Students and teachers from a variety of courses at K-12 schools and Clemson students from three courses worked towards advancing their knowledge and commitment to environmental stewardship. One goal of this project was to reach out to a diverse population by partnering with several institutions to design and to promote sustainable community environments for people as well as for wildlife. Another goal was to provide an opportunity for students to learn and mature through participation in a project that has a long-term visible impact. To that end, students, faculty, and administrators from partnering schools, Clemson University, volunteers, and school board officials worked together in three phases. 1) Information dissemination of the research, analysis, and designs completed in phase one; 2) Fund raising and grant application; 3) Implementation, evaluation, sharing, and recognition.

Outputs (Deliverables)
1. Posters were prepared by Clemson University college students and presented in the 2001 Gardening with Children Symposium. These included research and designs from phase one landscape designs and input from K-12 students.
2. A curriculum is being developed by Mr. Jason Ginder, a graduate student with an environmental education focus. See below for a description of his Teacher's Environmental Resource Guide for Clemson Elementary School. His Guide uses the landscape/naturescape plan reflecting state science standards.
3. Landscape plans for three schools (Daniel High School, Clemson Elementary School, and Hunt Meadows Elementary School) have been partially implemented emphasizing tree planting for energy efficiency, an outdoor classroom, interpretative signage along a school nature trail, outdoor seating arrangements, a Carolina fence garden, and a native plants courtyard for teaching and learning purposes.
4. A PowerPoint presentation on environmental stewardship and Schoolyard Projects is being expanded to share with schools, volunteers, university professors and public through the web page and at conferences.
5. College students (as well as parents and teachers) are being encouraged to become certified “Habitat Stewards” (NWF). A poster about phase two of the project is being developed for use at Earth Day Celebrations, Service-learning meetings, landscape for learning collaborative meetings, and other appropriate occasions.
6. A $100,000 USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant was submitted in February 2002. We hope to continue work on this project, and feel that SUI has provided us with a significant base from which to find outside funding support.
7. An article has been written about the project and a paper entitled “Linking Universities and K-12 Schools Through Design of Outdoor Learning Environments” has been accepted for presentation at the 13th International Conference on College Teaching and Learning to be held April 9-13, 2002 in Jacksonville, Fla. See:
Outcomes (Impact) and Benefits to Students and to the Community

Working on real world projects can greatly influence student motivation and learning while simultaneously helping solve community problems. This project encourages creative thinking and problem solving teaches students more about community relationships, wildlife habitats, and sustainable living. Working with school administrators, landscape architects, and public service organizations gives students a feeling for how institutions and communities function. An appreciation of the need for community involvement is also learned. Perhaps the most important lesson students can learn is that a good plan grows from the site and from the needs of the people, plants, and wildlife that inhabit that site. It should not be designed in a studio to be imposed on the land; it should seem a natural outgrowth of the site and should preserve and enhance the best features of the community.

Our students are gaining an understanding of nature and natural sites by working with authentic projects. They are also gaining sensitivity to people through working with partners. One result of this interaction is the opportunity provided for students to practice oral communication skills in both formal (classroom), and informal (schoolyard) settings. As they implement a plan that is environmentally, functionally and aesthetically sound, students are learning to convey their ideas and educate others.

Teachers traditionally take the active role, gathering and compiling information, asking questions, and providing answers. Advanced learning, of an active and ongoing kind, can be stimulated by allowing and encouraging students to, first, ask important questions, and second, set about exploring new territories by finding their own answers. Once found, the depth of these answers can be measured by giving them to someone else to test and utilize. This project will enable students to ask questions, and it will stimulate curiosity, promote interest, improve reasoning, and increase student's ability to isolate, define, and solve problems.

