

# School Facilities and Grounds Section



## Step 2 -- Green & Healthy Schools Assessment



Your school facilities, grounds and school forest provide excellent educational opportunities if they are designed, managed and used correctly. This section will help you identify current health, safety and environmental management practices for your buildings and grounds. It will start you thinking about how you can modify these practices to make a safer, healthier learning environment, increase outdoor plant and animal diversity, improve aesthetics, reduce runoff and manage resources wisely.

**School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Conducted By:**

*Please include administrators, teachers, school staff, students and parents involved in this assessment.*

| Name  | Title and/or Grade Level |
|-------|--------------------------|
| _____ | _____                    |
| _____ | _____                    |
| _____ | _____                    |
| _____ | _____                    |
| _____ | _____                    |
| _____ | _____                    |
| _____ | _____                    |
| _____ | _____                    |

**School Population:**

Students: \_\_\_\_\_ Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

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## A. School Map

1. Make a map of your school site. First, look for any existing site maps or blueprints that can be used as a base map. If you can't find these, you will have to make your own. Include the school building, sidewalks, roads, fences, trails, parking areas, utilities and all of the green spaces. Examples of green spaces include courtyards, grassy areas, playgrounds, athletic fields, gardens, wooded areas, etc. This will help you study your school grounds and plan for improvements.
2. Using your map, assess the pervious and impervious areas of the school grounds.  
(**Pervious** means that rainwater can percolate through the surface, for example grassy areas, natural athletic fields, playgrounds with a wood chip surface and other green spaces. Pervious areas replenish the ground water table and reduce storm water runoff. **Impervious** surfaces do not allow rainwater to pass into the ground and increase storm water runoff. Examples of impervious areas includes asphalt, concrete, sidewalks, paved court yard, paved driveways and parking lots.)

- a. List the **pervious** areas:

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Approximately what percentage of your school site is pervious? \_\_\_\_\_

- b. List the **impervious** areas:

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Approximately what percentage of your school site is impervious? \_\_\_\_\_

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## B. Building

1. When was your school built? (Include dates for major additions and remodeling projects.)
2. What is the square footage of your school building? \_\_\_\_\_ ft<sup>2</sup>
3. Besides your main building, does your campus have additional structures?  
 Yes       No  
If yes, please list:
4. How many custodial and maintenance staff does your school employ?  
Custodial FTE      \_\_\_\_\_  
Maintenance FTE      \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does your school have standards for what is accepted as clean?  Yes  No
6. Does your school have a cleaning schedule?  Yes  No
7. Does your school have entryway mats or grates to catch dirt?  Yes  No  
 If yes, are they wide enough to cover five full steps?  Yes  No  
 Are they cleaned regularly?  Yes  No
8. Does your school provide personal protection equipment to school staff for appropriate tasks?  
 Yes  No
- If yes, does your staff use them?  Yes  No

### C. School Grounds

1. What features are found on your school grounds?  
 Playground equipment  Outdoor learning area  
 Weather station  Sporting fields/courts  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where is your school located?  
 In the village or city limits  
 In the country (outside village/city limits)
3. What type of land borders your school grounds (i.e., residential, agricultural, natural, commercial or industrial)?  
 North \_\_\_\_\_ East \_\_\_\_\_  
 South \_\_\_\_\_ West \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does your school have a natural resources management plan for the school grounds?  
 Yes → When was it developed? \_\_\_\_\_  
 No
5. Where does water that runs off the school's roof, parking lots and grounds go?  
 Storm drain  Retention pond  
 Recessed grassy areas  Drainage ditch  
 Rain garden  Natural pond, stream or wetland
6. Does your school or classes keep a log for wildlife/animals regularly seen on school grounds?  
 Yes  No
7. Does your school have any of the following on its grounds to attract wildlife?  
 Houses (i.e. bat, bird, etc.)  Gardens (butterfly, vegetable, cultural, etc.)  
 Feeders  Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Water

8. What equipment does your school use for outdoor study or recreational use on school grounds?
9. Has your school received grants related to outdoor school site use and development?  
 Yes       No

If yes, please describe the project the grant was use for.

