

# Reclamation: Building Community One Project at a Time



By Libby Pritchard  
NSSGA Director,  
Safety Policy

**ALTHOUGH EVERY ENHANCEMENT RECLAMATION** project is unique, each shares a common element — quarrying operations that set the stage for land transformation. Some pits are backfilled and whole communities have developed where there once was a hole. Others progress sequentially, where patches of acreage are mined, reclaimed, and then planted with crops, one cell after another. Many quarries lay the groundwork for what will eventually become prime habitat for native species, and such reclamation efforts take full advantage of geographic

features left by quarries, such as finger lakes or shallow channels off the mainstem of a river. But quarrying also creates foundations beyond just physical building blocks; sometimes, it is foundations within the community that spur successful enhancement reclamation projects.

For Luck Stone, engagement with the community is woven into how the business is run, and their Charlottesville plant is the kind of neighbor you would want to have. Since the 1960s, Stone Robinson Elementary School has abutted the quarry, and over the years the

*Luck Stone used land between their quarry and the Stone Robinson Elementary School to dispose of overburden, then raised the area to the same elevation of the school, leveled it, and donated a portion so it was large enough to build a baseball field.*



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two organizations have steadily built and maintained a mutually beneficial relationship that has resulted in numerous enhancement reclamation projects.

Around 1999, Luck Stone was running out of space to dispose of its overburden, because the 11 acres they had used for years was finally nearing its capacity. An ideal site for further disposal of overburden was a two-acre parcel of land right next to the quarry, which, coincidentally, was for sale. However, the site was also adjacent to Stone Robinson Elementary School, and Albemarle County was interested in purchasing it to expand the school. Thanks to the strong relationships that had been forged for decades, Luck Stone went to their neighbor with a plan and created a win-win outcome.

Luck Stone offered to bring their 11-acre parcel filled with overburden up to the school's elevation, level it, and reclaim the area to build a soccer field and track for the school with help from S. L. Williamson Asphalt Co. and Digs Excavating Co. Luck Stone would also donate the 11 acres to Stone Robinson Elementary and purchase the two-acre parcel so they would have somewhere to dispose of excess overburden materials.

The two-acre site had a deep ravine, which was ideal for holding overburden, but not for any efforts to expand the school. Because Luck Stone knew

the site would ultimately fill up, they planned ahead so in the future the site would ultimately serve as another enhancement reclamation project, again transforming land from overburdened storage to community amenity.

From 2000-2006, Luck Stone placed approximately 35,000 yards of overburden on the site, then added 20,000 more yards of soil in 2006, which brought the area up to the school's elevation, and enabled the school to extend the playground and add new equipment.

"It was definitely a win-win situation for the school and for us," said Tom Fleming, plant manager at the Charlottesville plant. From the first two enhancement reclamation projects both parties certainly benefitted. Stone Robinson got a new soccer field, track, and 11 acres of land that included access to the Rivanna River, and improvements to their playground; Luck Stone got land essential to their operations.

Luck Stone undertook a similar project in 2010, when Albemarle County wanted to grow its recreation opportunities. "We heard the county was looking for places to build a baseball field, and that's what sparked the conversation," Fleming said. There was another ravine between Luck Stone and Stone Robinson that was ideal for placing overburden and, once filled and brought to the right elevation, it would

be large enough for a baseball field. Ultimately, the plan was set, and Luck Stone even donated a portion of its land for the field.

All these projects were possible because Luck Stone maintains great relationships with its neighbors. They host regular quarry tours for students, hold a teacher appreciation day each fall, volunteer their time doing projects on campus, and more. Community engagement as a company value enables the continual win-win situations that Luck Stone is part of. "It's our goal to always keep the community's need in mind," said Luck Stone Environmental Manager Mark Williams.

The projects were also possible thanks to strong partnerships from Stone Robinson Elementary and one champion in particular, Sharon Wood, who spearheaded the ventures and helped coordinate the efforts. "She was very energetic and active — she pushed hard to make things happen and was determined to see things through," Fleming said.

It all comes back to being a good neighbor and a steward within the community. "We try to be involved in projects like these with our neighbors to support the area and it's a good example of how Luck Stone likes to be part of the communities we work and live in," Fleming said. ■