Students versed in the art of asking questions become intellectually athletic and spring easily into the phase of seeking solutions. This project insures that they learn to discover sources, collect information, analyze data, and solve problems. When asked to communicate his or her solutions to an interested party, the student must learn to sift through the information collected, decide what data is most appropriate, and prepare a meaningful presentation for his or her audience. The presentation generally reinforces the importance of the cognitive functions, instills confidence, and generates enthusiasm in the student while imparting information to the audience. A tremendous sense of accomplishment and satisfaction results when students follow this three-part process of asking questions, seeking solutions, and giving answers. The process takes on special significance when taken out of the classroom and placed in the community. Students become teachers, and this reversal of roles stimulates awareness and promotes intellectual maturity.

In addition, this project also addressed the following community based objectives outlined by the Landscapes for Learning Collaborative (LLC). Through participation in the 2001 Landscapes for Learning Gardening with Children Symposium, college students networked with interested parties and helped address learning landscape needs through their poster presentation. They
became part of the network that helps school children, K-12, and college students to engage in hands-on, practical environmental education, environmental stewardship, public service, and nature-based enhancement in all areas of study. This also assists community members in enhancing their environments while at the same time building community relationships and providing non formal environmental education. They helped integrate teaching, research and service for K-12 and colleges.

**Participating College Courses: Clemson University:**

1) Horticulture 208 Landscape Appreciation--taught by Professor Mary Haque-Department of Horticulture, College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences; Fall 2001.
2) Horticulture 308 Landscape Design --taught by Professor Mary Haque- Department of Horticulture, College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences; Fall 2001.
3) Landscape Architecture 490 Directed Studies--taught by Professor Francis Chamberlain with Professor Haque advising senior student Erin Jordan of the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture; Summer and Fall 2001.

Ms. Erin Jordan, a fifth year Landscape Architecture student enrolled in LA 490 Directed Studies under Mary Haque’s supervision researched the history, case studies, and safety issues associated with children and landscapes, and wrote a 100 page book entitled “Children and Landscapes: Environmental Education and Childhood Development.” She graduated with honors in December of 2001 and is presently looking for a publisher.

**K-12 Schools and contacts:**

1) Clemson Elementary School- Dr. Paul Pritchard, Principal and Dr. Gina McLellan, President, School Improvement Council. This project (“Clemson Elementary Outdoors”) won the 2001 service learning award presented by the SC Commission on Higher Education. See below for a full description.
2) Hunt Meadow Primary School, Anderson County, SC- Nancy Prince, Principal; Sue Tarkenton, Teacher, and Sonja Maki, Parent Volunteer and President of the School Improvement Council. The lead teacher on this project, Ms. Sue Tarkenton, won the 2001 SC Wildlife Federation Education Award for her work on this project. See her website at: [http://www.anderson1.k12.sc.us/schools/hmes/Garden/courtyard%20garden.htm](http://www.anderson1.k12.sc.us/schools/hmes/Garden/courtyard%20garden.htm)
3) Daniel High School-Mr. Earl Gilstrap, Principal, Mr. and Mrs. Steve Sanders, Parent Volunteers

**Qualified Leadership, Support, Supervision, and Evaluation:**
Mary Haque- Clemson University Professor, Department of Horticulture
Gina McLellan-Clemson University Professor, Department of PRTM
Stephanie Stowell National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitats program
Lolly Tai- Clemson University Professor, Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture
Sara Thieben, Coordinator, Schoolyard Habitat efforts of the South Carolina Wildlife Federation.
Mr. Tommy Gladden, State Director of Agricultural Education

15 Agricultural Education majors enrolled in my Hort. 208 Landscape Appreciation in the Fall semester of 2001. I taught those students about sustainable landscapes and familiarized them
with the NWF schoolyard habitat program. Over the course of the semester, I lectured on xeriscape (water conservation for the southeast), landscape design for energy efficiency, landscape design for wildlife habitat, and landscape design for low maintenance. Hort. 208 students joined the Hort. 308-landscape design class on October 24, 2001 to help install a native plant courtyard at Clemson Elementary School. The involvement of these university "pre-service teachers" will enable them to bring more to their classrooms after graduation. Students enrolled in Hort. 208 and 308 were also involved in applying the sustainable landscapes theory taught in the classroom to the 'Blitz Build' Habitat for Humanity site with installation on October 17, 2001.