10. Which green spaces are present on your school grounds, and who uses them? (Check all that apply.)

| Green Spaces         | ✓ | Classes | School Clubs | Student Athletes | Students Out of Class | Staff | Community Members |
|----------------------|---|---------|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Lawns*               |   |         |              |                  |                       |       |                   |
| Courtyard            |   |         |              |                  |                       |       |                   |
| Athletic Fields      |   |         |              |                  |                       |       |                   |
| Playground           |   |         |              |                  |                       |       |                   |
| Gardens              |   |         |              |                  |                       |       |                   |
| Prairie**            |   |         |              |                  |                       |       |                   |
| Abandoned fields *** |   |         |              |                  |                       |       |                   |
| Wetlands             |   |         |              |                  |                       |       |                   |
| Wooded areas         |   |         |              |                  |                       |       |                   |
| Other:               |   |         |              |                  |                       |       |                   |

\*Mowed areas not used for playground or athletics.

\*\*Prairie: grassy areas maintained in a natural state with native vegetation.

\*\*\*Abandoned fields: grassy fields that have not been mowed or farmed for several years and may be reverting to a "natural" state, but vegetation is primarily not prairie species.

## D. School Site Assessment

### A. Lawns (Complete if applicable.)

1. How often are lawns mowed?

2. Are the grass clippings left on the lawn?     Yes       No  
 If no, what happens to them?

3. How tall is the grass after it has been cut?

- 1"       3"  
 2"       Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Are leaves raked off the lawn in the fall?  Yes  No  
If yes, what happens to them?

5. How often are lawns watered?  
 Daily  Weekly  Not watered  
 Twice a week  As needed

What time of day are they watered?

Morning (6-10am)  Late afternoon (2-5pm)  
 Early- to mid-afternoon (10am-2pm)  Evening (5-9pm)

6. Do your lawns have shade trees?  Yes  No

7. What types of animals are found on the lawns on your school grounds?

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birds                | <input type="checkbox"/> Insects        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earthworms           | <input type="checkbox"/> Turtles        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snakes               | <input type="checkbox"/> Toads          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mammals              | <input type="checkbox"/> Snails         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other invertebrates: | <input type="checkbox"/> Other species: |

8. What changes would you recommend to make the lawn areas more inviting, useful, safe or environmentally sound?

**B. Courtyards** (Complete if applicable.)

1. What type(s) of vegetation is in your courtyard?

|                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mowed grass | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flowers     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trees       |                                      |

2. What items are present in the courtyards?

|                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benches      | <input type="checkbox"/> Ponds       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tables       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird feeders |                                      |

3. What activities take place in the courtyards?

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Studying | <input type="checkbox"/> Meetings           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating   | <input type="checkbox"/> Observing wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____        |

4. What types of animals are found in the courtyards?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birds                | <input type="checkbox"/> Insects        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earthworms           | <input type="checkbox"/> Turtles        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snakes               | <input type="checkbox"/> Toads          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mammals              | <input type="checkbox"/> Snails         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other invertebrates: | <input type="checkbox"/> Other species: |

5. Who is responsible for maintaining the courtyard?

6. If your courtyards are used by classes for education, what subjects are taught and what grade levels participate?

7. What can be done to make the courtyards more inviting, useful, safe or environmentally sound?

**C. Athletic Fields** (Complete if applicable.)

1. How often are the athletic fields mowed?

2. Are grass clippings left on the lawn?  Yes  No  
If no, what happens to them?

3. How tall is the grass after it has been cut?

- |                             |                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1" | <input type="checkbox"/> 3"          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2" | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

4. How often are the athletic fields watered?

- |                                       |                                    |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily        | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly    | <input type="checkbox"/> Not watered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a week | <input type="checkbox"/> As needed |                                      |

What time of day are they watered?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Morning (6-10am)                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Late afternoon (2-5pm) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early- to mid-afternoon (10am-2pm) | <input type="checkbox"/> Evening (5-9pm)        |

5. What can be done to make the athletic fields more inviting, useful, safe or environmentally sound?

**D. Playground** (Complete if applicable.)

1. What type(s) of surface does your playground have?

- |                                |                                     |                                      |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dirt  | <input type="checkbox"/> Blacktop   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grass | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood chips | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |



4. What types of animals are found in the garden?
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birds                | <input type="checkbox"/> Insects        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earthworms           | <input type="checkbox"/> Turtles        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snakes               | <input type="checkbox"/> Toads          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mammals              | <input type="checkbox"/> Snails         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other invertebrates: | <input type="checkbox"/> Other species: |
5. If your gardens are used by classes for education, what subjects are taught and what grade levels participate?
6. What can be done to make the gardens more inviting, useful, safe or environmentally sound?

