

# NEWS FROM THE CREW

## CONSERVATION CREW WINTER 2022-23

---

### FROM THE TRAILHEAD

Deep into the winter months, Conservation Crews are busy narrowing down ideas to start their spring projects. Some Crews are engaging with local experts in the conservation community. Pillager Middle School connected with their county's Master Gardener for help in their pollinator garden. Black Hawk Middle School is participating in the Solar for Schools program and is working with the Clean Energy Resource Team (CERT) at the University of Minnesota's Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships and Extension. These industry experts empower students to tackle the issues that matter to them.

At the end of the school year, groups can share their accomplishments with other Crews from across the state at the Conservation Celebration. A panel of experts will select three outstanding projects from participating schools and award an additional grant to support future activities.

### CREW VIEWS

#### Celebrating Growth

Last year's Crew project winner, Cottage Grove Middle School, has been hard at work creating a pollinator garden on school grounds, and it keeps growing!

Last spring, they focused on soil health by pulling weeds and managing pest control. To keep the garden chemical-free, the Crew removed all invasive plants and weeds by hand. This school year, they began planting in earnest. The Conservation Crew members recruited over **300 students** to participate in their fall planting, which included over 150 native flowers, shrubs, grasses, and trees. When the snow melts and the ground thaws, they plan to plant several larger trees too.

Through Crew's leadership and hard work, they are creating a welcoming space for others to connect with nature while engaging their peers.



## Conservation Connections

One of the things that make the Crew program unique is the connections students make to conservation leaders and experts who help guide them in their projects. Crew students from New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Middle School connected with resources from the Bee Lab at the University of Minnesota to learn all the buzz about pollinators for their garden.

Taking what they learned from the Bee Lab, students hosted a bee trivia game to test their knowledge of these important visitors to their new school garden.

## Crew Spotlight

**“The kids get so excited on Tuesday when they have their Crew meetings.  
One of the students comes up every Tuesday to hug me and says, ‘It’s Tuesday!’”**

—Lynell Senden Crew Teacher from Prairie Winds Middle School in Mankato

**CONSERVATION CREW**

**CONSERVATION MINNESOTA**