Dr. Gina McLellan enlisted Mr. Jason Ginder, a graduate student with an environmental education focus, to develop a "Teacher's Environmental Resource Guide" for the project. Below is a description of the guide, which is still being developed.

The Teacher's Environmental Resource Guide

In an effort to encourage use of the new outdoor classrooms and environmental settings at the new Clemson Elementary School, we will be developing resources for teachers that correlate with the established South Carolina Curriculum Standards. These resources should allow teachers to more readily utilize the unique outdoor environment around them. This project will have two parts or stages. First a resource guide will be developed that describes different ways that teachers can utilize the outdoor classrooms. The second stage of this project will be a resource that offers suggestions and activities that will assist teachers in utilizing the outdoor environments to meet individual South Carolina Curriculum Standards.

The resource guide will include examples of outdoor lessons and alternatives to traditional lessons that will allow teachers to extend classroom learning into outdoor environments. The resource guide will include information on supplementary curriculum and materials that may assist the teachers. The second stage of this project will create a resource library with each curriculum standard identified along with a short list of possible resources, activities or lessons that will allow the educators to expand their use of the environment.
The goal of this project is to stimulate educators and assist them in utilizing the unique environment at this new school. We will use many of the established environmental education and outdoor education resources and techniques throughout these projects. It is our hope that teachers will challenge themselves to find new ways of presenting the traditional educational material. Through this process students and teachers will become more familiar with and possibly develop an appreciation for the environment around them.

To stimulate more widespread use of the nature trail by teachers and students, Clemson Elementary School invited Rudy Manke to lead a teacher in-service workday in March of 2002. He spent all day at Clemson Elementary School and led teachers and CU student teachers on a nature walk to highlight the opportunities for learning that are now available on school grounds. Dr. McLellan organized a “Bug Fun Day”, and students made insects out of recycled materials.

Troop 235 Boy Scouts partnered on the Clemson Elementary Project, and Mr. Hoke Hill led his troop in the construction of an outdoor classroom on the nature trail. Mr. Tripp Mostertz led his troop in the construction and installation of interpretative signage along the trail. Both projects were completed as part of the Eagle Scout requirements, and both brought to reality design recommendations made by Clemson University students during the design phase of the SUI project. Mr. Omar Haque is presently preparing to install the Peter Rabbit Courtyard as part of his Eagle Scout project. This courtyard was also designed by Clemson University students.

Thanks to the Sustainable Universities Initiative and other partners, The "Clemson Elementary Outdoors" project, one of our works in progress initiated in 1999 and directed by Dr. McLellan, won the 2001 service learning award presented by the SC Commission on Higher Education. Below is part of the nomination form which gives an overview of that project and more fully describes how we are involving college students in this project.

"Clemson Elementary Outdoors"
Submitted to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
1333 Main Street, Suite 200
Columbia, SC 29201
April 20, 2001

Total Number of Students Involved: 750 Clemson University Students; 600 elementary students from Morrison Elementary School

1. The commission on Higher Education defines service learning as college student learning at any level and in any situation that is linked in a direct, hands-on fashion to the resolution of a problem or concern in a target community outside the institution. Briefly, how do your project meet the parameters of this definition? Due to the fact that many schools have access to funds to support buildings and programs, but do not include funding or provisions for the surrounding landscapes, this project is intended to address the issue of creating sustainable outdoor learning environments through a collaboration between Clemson Elementary School and Clemson University. Building on the Sustainable Universities Initiative and the schoolyard
habitat program established by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), this project involves students, teachers, and administrators. Our goal is to research, plan, design, and reflect on sustainable and efficient landscapes for Clemson Elementary School. The focus is to involve both university and K-12 school students in identifying environmental problems and using critical thinking skills to propose solutions. This could include problems associated with transportation efficiency, energy use, recycling, water use, landscape maintenance, reading, nature trails, biodiversity, etc.

