

## A new outdoor classroom in Little Falls is modeled after learning centers at Bloomfield's Clark's Pond and Nutley's Yanticaw Park.

By Eric Kiefer, Patch Staff | Mar 29, 2019 12:40 pm ET



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This past week, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission and the Little Falls School District jointly announced the completion of construction of an outdoor classroom and amphitheater in Little Falls. The unique learning environment is located in the Morris Canal Preserve off Main Street, along the Passaic River and across the street from Little Falls Public School No. 1. It will be used by all grades K-8.

"We were pleased to partner with the Little Falls School District to create this outdoor classroom," said PVSC Chairman Thomas Tucci, Jr. "Our goal was to help give children the opportunity to spend more time outdoors, especially in a natural setting. An outdoor classroom should give them opportunities to interact with nature, study the environment or any school subject for that matter. We hope that Little Falls children will be able to use and enjoy this unique learning environment for many years to come."

"I am so proud to have been able to participate with the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission to provide the students of Little Falls this beautiful outdoor classroom," said Little Falls Schools Superintendent Tracey Marinelli. "The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's professionalism, expertise and craftsmanship was magnificent. Outdoor learning spaces have been proven to increase motivation, decrease stress levels, foster a better attitude about the environment and increase grades. We can't wait to give our students this multi-sensory experience."

The facility was modeled after similar PVSC-constructed outdoor learning centers at Bloomfield's Clark's Pond and Nutley Yanticaw Park. It consists of three tiers of seating, approximately 30 feet in width, built into the natural slope of the park. There is enough seating to accommodate about 75 students. When seated in the amphitheater, students will be looking toward the Passaic River.

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Brownstone rock was used to create a podium in front of the amphitheater. In 1925, the Morris Canal Aqueduct spanning the Passaic River near where the outdoor classroom now sits was demolished. The aqueduct was erected in 1829 out of brownstone. Numerous blocks from the destroyed aqueduct were left behind. PVSC River Restoration Program employees were able to retrieve some of the blocks and repurpose them into a podium.