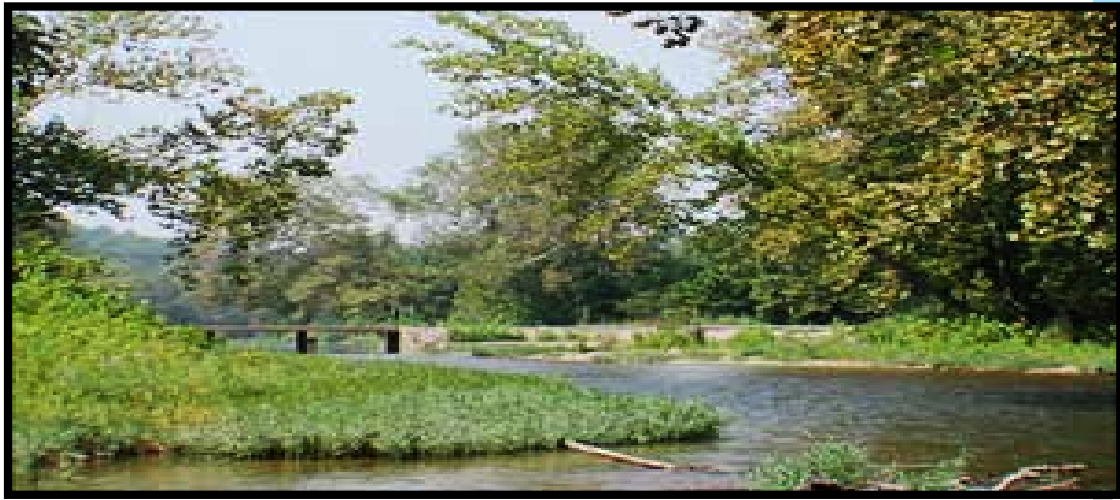


# WaterFest Manual



**Howell County Missouri**

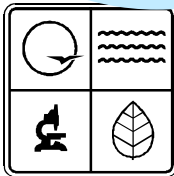
**Sponsoring Agencies...**

**University of Missouri Extension**

**Missouri Department of Conservation**

**Bryant Watershed Project**

**Missouri State University (MSU) West Plains**



“U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region VII, through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, has provided partial funding for this project under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act.”

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## **I. Introduction**

It is universally known that water is the key to sustaining life. After just a short time without water plants, animals and even people would wither and die. Our planet Earth has a given amount of water. With the exception of a minute amount of water that arrives from extraterrestrial sources such as comets, the water we have here on Earth is a limited resource. We have no way of replacing a supply of water. Water is recycled through time on our planet. The water that flows so freely in Howell County Missouri is recycled water that may have existed in the air six months ago, the ocean 10,000 years ago or in a glacier 100,000 years ago.

The karst topography of our county makes pollution a critical issue. Many adults in Howell County recall the day a sinkhole opened in the West Plains sewage treatment plant lagoon and drained it dry. Drinking water was contaminated with bacteria in a large area, and many became ill. This event made the public aware of the role our geology plays in the safety of our drinking water. There are other considerations, however, that should be brought to the attention of the public. Non-point source pollution, also known as polluted runoff, is a far more common source of contamination. Both are important issues to be dealt with in both the public and private sector.

The WaterFest is one method of educating the public on the importance of protecting our water resources. Each year the Annual Howell County WaterFest (HCWF) provides an excellent hands-on educational experience for over 450 students in Howell County, Missouri. The festival is a FREE, one-day event in the county. The goal of this manual is to provide the necessary background and information needed to organize and implement a water festival.

Incorporating a water festival into a community event is a great way to provide a fun educational experience where children as well as adult volunteers will learn about water. Howell County Missouri is not the only place that has seen first hand the results of this type of successful educational program.

Communities across the nation have been incorporating the “water festival approach” to successfully educate young minds about “water quality”. In Nebraska, the Groundwater Foundation has been using this approach for 20 years.

This is only one example of events that occur each year throughout the United States with the same goal of educating young minds about water quality. There are many approaches to developing a water festival. This manual will take you through all of the steps necessary to create and implement a Water Festival based on the Howell County Model.

## **II. History of the Howell County WaterFest**

The idea for creating a water festival in Howell County was inspired in the spring of 1999. The First Annual Meramec Regional Water Festival took place on the University of Missouri-Rolla campus on March 23, 1999. Mary Palmer of the Missouri Department of Conservation and Richard Atkinson of University of Missouri Extension attended and participated in that event and took home an idea for developing a water festival for Howell County.