One goal of this project is to reach out to a diverse population by collaborating with several institutions to design and to promote sustainable community environments for people as well as for wildlife. Another goal is to provide an opportunity for students to learn and mature through participation in a project that has a long-term visible and measurable impact. To that end, students, faculty, and administrators from collaborating schools, Clemson University, volunteers, and school board officials are working together in four phases. 1) Research, analysis, and information gathering; 2) planning and design; 3) scheduling and implementation, and 4) reflection, evaluation, sharing, and recognition.

2. Specifically, which segments of the college/university community does your project involve? Many segments are involved including multiple departments and an interdisciplinary group of faculty and classes. Examples include:

Gina McLellan's classes in Recreation and Leisure Environments researched concepts pertaining to children and outdoor environments and also interviewed children at Morrison regarding what they wanted to see in the outdoor environments at their school. Using this research as a foundation, Lolly Tai, professor and landscape architect worked with her students to design Four courtyards based on favorite books picked by the children at Morrison: The Adventures of Peter Rabbit, Alice in Wonderland, The Secret Garden and the Harry Potter series. Clemson students researched how children learn outdoors, looked at famous children’s gardens in the United States and elsewhere and listened to the Morrison Elementary children. Each courtyard will include scenes from the book, an outdoor classroom area and complementary plantings.

Horticulture students designed an inner courtyard for native plants. Their work was guided by horticulture professor and landscape architect Mary Haque, whose schoolyard habitat projects have created sustainable landscapes for schools across the state.

Civil engineering students are building two bridges across the brook in the natural area. They will use steel that has been donated for their participation in the National Student Steel Bridge Competition held by the American Society of Civil Engineers each year. "The members of the steel bridge team designed the bridges during spring semester. They will construct them in June and place them in July," says Scott Schiff, civil engineering professor and adviser to the team.

Several PRTM and English classes have written grants for community businesses to donate goods. A technical writing class taught by English professor Summer Smith is writing brochures, a guide for the nature trail and an overview of the school and grounds for the beginning of school. The class is also developing a Web site.
An important resource for the Outdoors project has been Landscapes for Learning, a University collaborative that promotes environmental stewardship and education using plants and landscapes.

Coordinated by sociology professor and Extension specialist Brenda Vander Mey, Landscapes for Learning provides opportunities for service learning and building stronger communities to more than 30 schools within the state. Other Clemson Cooperative Extension specialists have helped with the Outdoors project including the Extension-trained Master Gardeners. And volunteer groups AmeriCorps, America Reads, and the Girl and Boy Scouts of America and others have helped.

Dr. Gina McLellan in PRTM continues to coordinate this diverse array of students, faculty, and community groups.

3. **How many students (please specify degree levels to the extent possible) does the project affect?** More than 750 Clemson students have helped design and create outdoor learning areas for the new school with guidance from University faculty and staff, and more than 600 elementary students, parents and community members. Degree levels range from elementary students at Morrison to sophomore, junior, senior, and master's level students from Clemson University. Students from each of Clemson’s academic colleges — including landscape architecture; design; civil engineering; English; horticulture; biology; and parks, recreation, and tourism management — have been engaged in the project.

4. **Can you please describe the target community or communities that your project serves?**

Three years ago, when Morrison Elementary School found a site for a new school — to be named Clemson Elementary when it opens — faculty, parents and the children themselves became involved in planning the grounds. They envisioned the school’s 36-acre campus as a wonderful living, learning environment extending beyond the structure of the new facilities. To figure out how to put their wish list into action, they called on the University. "Clemson Elementary’s campus will be unlike any other elementary school campus in the United States," says Gina McLellan, professor of parks, recreation and tourism management and coordinator of the outdoor project. She’s also president of the school improvement council. "Nevertheless," says McLellan, "it will serve as a state and, perhaps, national service-learning model for what can be done in partnership with a university committed to community."

The goal is to offer environments in which all types of learners can excel, especially those who need hands-on participation. Likewise, the features have been designed to coordinate with the S.C. Department of Education curriculum standards. While students, teachers, parents, and administrators are the primary target audience which this project serves, we are also partnering with the City of Clemson to make athletic fields, outdoor classrooms, and the nature/walking trail available to the larger community on weekends and after school.

