

# Water fair gives 4th-graders hands-on lessons in water awareness

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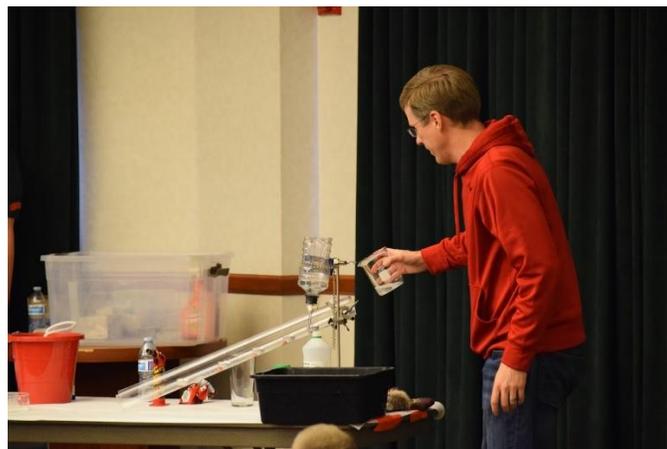
March 11, 2018



*Iron County Water Fair in action, date not specified | Photo courtesy of the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District, St. George News*

**CEDAR CITY** — The Central Iron County Water Conservancy District and Utah State University Extension are hosting the fifth annual water fair for all Iron County fourth graders Monday and Tuesday at Festival Hall in Cedar City.

Learning about water is part of the state fourth-grade curriculum. The water fair is designed to further expand on what students are learning in the classroom.



*Students learn at the 2017 Water Fair in Iron County, date not specified | Photo courtesy of Central Iron County Water Conservancy District, St. George News*

“I think the sooner students can learn about protecting our precious resources, the better,” Angela Harker, a fourth-grade teacher from Escalante Elementary, said. “It will serve us all well to be aware of our impact on our environment and realize that we can all make a significant difference if we care to.”

Water experts from across the state and multiple state agencies will come together to teach the fourth graders, Candace Schaible of USU Extension said. Each speaker teaches a different topic about water.

“The highlight for the kids begins with a bang as Mackay Steffensen, a chemistry professor from Southern Utah University, along with some of his students, conduct water experiments,” Shelby Ericksen, of the water district, said.

Many of the classes at the water fair have a hands-on aspect to help engage students and increase understanding.

“Water education is especially important in the Cedar Valley where more groundwater is being withdrawn each year than is being recharged,” Ericksen said. “This has caused the Cedar Valley aquifer to decline.”



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As of today, Southwestern Utah has the snow-water equivalent of 47 percent of normal.

“After the water fair last year, the students had become permanently more aware of how important our small amount of usable water is,” Harker said, noting that the National Groundwater Association says only 0.3 percent of water on earth is usable for humans. “The other 99.7 percent is in the oceans, soils, icecaps and floating in the atmosphere.”

In the weeks leading up to the water fair, teachers are sent materials to study with their classes for Water Jeopardy, a station at the fair where the overall winning class gets a pizza party. Infographics with toilet facts are dropped off at schools the week prior to the fair.

At the close of the water fair, each class receives a gift to help them continue to learn about the importance of water, including water cycle materials and experiments. Each student is given toilet tablets to test for leaks in their homes.

“One student asked their dad to fix the toilet once they discovered it was leaking by using the tablets ‘so they could stop wasting water,’” Harker said.

<http://www.cedarcityutah.com/news/archive/2018/03/11/prc-water-fair-gives-4th-graders-hands-on-lessons-in-water-awareness/#.WrqqvIjwaM8>