**F. Prairie** (Complete if applicable.)

1. What type of prairie does your school have?
- |                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tall grass  | <input type="checkbox"/> Savanna     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Short grass | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
2. Does your prairie contain primarily native plants?  Yes  No
3. What are the predominant plant species in your prairie?
- |   |                                      |   |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Big blue stem    | <input type="checkbox"/> June grass  | <input type="checkbox"/> Butterfly weed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little blue stem | <input type="checkbox"/> Asters      | <input type="checkbox"/> Shooting stars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indian grass     | <input type="checkbox"/> Goldenrods  | <input type="checkbox"/> Oak trees      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Switch grass     | <input type="checkbox"/> Coneflowers | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Side oats        | <input type="checkbox"/> Bergamot    |   |
4. Does your school collect prairie seeds in the fall?  Yes  No  
If so, what do you do with the seeds?
- |   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Replant seeds to enlarge existing prairie  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sell seeds to school and community members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donate seeds                               |
5. How is your prairie maintained?
- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burning | <input type="checkbox"/> Not maintained |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pruning | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mowing  |   |
6. What types of animals are found on the prairie?
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birds                | <input type="checkbox"/> Insects        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earthworms           | <input type="checkbox"/> Turtles        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snakes               | <input type="checkbox"/> Toads          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mammals              | <input type="checkbox"/> Snails         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other invertebrates: | <input type="checkbox"/> Other species: |

7. Who is responsible for planting and maintaining the prairie?
  
8. If your prairie is used by classes for education, what subjects are taught and what grade levels participate?
  
9. What facilities have been placed in the prairies to make them better for teaching?
 

|                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Signs    | <input type="checkbox"/> Trails      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shelters | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
  
10. What can be done to make the prairie more inviting, useful, safe or environmentally sound?

**G. Abandoned Fields** (Complete if applicable.)

1. What types of plants are found here?
 

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-native grasses | <input type="checkbox"/> Grasses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flowering plants   | <input type="checkbox"/> Shrubs  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trees              |                                  |
  
2. What types of animals are found on here?
 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birds                | <input type="checkbox"/> Insects        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earthworms           | <input type="checkbox"/> Turtles        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snakes               | <input type="checkbox"/> Toads          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mammals              | <input type="checkbox"/> Snails         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other invertebrates: | <input type="checkbox"/> Other species: |
  
3. When was this area last mowed or farmed?
  
4. Who is responsible for maintaining the abandoned fields?
  
5. If your abandoned fields are used by classes for education, what subjects are taught and what grade levels participate?
  
6. What facilities have been placed in abandoned fields to make them better for teaching?
 

|                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trails   | <input type="checkbox"/> Signs       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shelters | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benches  |                                      |
  
7. What can be done to make the abandoned fields more inviting, useful, safe or environmentally sound?

**H. Aquatic Communities** (Complete if applicable.)

1. What types of aquatic communities are found on your school site?

- Lake       River       Marsh       Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pond       Stream       Ditch

2. What percentage of each aquatic community is open water, emergent vegetation (lilies, cattails, arrowheads), and wet soil vegetation (wet sedges, canary grass, etc.)?

|                     | Lake | Pond | River | Stream | Marsh |
|---------------------|------|------|-------|--------|-------|
| Open water          |      |      |       |        |       |
| Emergent vegetation |      |      |       |        |       |
| Wet soil vegetation |      |      |       |        |       |

3. What type of aquatic life is found in or near the water on your school grounds?

- Fish       Turtles       Insects       Birds  
 Frogs       Toads       Snakes       Snails  
 Crayfish       Other invertebrates       Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. What facilities have been placed in aquatic communities to make them better for teaching?

- Trails       Decks       Signs  
 Boardwalks       Piers       Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Who is responsible for planting and maintaining the aquatic communities?

6. If your aquatic communities are used by classes for education, what subjects are taught and what grade levels participate?

