

# SCHOOLYARD ASSESSMENT

How is your schoolyard doing? Is it helping the Dan River basin or is it contributing to poor water quality? Follow this Assessment and find out...

## Runoff/ Erosion:

1. After looking at your overall school campus describe where in this range it falls.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(1=Entirely made of concrete )

(10=Totally Forested)

2. Your school roof drains rainwater into mostly:

- a) well vegetated trees and shrubs or un-mowed grass (10 pts)
- b) mowed grass (5 pts)
- c) bare soil or impervious surface (4 pts)
- d) directly into storm drain (0 pts)
- e) even mix of all (5pts)

3. Look for patches of bare soil and signs of erosion such as areas where rainwater has carved out ditches or washed out vegetation. The schoolyard has:

- a) very little erosion and few patches of bare soil (10 pts)
- b) several patches of bare soil or areas where soil is eroding (7 pts)
- c) mostly bare, exposed soil or impervious surfaces (0 pts)

4. Does your school have any of these run-off control systems:

- Rain Garden.....2 pts
- Rain Barrel..... 2 pts
- Meadow.....2 pts
- Wetland.....2 pts
- Forested buffer zone (More than 50 feet wide ).....2 pts

### **Helpful and fun solutions:**

- Install a **Rain Barrel**
- Plant your own **Rain Garden**
- Stencil** your storm drains
- Plant a **Buffer** of trees next to your stream

Your Score
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
Runoff/ Erosion Total <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>

# Transportation:

1. Determine the number of people employed at your school (teachers, maintenance staff, food service staff, administrators, etc.) by asking office staff. Look at the school parking lot and determine the number of vehicles relative to the number of employees.
  - a) there are 50% fewer cars in the parking lot than employees (10 pts)
  - b) there are 25% fewer cars in the parking lot than employees (7 pts)
  - c) there is about one car per employee in the parking lot (5 pts)
  
2. Are there bicycle racks at your school and do people use them?
  - a) the bike rack is full of bikes (10 pts)
  - b) the school has a bike rack but there are only a few bikes in it (7 pts)
  - c) the school has no bike rack and no bikes on the property (0 pts)
  
3. Is there any reward or encouragement for teachers or students who walk to school, ride their bikes, carpool or take public transit?
  - a) Yes (10 pts)
  - b) No (2 pts)
  
4. Where does rain water drain after hitting the parking lot?
  - a) highly vegetated area (10 pts)
  - b) mowed or slightly vegetated drainage ditch (7 pts)
  - c) unmarked storm drain (0 pts)

Your Score
1. <hr/>
2. <hr/>
3. <hr/>
4. <hr/>
Trans. Total
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 30px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>

**Low Score? Try these solutions:**

- Incentives to **carpool**, use public transportation or ride a bicycle to school
- Install and use **Bike** racks
- Letter writing** to county for bike lanes
- Vegetated** run-off control for parking lot and roads

## Vegetation:

1. Describe the vegetation on your schoolyard:
  - a) Trees and bushes cover a significant part of the schoolyard (10 pts)
  - b) Trees and bushes dot the landscape of the schoolyard (6 pts)
  - c) There are few or no trees on the schoolyard (0 pts)
  
2. How much of the grass and vegetated areas in your school are being mowed?
  - a) less than 50 % (10 pts)
  - b) between 50% and 80% (6 pts)
  - c) over 80% (4 pts)
  
3. Ask your school's lawn service or school maintenance staff how the mowed grass on the school grounds is fertilized.
  - a) Grass clippings are left on the grounds as natural fertilizer (10 pts)
  - b) Lawn fertilizer is used according to a formula after doing soil tests (8pts)
  - c) Lawn fertilizer is used according to instructions (6 pts)
  - d) Lawn fertilizer is applied randomly (5 pts)
  
4. Describe the vegetation in the lowest lying part of your schoolyard.
  - a) well vegetated with trees and shrubs (10 pts)
  - b) vegetated with unmowed grass (8 pts)
  - c) mowed grass (7 pts)
  - d) bare soil, pavement, or concrete (0 pts)

### **Any of these projects can add colorful habitat:**

- Plant a wild **Meadow** with a native wildflower mix
- Build a **Rain Garden**
- Attract wild colorful butterflies and birds by planting a **Butterfly Garden**

Your Score
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
Veg. Total
<input type="text"/>

# **Biodiversity:**

1. By counting the different types of leaves or bark, how many different types of trees are there on your schoolyard?

- a) 10 or more (10 pts)
- b) 7-9 (8 pts)
- c) 4-6 (5 pts)
- d) less than 4 (4 pts)

2. By counting the different types of leaves and berries, how many different types of shrubs are there on your schoolyard?

- a) 7 or more (10 Pts)
- b) 4-6 (7 pts)
- c) less than 4 (4 pts)

3. Below are examples of habitats for animals. Which of the following apply to your schoolyard? (4 pts. for each)

- a) woodlands with many layers of plants and trees
- b) tall grassy fields/meadow
- c) thick brush and brambles or a brush pile
- d) dead standing trees or rotting logs on the ground
- e) streams with forested buffers

Your Score
1. <hr/>
2. <hr/>
3. <hr/>
Biodiv. Total
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 30px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>

To bring more **LIFE** to your schoolyard:

- Plant native** shrubs and flowers that attract wildlife
- Install **bird feeders** and **bird houses** around campus
- Plant **trees**

# \*\*\*\*\*BONUS\*\*\*\*\*

## Awareness:

1. Does your school have an environmental club, offer environmental science classes or a bay unit in science class? (1 point for each yes)
2. Is there a stream on your schoolyard? Is there access? (1 point for each yes)
3. Are there energy saving devices? (1 point for each yes)
  - compact fluorescent
  - skylights
  - signs reminding you to turn off lights
4. Test your principal/administrator/science teacher: (2 points for each correct answer)
  - a. Is there a body of water or stream attached to your schoolyard?
  - b. What is the closest sewage treatment plant?
  - c. Where is the closest landfill?
  - d. Is there incentive for the staff to use public transit? (2 pt. for yes)
  - e. Does your school recycle? (2 pt. for yes)
  - f. Do you want to improve your schoolyard? (2 pt. for yes)
5. How many storm drains are on your school campus? Take a walk and count them if you don't know. (2pts)

Your Score
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
Bonus Points
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>

## How to find out more:

- Go on a Dan River Basin Association **field trip experience**
- Get trained** on water quality monitoring methods to test your stream on school campus

Now it's time to add your scores together to find out the health of your schoolyard...

Runoff/Erosion	_____
Transportation	_____
Vegetation	_____
Biodiversity	_____
<b>Total</b>	_____
Total + bonus points	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px;"></div>

If you scored:

**100-80 A-B:** Your school is **excellent** habitat for many plants and animals and is a very healthy part of the watershed!

**79-60 C-D:** You are on the right track but there is more work to do if we want to save the rivers!

**59 or less:** Poor habitat. Many schools fall in this category so please help us in making your schoolyard a better place by partnering with DRBA and seeing what can be done to improve your school campus.