The Howell County WaterFest (HCWF) is a successful example of water quality preservation education. For five years, the HCWF has educated several hundred Howell County students each year on the subject of water quality while meeting many of the required Missouri Show Me-Standards. In the past, the WaterFest invitation has been extended to 5<sup>th</sup> grade educators and their students. With the addition of the Missouri Grade Level Expectations in Science, the event goals and objectives more closely match those of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. For this reason, the invitation to the 2006 Howell County WaterFest was extended to 4<sup>th</sup> grade educators and their students.

Each year during the college spring break, Missouri State University (MSU) hosts the event on campus. MSU pre-service educators present fun hands-on activities to the elementary students. Activities of the day are based on the following topics:

1. Surface Water
2. Polluted Run-off
3. Karst
4. Soils and Erosion

The key agencies involved in developing the (HCWF) include, University of Missouri Extension, Missouri Department of Conservation, Bryant Creek Watershed Education Project and Missouri State University (MSU) West Plains. A committee with representatives from each agency develops and

implements the WaterFest each year with planning for the event starting a minimum of 6 months prior to the festival.

Nine Howell County Elementary schools participated in the 2005 Howell County WaterFest (HCWF). The event took place on Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, with over 450 fifth graders taking part in various water related hands-on lessons.

In preparation for WaterFest students were given a pre-test consisting of questions related WaterFest topics. This pre-test was given before any discussion on the water related pre-activity materials. Scores were tallied and the results were given to a HCWF committee representative.

The participants of WaterFest were then given a post-test soon after the event. The scores from these tests were recorded and an overall average obtained. The HCWF is a proven success. The following table shows a significant improvement in the overall test scores for the student participants in 2005. The 2005 test results are consistent with results from previous years. Each year a significant improvement is reflected in the test scores.

<b>2005 Howell County WaterFest Test Scores</b>	
<b>Pre- Test Average (Taken prior to WaterFest)</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Post-Test Average (Taken after WaterFest)</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Percentage of Improvement</b>	<b>33%</b>

### **III. Purpose of the festival.**

There are two goals of the The Howell County WaterFest (HCWF). The primary goal of the HCWF is to encourage elementary students to appreciate water, its value, its history and its future. A second goal is to provide an opportunity for education majors.

Through the various activities, the elementary students learn about soil erosion, karst topography, benthic macroinvertebrates and how the actions of individuals and communities can positively or negatively affect water quality. In addition students learn about watersheds and the watershed address of their school.

Not only do the elementary students gain a wealth of knowledge but the MSU students are provided with an opportunity to plan, practice and present an active learning experience in a classroom setting to four different groups of students. The experience provides an experience applicable to their future job responsibilities such as curriculum development, classroom dynamics, and fundamentals of learning.

In the polluted runoff exploration, the MSU students facilitate teams of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from West Plains Middle School. These 8<sup>th</sup> graders lead the polluted runoff activity.

### **IV. Getting Started**

#### **a. Location and implementation of the festival.**

The Howell County WaterFest (HCWF) takes place in early spring on the Missouri State University (MSU) West Plains campus in West Plains, Missouri. The event is scheduled to correspond with the college spring break. Thus there is little or no interference with college classes and student schedules. However, college students participating in the festival must use part of their spring break. In 2006, the spring break for MSU students and 4<sup>th</sup> graders overlap. In this case, we have expanded the event to two days and reduced the number of classrooms needed.

The event is an all day event, with the elementary students arriving on campus around 9:00 a.m. and leaving around 2:30 p.m. with a break for lunch in the middle of the day.

Upon arrival, all students met by a guide who directs them to the Christian Life Center where they all participate in an opening ceremony. Assigned group leaders then guide the groups of 20 to 30 students through a series of hands on-activities involving four major topics: Karst (Groundwater), Soil Erosion, Polluted Runoff, and Surface Water. Groups/Schools rotate to different activities throughout the day, spending 30 to 60 minutes on each topic. Concepts are taught using hands-on activities presented in a classroom setting by the MSU students and other volunteers.

**b. Financial and in-kind support.**

Sponsoring agencies provide financial and in-kind assistance to the festival. In 2005 a 319 mini-grant through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, provided funding to coordinate, document and make plans for future HCWF. In past years WalMart has sponsored an environmental grant and local businesses have made small and in-kind donations to help subsidize expenses for the HCWF. These small and in-kind donations are used for lunch for the volunteers, supplies for the activities, and t-shirts to help with event volunteers and staff.

