

did you know?



- Young people are becoming more and more disconnected from the outdoors, sometimes called “Nature Deficit Disorder”, as defined by Richard Louv’s groundbreaking book *Last Child in the Woods*;
- Research has confirmed this disconnect and has identified associated trends such as obesity, chronic disease and behavioral issues resulting from the disconnect from nature;
- When children have access to the natural world, even if only a daily glimpse of it, their quality of life is improved.
- Outdoor play lowers children’s stress levels, helps decrease the negative aspects of attention deficit disorder, and reduces the incidences of behavioral issues. Other benefits include healthy development, physical and mental health, and general well-being.
- Four volumes of research on children’s connection to nature and its benefits have been compiled by the national Children and Nature Network: <http://www.childrenandnature.org/research/>

“We can do it. We can create extraordinary places for young children to discover themselves and the world around them. We can create places for children that tickle the imagination and surprise the senses. We can make places for children of all abilities to interact with nature as they play on the planet. We can craft these spaces with love, collaboration, and care.”

-Rusty Keeler, Natural Playscapes



we need YOU!

Big Thompson Elementary School of Nature and Science must raise \$100,000 to match a potential \$350,000 Great Outdoors Colorado grant. (All funds will be contributed to playground improvements regardless of grant status.)

Big Thompson Elementary students and children from the community will benefit from your contributions in helping them reach this financial goal. Here are ways that you can help!

- Make a **tax deductible cash donation** to the Big Thompson Elementary Playscape Fund. Donate online to the Thompson Education Foundation at: www.bigthompsolementary.org/playscape.shtml
- Make an in-kind **donation of materials or professional labor**

contact us!

Big Thompson Elementary School

Attn: Playscape Committee

7702 West US Highway 34, Loveland, CO 80538

970.218.7174

www.bigthompsolementary.org/playscape.shtml

playscapeproject@gmail.com

Big Thompson Elementary

School of Nature & Science



PLAYSCAPE [PROJECT]

A unique and educational nature-inspired landscape for play, designed for the community with sustainability in mind

[we need your
SUPPORT...]

to help make
Big Thompson Elementary’s
Playscape Project the first of its
kind in Larimer County!

the
PLAYSCAPE
 [PROJECT]
 story



Big Thompson Elementary is a public, tuition-free, focus-based school in the Thompson R2-J school district. After being designated as a School of Nature and Science in 2009 for their innovation in integrating nature and science concepts into the curriculum, Big Thompson Elementary staff and students wanted to turn their attention to the school's exterior landscape, with the desire to make the outdoors a better place to learn and play! The project coordination team solicited feedback from students, staff, and the community and incorporated these ideas into a conceptual plan. Revitalizing the exterior landscape of Big Thompson Elementary and its adjoining Outdoor Education Center will improve access to natural areas and native ecosystems, giving kids the advantage of connecting with nature on a daily basis! Encouraging unstructured, creative, imaginative play will provide academic, fitness, health and behavioral benefits not only Big Thompson students, but also for members of the community who visit and use the playscape. Big T hopes to be the first public school in Northern Colorado with a natural playscape!

playscape features



Lower Playscape—Create diverse topography, including a sand pit, small hills, boulders, a “hill slide,” rock-climbing wall, and adding native vegetation, and a few new play structures typically found on a school playground.

Upper Play Area—Create a 1/10-mile, ADA-accessible crushed surface track with a small (50'x100') artificial turf area in the center made from recycled plastic. The track/field will be a welcome amenity to local community members – the closest one is approximately 8 miles away – as well as organized sports groups, who often have trouble finding locations to practice.



ADA Accessible Trail—Construct a new 2/10-mile ADA trail that will connect the outdoor classroom (a four-acre parcel of land adjacent to the school) to the school and playgrounds, enhancing access to natural areas for individuals with all abilities.



School Entrance (front area)—Replace non-native bluegrass with native grasses and vegetation, and erect a large flagstone monument sign. A natural biosway will be created in the front drainage area where kids can learn about water filtration and runoff before the water drains in to the Big Thompson River.

