



Anniversary Story

“Source Water Education”

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Groundwater Guardian Team, Pennsylvania

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We are in the business of water. So water is very important to us and we are very concerned about the protection of our groundwater supply. Because of that, we decided to develop an annual educational program in the area schools to promote groundwater protection and conservation.

For the past fifteen years, around National Drinking Water Week, which occurs the first full week in May, Yvonne Shaffer (American Water) and Edward Adams (Meadville Area Water Authority) have presented Source Water Protection educational programs to the

6th grade classes at the six elementary schools in our area. Using a number of models and handouts, the presentations give the students a real “hands on” opportunity to learn about source water supply, groundwater protection and conservation.

Each year the students are asked to create a poster demonstrating what they learned during the presentations. They have responded with great enthusiasm and this year we received about 350 posters depicting various subjects discussed during the presentation at their school.

The posters are judged by a panel of judges made up of community members who share a concern about the protection of our water supply. The posters are judged based on content as it is related to the presentation topics, originality of design, and overall appearance. The judges’ task is never easy, as the students do such a great job!



Every year, all of the posters are displayed at the Downtown Mall in Meadville, Pennsylvania for one week. An awards ceremony is held during that time, honoring twelve winning students. The awards ceremony is always well attended by the students, their families and teachers. Presenters include geologists and others who work in the water industry and share their concerns about groundwater protection before presenting the students with their awards.



The 2014 winning poster contest winner. Lexi Ellis, with MAWA Board Chairman, Timothy Groves.

Lexi's first place poster will be printed on a bookmark with suggestions for good source water conservation and protection habits that will be distributed to the 6th grade classes next year. All of the winning posters were aired on the Crawford Central cable channel for one week as well.

The twelve prize winners receive prize packages donated by area vendors and others interested in supporting groundwater protection, who provided us with the bags (made from recycled pop bottles) to put all of the prizes in that were donated by over 30 sponsors. Prizes included everything from water bottles, frizbees and trinkets, to gift cards, certificates and coupons.

We are gearing up for our 16th year of presentations and bringing an awareness about the importance of groundwater protection to another 300 plus students in our region again this year. Our first group of students are about 28 years old now. Over the fifteen years of presentations, we have directly reached between 4500 and 5000 students. And through our poster contest and awards ceremony, we have also reached the numerous family members that come to the awards ceremony to watch their student receive this award. It has been a very rewarding and beneficial program in our area schools. We have received so much support from the schools and from the community for our program, making the presentations and the wonderful prize packages for the poster contest awards ceremony possible and helping to make our program such a tremendous success in our community.



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