

Water Fair educates fourth grade students about water conservation Read more: Iron County Today - Water Fair educates fourth grade students about water conservation

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

By Corey Baumgartner, Reporter Iron County Today

CEDAR CITY – Just under 800 Iron County fourth graders flowed through the Cedar City Aquatic center March 9-10 for the second annual Water Fair, sponsored by the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District.

Throughout the day, classrooms and learning stations were set up and volunteers from around the state, including Utah State University and the Dixie National Forest, taught the students about the journey of the water cycle, pollution, clouds, dams, leaky faucets and toilets and ways to use water more wisely.

Because the water cycle and water conservancy is part of the fourth grade curriculum, the water fair fits perfectly into the students' learning.

“We do this fun and educational event to complement their classroom curriculum,” Candace Schaible, of CICWCD and USU Extension, said.

Rick Webster, a Cedar City native who now works for the Utah Division of Water as its education specialist, travels all over the country teaching kids about water education.

“It’s fun to see their excitement and try to get them to change the world,” Webster said. “Water conservation comes down to you choosing to be more efficient.” He also challenged the students to “pick at least one thing at home that you can fix, or be better at.”

Each learning station provided a different conversation about conservation, and at one of the more interactive stations, Marcia Gilles and Holly Hadley, from the Dixie National Forest Service, set up a three-dimensional enviroscape to demonstrate the dangers of pouring chemicals, or oils down the drain, or toilet, and what happened when fertilizers, or animal manure seep down into the water supply. Several students with spray bottles simulated a rainstorm and watched how water sources can become polluted if not protected.

Nicki Frey, a wildlife biologist, demonstrated that if all the water in the world could fit into two 5-gallon buckets, three cups would be polluted, one cup would be frozen fresh water, and to the students' surprise, only about nine drops would be available for drinking. She also made sure to remind the students the importance of protecting that precious percentage of water.

“We can’t create more water, but we can pollute it and ruin it for drinking,” she said, giving an example of how only one gallon of motor oil seeping through the ground can contaminate one million gallons of water.

The students also enjoyed participating in the game show, “Water Jeopardy,” where classes were quizzed on their knowledge of water. Some of the questions asked students about the number of inches of snow required to make one inch of water, the source of energy that drives the water cycle, and how much water can a dripping faucet waste per day. The correct answers were 12 inches, the sun, and 4 gallons, respectively.

The winning class received a pizza party and this year two classes, LeAnn Roberts’ class from Three Peaks Elementary and Suzie Palladino’s class from North Elementary, tied for the prize.

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