master plan for an outdoor classroom, park and greenway combination along Beaver Creek south of BMES, a plan created through partnerships between HPUD, the school, the Beaver Creek Watershed Association and UT.

Cardwell said he hopes to see community partners come together to make other aspects of the outdoor classroom a reality, including boardwalks along the

creek, an amphitheater, an educational garden and creek access points. There are even elements that could be completed by volunteers or for Eagle Scout projects.

"We'd like to see it move forward," said Cardwell. "This is going to be more than just Brickey-McCloud Elementary School. This is going to be a community park in the future."

Those interested in completing other outdoor classroom elements are encouraged to contact HPUD, 922-7547.