



RIVER WATCH FORUM HIGHLIGHTS STUDENTS' SCIENTIFIC WORK

It may be spring break at the University of Minnesota, Crookston, but the campus has been hopping. Almost 200 high school juniors from Crookston and surrounding districts converged at UMC for Career Day, and about 200 local and area students are competing in a Knowledge Bowl meet on Campus.

Sandwiched between those two events was the 13th Annual River Watch (RW) Student Forum, hosted by the International Water Institute and the Red River Watershed Management Board. Approximately 180 students, teachers, and resource managers participated to showcase the work of RW teams from high schools in the Red River of the North Basin in Minnesota, North Dakota and Manitoba.

Awards were presented to the schools that have built on the basic RW water quality monitoring program and completed

additional activities of note. Partners who have provided significant support to the RW program were also recognized.

The River Watch program continues to provide scientifically credible water quality information about the Basin's valuable water resources, said Wayne Goeken, RRWMB River Watch coordinator. The International Water Institute and partners are working together to integrate River Watch directly into school curriculums, include biological and flow monitoring, become involved in Adopt-A-River community clean-up efforts, and much more.

Student teams presented their projects and, in Bede Ballroom, displayed poster-board presentations of their science-based initiatives.

(This article was reprinted courtesy of the Crookston Daily Times, Mike Christopherson.)



In Kiehle Auditorium, student Tomi Thompson from the Barnesville, Minn. River Watch team discusses their Energy Conservation Community Survey.



The River Watch team from West Fargo, ND discusses their project, "Fish Don't Do Drugs" that focused on proper pharmaceutical disposal.

RIVER WATCH FORUM VITAL TO WATERSHED EDUCATION

High school students share water monitoring projects at forum

Every March, high school students and educators meet at the University of Minnesota, Crookston to present their River Watch citizen monitoring projects. The annual River Watch Forum, held on March 18, was the culmination of the past year's water monitoring efforts.

The Forum is part of

the Red River Basin River Watch Monitoring Program that began in Minnesota in 1995. The monitoring program and forum is coordinated and managed by the International Water Institute's Red River Center for Watershed Education.

Today, the program is being implemented in North Dakota and Mani-

toba through a partnership between the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB), MN Pollution Control Agency, the ND Department of Health, and Oak Hammock Marsh. "We see our participation in the program as important to our mission. The program provides vital information about water quality that we use in

making decisions about projects we fund," says RRWMB president John Finney.

The basin wide program provides hands-on "real world" science opportunities for students, teachers and citizens participating in the program and is designed to provide leadership experiences

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RRWMB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At its regularly scheduled March meeting, the RRWMB:

- Received a report from Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator.
- Discussed the Public Information Initiative with Mark Meister, Public Information Officer.
- Received a report from Naomi Erickson, Administrator.
- Discussed the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) proposal of the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) with Janeen Stenso, Outreach Coordinator.
- Discussed the Consolidated Conservation (Con-con) Ditch Rule Update with Mike Carroll, MNDNR Regional Director.
- Received a report from Chuck Fritz, Director, International Water Institute regarding the Red River Basin Mapping Initiative.
- Received a report from Wayne Goeken, Monitoring Coordinator.
- Received a report from Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator.
- Authorized the Step II submittal of the CD No. 18 – Goose Prairie Water Management Project of the Wild Rice WD.

and greater awareness and understanding of baseline water quality in the Red River Basin. “We hope we are educating future watershed leaders,” adds Finney.

There are currently 34 schools participating basin wide in the River Watch Monitoring Program (27 in Minnesota, 7 in North Dakota and 3 in Manitoba). Participating schools monitor with scientific equipment at

2-16 predetermined sites along selected rivers and streams.

FACTS ABOUT THE 2009 RW STUDENT FORUM

- Over 170 high school students and administrators attended the forum
- Participating schools included those from MN, ND, and MB
- Each school attending the forum displayed “poster board” presenta-

tions of their science-based River Watch

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RIVER WATCH PROGRAM

River Watch incorporates watershed science as the integrating context for developing critical thinking and leadership skills while emphasizing citizen engagement and water resources management dialogue resulting in more informed decisions and actions which foster sustainable and vibrant communities.

Goal -- Develop an effective transferable model to engage and educate watershed residents, stakeholders, and others to better understand and protect watershed ecosystems through environmental monitoring, training, and formal and informal education programs in their local watershed.

Objectives

- Identify and ad-

dress priority watershed monitoring, science, and research needs

- Build leadership capacity and civic engagement opportunities
- Encourage active participation in natural resources management decision making
- Engage citizens in applied watershed science research, public outreach, and restoration efforts
- Conduct regular monitoring of local environmental conditions
- Establish online environmental data and research discussion center
- Provide pre-service and practicing teacher training programs
- Undertake annual program review and evaluation of projects
- For information about the River Watch Forum, the monitoring program, and the Red River Center for Watershed Education, visit: www.internationalwaterinstitute.org.



River Watch participants listen to project presentations by other RW teams at UMC

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