7. What can be done to make the aquatic communities more inviting, useful, safe or environmentally sound?

**I. Wooded Areas** (Complete if applicable.)

1. What types of trees are found in the wooded areas?

- Deciduous       Coniferous

2. Are the trees native to Wisconsin?

- Yes       Some       No

3. What types of vegetation grow under the trees?

- Short trees       Grass       Moss  
 Shrubs       Ferns       Flowering plants

4. What types of animals are found in the wooded areas?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birds                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Insects                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turtles                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Snakes                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toads                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Earthworms                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snails                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other invertebrates         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large mammals, please list: | <input type="checkbox"/> Small mammals, please list: |

5. Who is responsible for maintaining the woodlands?

6. If your woodlands are used by classes for education, what subjects are taught and what grade levels participate?

7. What facilities have been placed in woodlands to make them better for teaching?

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trails   | <input type="checkbox"/> Signs       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shelters | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benches  |                                      |

8. What can be done to make the wooded areas more inviting, useful, safe or environmentally sound?

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**E. School Forest** *If you don't have a school forest, you may skip this section.*

1. Is the school forest registered with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources through the LEAF Program? *Visit the following website for a list of registered school forests:*

[http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/leaf/Schoolforests/sf\\_registration.aspx#Registered\\_School\\_Forests](http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/leaf/Schoolforests/sf_registration.aspx#Registered_School_Forests)

- Yes       No

2. How many school forest parcels does your school district have, and how many acres is each parcel?

Parcel 1: \_\_\_\_\_ acres      Parcel 3: \_\_\_\_\_ acres

Parcel 2: \_\_\_\_\_ acres      Parcel 4: \_\_\_\_\_ acres

3. How long has your school district had the school's forest?

4. How close is the school forest to your school?

5. Has your school district worked in partnership with a local DNR forester to create a forest management plan for the school forest? (If you are unsure, [contact the DNR forester in your county](#) to see if a management plan has been developed for the school forest property.)

- Yes       No

6. Has your school district developed and implemented an education plan for the forest?  
 Yes       No

If yes, does it include: (check all that apply)

|                        | <u>YES</u>               | <u>NO</u>                |                           | <u>YES</u>               | <u>NO</u>                |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Goals and objectives   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trail development         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Budget                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trail maintenance         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Building development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Curriculum                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Building maintenance   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Public use                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Health and safety plan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Link to forest mgmt. plan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. What types of management activities have been done in the school forest?

- Harvesting trees       Planting trees  
 Pruning trees       Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. How often do management activities occur?

9. What facilities are available at the school forest? (check all that apply)

- Parking lot       Rest rooms       Pond  
 Nature trails       Drinking water       Stream  
 Service road       Teaching stations       Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nature center       Skills course

10. What are the predominant tree species in the school forest? (check all that apply)

- Pine       Hickory       Walnut  
 Spruce       Cherry       Aspen  
 Fir       Maple       Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Oak       Birch

11. What types of vegetation grow under the trees? (check all that apply)

- Shorter trees       Grass       Mosses  
 Shrubs       Ferns       Flowering plants

12. What animals live in the school forest? (check all that apply)

- Deer       Foxes       Song birds  
 Squirrels       Coyotes       Game birds  
 Chipmunks       Frogs and toads       Insects  
 Raccoons       Salamanders       Arachnids  
 Opossums       Snakes       Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Skunks       Turtles

13. What is your school forest used for? (check all that apply)

- Outdoor classroom                       Recreation  
 Forest management                       Other \_\_\_\_\_

14. If your school forest is used as an outdoor classroom, what grades use the forest and what classes are taught there?

15. If used as an outdoor classroom, how often is it used?

16. Is the school forest open to the public?     Yes                       No

17. Does your school forest have a manager or coordinator assigned by the school district?

- Yes                       No

If yes, who is it? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Who maintains the school forest? (check all that apply)

- School forest manager/coordinator                       Students  
 School maintenance staff                       Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teachers

19. What can be done to make the school forest more inviting, useful, safe or environmentally sound?

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## F. Action Plan

Based on the information you found out from this assessment, what recommendations do you have to improve school facilities and grounds? Use the chart on page 14 to brainstorm and organize your ideas for action.

## School Facilities and Grounds Assessment: Ideas for Action

Based on the information you gathered from the School Facilities and Grounds Assessment, what action ideas do you have to create a healthier learning environment and improve management efforts at your school? Use this sheet to record your ideas.

| Section               | General Ideas | Classroom Connections/<br>Lesson Plan Ideas | Community Involvement/<br>Activity Ideas | Outside Sources<br>(organizations, community<br>members, professionals) |
|-----------------------|---------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Buildings</b>      |               |   |  |   |
| <b>School Grounds</b> |               |   |  |   |
| <b>School Forest</b>  |               |   |  |   |