

The Oxbow

FROM THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE WATER COMMISSION

North Dakota students "Make a Splash"

Nearly 1,250 fourth and fifth grade students and teachers from 47 schools throughout southwest and northeast North Dakota participated in the annual "Make a Splash with Project WET" water festivals in Dickinson (September 20-21), and Grand Forks (September 24-25). These "Make A Splash" water festivals were held in conjunction with National Project WET Water Education Day, September 21, during which over 45,000 elementary students in all 50 states took part in similar events.

The national effort was sponsored by International Project WET, with support from the Perrier Group of America. International Project WET Director Dennis Nelson (a North Dakota native) says "The activities are fun for all, but the topic remains a serious and important one. There are few issues today

that strongly affect all our lives; water is a precious resource, not only from a scientific or environmental standpoint, but also economically, culturally, and historically. The water festivals expose children to this subject in a way that both complements and reinforces traditional classroom learning."

The "Make a Splash" water festivals consisted of structured learning stations and exhibits where students actively engaged in hands-on water activities and investigations. Station topics included the hydrologic cycle, ground water, water movement, water and dams, spring water, water quality, water pollution, wetlands, water management, water conservation, soils and landscapes, water treatment, water turbidity, water hauling, stream hydrology, living history, and much more.

Other events contributed to the festival atmosphere, such as, musical entertainment, water magic, interpretive dancers, trivia contests, water demonstrations, living history skits or re-enactments, and rainstick making.

"The water festival educates children on the importance of water in our everyday lives and how critical it is to conserve and maintain a healthy water supply," said Ray Christensen, Southwest Water Authority, Manager and CEO.

Acting Dakota Science Center Director, Mary Beth Kelly Lowe, said "as a science center we're committed to supporting educational initiatives that help kids, parents, and community members understand the importance of protecting our natural resources." Grand Forks festival coordinator, Jenn Ochs adds, "while the water festival activities are fun to participate in, their message is important. Water is a vital element for all living things and it must be protected."

The fourth and fifth grade students from Grand Forks and Dickinson, spent a half day participating in hands-on water-related activities. Both festivals were comprised of four half-day sessions. Presenters included 11 Project WET facilitators, as well as local, state, and federal agency and community organization personnel.

Bill Sharff, the state's Project WET director said, "these children will one day be the stewards of our water resources. These water festivals will provide attending children with a focus for an appreciation for what that responsibility means and just how important it is."

"We're overwhelmed by the number of kids, parents and community members who participated in the two festivals...and our thanks go out to all the organizers, sponsors, funders, volunteers, presenters, and school personnel who helped make

Jacqueline Henderson, Soil Scientist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bismarck, and Project WET Facilitator, demonstrates to students how water has shaped the southwestern North Dakota landscape at the Dickinson "Make a Splash" Water Festival.



the “Make a Splash” festivals possible, Sharff continued.”

A critical component to both water festivals was engaging the students in critical thinking about water resources prior to or after their actual attendance. The Project WET activity, *A Drop in the Bucket*, introduced students to why water is a limited resource at the Grand Forks festival. The Dickinson water festival challenged students to write essays on what they learned at the water festival. Both festivals introduced all students to the “Make a Splash” journals prior to their attendance. The journals were used at the water festivals after each learning session by all students as a time to reflect on what they had experienced and learned.

All students received a variety of educational materials in addition to pencils, bags, and bookmarks. Teachers received a “Make A Splash” Educator’s Guide, brochure and poster from Project WET, and a host of water-related educational materials either through an educational packet or through a teacher’s educational resource area.

Joseph Froelich, a fifth grade student from Roosevelt Elementary School in Dickinson, said “I learned that if you build a dam, if it is built with a curved angle it will hold more pressure. I also learned that if there’s a little bit of pollution in the water and you drink it could make you very sick.”

Jessica Merchant, a fifth grader at Lincoln Elementary School in Dickinson, reflected on the Project WET activity *Pucker Effect*; “we

had to find out where the toxic lemonade (pollution) was in the box and I learned that I could be a scientist and figure out stuff.”

Both water festivals included a “Family Night of Exploration” at which children and parents and the general public were invited to attend. In a fun and festive way, participants



COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

By Patrick Fridgen

The North Dakota State Water Commission (Commission), chaired by Governor John Hoeven, acted on several items of business and was given status reports on continuing water management projects and programs at the October 23, 2001, meeting in Bismarck.

In action items, the Commission approved:

- One half of \$2,615,000 or \$1,307,500 for the Wahpeton flood control project for the 2001-2003 biennium.
- \$225,000 for the North Dakota Cloud Modification Project.
- An expansion of the current rural ring dike policy to include all existing occupied rural homes that have a history of repeated flooding from either natural or man-made causes; a new requirement where the value of property protected must be disclosed; a requirement for an

analysis of potential hydraulic impacts, including a statement of no significant impact or a quantified impact statement from a professional engineer licensed in North Dakota; and a modification to ring dike top width construction standards.

