

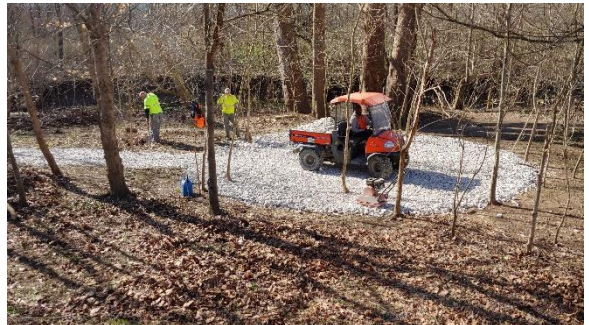


## Veterans Park Outdoor Classroom Project Lexington, KY December 2022 - February 2023

The Bluegrass Chapter of Trout Unlimited is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of Kentucky's watersheds, and to educating the public on issues affecting water quality and wildlife. EcoGro was contacted by local members interested in developing an outdoor classroom in a public park. With funding awarded by the national Embrace A Stream program, they had a volunteer force for labor and a budget but lacked some of the expertise and equipment needed to install a long-lasting outdoor educational facility along a creek. Because the location is an active floodplain in a city park, there were constraints about suitable materials, construction impacts and ability to maintain surfaces.

In order to provide longevity and greatly reduce the need for costly maintenance, the classroom site and path leading from the nearby paved trail were built with layers of compacted rock. First a layer of geotextile fabric was installed to prevent soil from infiltrating the rock above yet still allowing water to seep through. Next, a base course of #2 stone was spread to raise the project area and hold smaller stones. Above this, a layer of dense grade aggregate (DGA) was placed and compacted. To provide a smoother surface, a top dressing of fine limestone was spread and leveled. Lastly, a coat of polymer adhesive and compactor was run over the entire space, creating a bonded surface and greatly reducing the likelihood of erosion or damage from use in the future.

After installation of the classroom footprint, volunteers worked with EcoGro team members to spread native seed, place larger stones around the border of the classroom as well as built wood benches for visitors and podium for instructors. Our team worked with their budget and donated labor to make this project happen, hopefully inspiring some of the next generation to get involved in the ecology of their community in the future.



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