5. **Can you please describe your project's effectiveness in helping to solve the problems or concerns in the target community?** In service learning, both college students and the community are targeted in a mutual exchange. Clemson students from multiple courses are working towards advancing their knowledge and commitment to environmental stewardship while helping create outdoor learning environments for the larger community. The use of service learning techniques has already generated a tremendous enthusiasm for learning and doing at
both schools. "It’s exciting, one of the most exciting things in my career," says Paul Prichard, principal of the elementary school. "It’s an opportunity of a lifetime. We want it to be a model throughout our district and the state." S.C. Educational Television will broadcast a special on the project, with video from Clemson’s Communications Center. Calls have already come in from as far away as the Denver Museum of Natural History. The school’s nature trail, which includes a brook that winds through 12 acres of wooded land, is already being used by students and the community although the school building itself is still under construction.

6. Can you please describe the degree to which your project enhances student learning? Students at all levels are learning and practicing oral, written, and graphic communication skills as they present their ideas to the community through conversation, speeches, booklets, flyers, posters, and landscape plans. They are learning to work in interdisciplinary teams and are developing an understanding of the planning process as they work through site analysis, research, preliminary plans, final plans, fund raising, and project implementation.

7. Is there academic credit associated with the project (not necessary for submission)? If so, please explain the particulars. Most of the college students working on this project are receiving academic credit as part of a course they are taking. For example, students in landscape architecture may learn how to do a site analysis by doing one for Clemson Elementary Outdoors for 10% of their grade. Twenty percent of a student's final grade in a horticulture class may be associated with researching native plants and drawing a native plant courtyard design for Clemson Elementary. Students have earned academic credit in technical writing, editing, Land Resource Management, Biology, and Engineering courses to name a few.

While most of the work to date has been associated with academic credit, engineering students have committed to help create features for the Alice courtyard. They will design forms for the card people and mushrooms, place them, let them cure, then set them up at the school. All of their work is voluntary, under the umbrella of the University’s chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers. "We might even use some of the mixes we’ve used in our concrete canoe, so the material will be light," says Serji Amirkhanian, civil engineering professor and adviser to Clemson’s national champion concrete canoe team. He’s also been president of the Morrison PTO and a member of the school improvement council.

8. If funding is required, how is the project funded and what is the approximate annual budget for the project? Since funding for education in South Carolina is very limited at this time, most of the work to date has been done on a minimal budget with professors and students donating their time and expertise as part of their teaching and learning duties. The Clemson University Service Learning Collaborative provided a $500. Mini-grant to get the project started. The Sustainable Universities Initiative funded $10,000 including Morrison and several other schools around the state, and Landscapes for Learning has also provided grant money for the project. The PTO has initiated a fundraising campaign with help from Clemson, and community agencies such as Tricounty Ace Hardware, Head/Lee Nursery, and Faffards have donated tools, plants, and potting soil. Students in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management and technical writing classes have helped faculty prepare over twenty more grants, which have been submitted or are in review.

9. Feel free to add any other comments you may have about your project.
For a project that is intensely community-centered, Clemson Elementary Outdoors has far-reaching applications. At the higher-education level, the impact could be enormous. Clemson’s College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences has submitted a challenge grant to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Called "Greening Schools," the grant proposes for Clemson Elementary Outdoors and other sites across the state to be national models for experiential service learning. "Clemson Elementary Outdoors is a valuable contribution to the community; it is outreach in its fullest sense," says John Kelly, the University’s vice president for public service and agriculture. "This cross-college, community model is exactly what is envisioned in the concept of an ‘engaged’ university."

As President of Clemson University, I view Clemson Elementary Outdoors as a great example of how Clemson is setting the standard in public service for land-grant universities by engaging the whole campus in service and outreach. This fulfills our mission of world-class teaching, research and public service in the context of general education, student development and continuing education.

----------President Jim Barker