Major sponsors of the “Make a Splash” water festivals were the Southwest Water Authority, Dakota West Resource, Conservation and Development Project, Dakota Science Center, Cargill, and ND Project WET (Grand Forks and Dickinson). ■

analysis of potential hydraulic impacts, including a statement of no significant impact or a quantified impact statement from a professional engineer licensed in North Dakota; and a modification to ring dike top width construction standards.

- \$93,800 for Richland County farmstead ring dikes and \$173,395 for Richland County residential ring dikes with a limit of \$25,000 on any one dike.

- Funding for the AgPACE program to buy down the interest on loans for the development of new irrigation in the amount of \$1 million.

- \$50,000 in 2002 and 2003 for the Irrigation Caucus to carry out activities outlined in its strategic plan for increasing irrigated acreage.

- An allocation of funding from the Water Development Trust Fund in the amount of \$15 million for Langdon Rural Water, McKenzie County Rural Water, Ramsey Rural Water, and Tri-County Rural Water.

- A capital repayment rate of \$0.85 per thousand gallons for contract users and \$26.03 per month for rural water users for 2002, along with a rate for Replacement and Extraordinary Maintenance of \$0.35 per thousand gallons for the Southwest Pipeline.

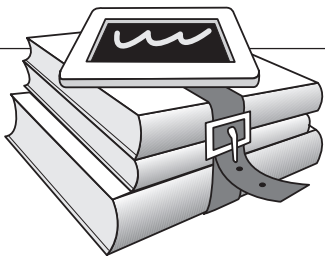
- \$104,000 from the Water Development Trust Fund for the purchase of easements. ■



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THE WATER PRIMER

Project WET Facilitator Awards: What are they and who receives them?

In last month's Primer, we looked at what it takes to become a Project WET facilitator and discussed the qualifications and general characteristics individuals should possess to become facilitators. To quickly recap, the best way to describe the character of these individuals is hard working and dedicated. However, the countless hours, continued involvement, and hard work of Project WET's facilitators does not go unnoticed. In fact, there are several benefits and incentives available to these educators.

The following is a summary of the various levels and incentives facilitators can obtain through their continued involvement:

Crew Level

The first level Project WET facilitators can reach is the Crew level. This is achieved following successful completion of the Project WET *Explore Your Watershed* leadership training workshop. Individuals who achieve this first level receive a certificate of completion for the leadership training workshop and a Project WET tote bag and travel mug.

First Mate Level

After completing 15 hours of Project WET *Explore Your Watershed* educational programs, facilitators reach the First Mate level. At the First Mate level, facilitators receive a Project WET facilitator lapel pin and engraved name tag; a Project WET shirt and cap; a free subscription to *North Dakota Water* magazine; and

access to Project WET water quality kits, equipment, and other educational resources.

Navigator Level

Facilitators who complete 75 hours of Project WET educational programs can achieve the Navigator level. As a Navigator, facilitators receive a Project WET denim shirt, a certificate of appreciation on a wooden plaque, and supplemental Project WET educational publications upon request.

Captain Level

After 150 hours of Project WET involvement, facilitators reach the Captain level. As captains, facilitators receive a Project WET polo shirt and sweatshirt, as well as a commendation award on a wooden plaque.

Commodore Level

The Commodore level is achieved by those who successfully complete 300 hours of Project WET educational programs. At this upper level, facilitators are given a special recognition award on a wooden plaque along with a Project WET jacket and briefcase.

Admiral Level

To reach the Admiral level, over 500 hours of WET involvement are required. This is the highest level a Project WET facilitator can reach, and to date, only two people have reached this most prestigious level. WET facilitators who achieve the Admiral level receive a Project WET coat and leather briefcase. ■

2001 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Navigator Level

Angie Bartholomay

Angie has been teaching science for over 21 years and is currently teaching physical science and chemistry at Bottineau High School. Angie has been a Project WET facilitator since 1995.

Captain Level

Pam Hintz and Sharleen Stigen

Pam has been teaching various math and science courses at Elgin/New Leipzig public schools for the past 17 years and has been a WET facilitator since 1996. Sharleen has been teaching at the rural Belfield and Billings school districts for more than 24 years. Her Project WET facilitator involvement began in 1994.

Admiral Level

Steve Seymour and Ila LaChapell

Steve taught grades 7-12 ecology, science, and psychology at Gackel/Streeter public schools for 27 years before retiring last spring. Even after retirement, Steve has continued his involvement with the Project WET program which began for him in 1985. Ila started her teaching career at Buxton Public School District in 1972, and then to Hope from 1981 to 1999 where she was a department head. Ila is currently teaching biology, physical science, chemistry, astronomy, and meteorology at Walhalla, North Dakota. She became a Project WET facilitator in 1995.