**c. Volunteers: organizers, presenters, guides, etc.**

The core committee members from the four sponsoring agencies conduct the majority of the pre-work for the festival. Associates of these committee members provide additional assistance throughout the planning and implementation of the event.

The majority of the volunteers for the event are current Missouri State University-West Plains students. In 2005 thirty-five college students and five middle school students participated in the Howell County WaterFest (HCWF) serving as presenters who taught the various water related sessions. Another twenty students volunteered as guides who lead the groups throughout the day. Collectively these students gave over 562 hours in training, preparing for and working at the event.

**d. Choosing activities to fit the Grade Level Expectations.**

Activities from a number of resources including Project WET are carefully reviewed. Historically, activities were chosen that will met the Show-Me Standards. These standards covered a grade span rather than a particular grade. In the past, the HCWF was held for 5<sup>th</sup> grade educators and their students and the activities addressed the proper standards. With the additional of the Grade Level Expectations

for each grade level, the activities are more closely aligned with 4<sup>th</sup> grade. For this reason, the invitation was extended to 4<sup>th</sup> grade educators and their students.

Although Grade Level Expectations are set for Communication Arts, Math and Social Studies, only Science are correlated to the WaterFest activities. They are as follows:

Polluted Runoff	Surface Water
SC4:1A Grade 4:a	SC4:1A Grade 4:a
SC4:1D Grade 4:a	SC4:1A Grade 4:b
SC4:1D Grade 6:a	SC4:3C Grade 4:b
SC5:3A Grade 5:c	

Soil Erosion	Karst
SC5:1A Grade 4:a	SC5:1A Grade 2:b
SC5:1A Grade 4:b	SC5:1A Grade 4:b
SC5:3A Grade 4:c	SC5:2A Grade 2:a
SC5:3A Grade 4:b	SC5:2A Grade 4:c

#### **e. Steps for developing the Howell County WaterFest**

The first step is to establish a committee that will plan, develop and implement the WaterFest. With the Howell County WaterFest, a committee has been established with representatives from each of the sponsoring agencies. In 2006 the sponsoring agencies and contact persons are; University of Missouri Extension: Richard Atkinson; Missouri Department of Conservation: Mary Palmer, Melanie Carden-Jessen & Wendy Ziegler; Bryant Watershed Education Project: Lois Reborne & Wanda Byrd and Missouri State University (SMSU) West Plains: Wanda Byrd.

The following steps will be organized in a timetable format beginning 6 months prior to the event and ending with follow-up responsibilities after the event, each time period will contain numerous tasks. Each task should be assigned to a committee person to facilitate implementation by a certain date.

**(See Appendix A)**

*The following narrative form includes tips and suggestions based on years of experience conducting Water Festivals and other events.*

#### **6 months prior to the event**

**(HCWF committee should meet to discuss the following)**

- 1. Schedule the exact date for the upcoming event.** Confirm the location for the event and schedule with the appropriate representatives from supporting agencies and groups. The HCWF uses the MSU West Plains campus for the classes and the adjacent First United Methodist Church Christian Life Center for the large group activities including the opening and closing event as well as lunch.
- 2. Schedule the exact date for the presenter training.** – Training should be conducted at least three weeks prior to the event in order to allow time for the presenters to prepare for their chosen activity. Pick a date that most of the students can attend. Some classes do not meet on Friday, a Saturday training might be best for maximum attendance. If possible, Schedule a follow up training for students unable to attend the first session.
- 3. Reserve Missouri State University (MSU) rooms** – Establish a contact person with MSU and reserve appropriate rooms for Presenter Training and WaterFest
- 4. Look ahead for assignments.** Thoroughly go over the WaterFest Annual Tasks list and assign items to committee members with projected completion dates.
- 5. Contact the elementary schools in Howell County to establish interest.** Contact is made by sending each elementary teacher of the target grade an invitation to attend HCWF. (See Appendix B & C)
- 6. Plan and organize WaterFest activities for each main topic.** The activities should follow guidelines for Grade Level Expectations. Topics for the 2006 HCWF :
  - Karst Topography – explaining the landscape of the Howell County region with caves, sinkholes, springs etc.
  - Soils and Erosion – explains how water makes things move
  - Polluted Runoff – what is a watershed and what happens when we don't protect our watersheds
  - Surface Water – learn how to tell good water quality from bad by identifying macro-invertebrate indicator bugs. The activities should follow guidelines for MO standards.
- 7. Apply for grants! If this has not been done previously.**

Grants for past events have been from WalMart, Inc. and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

## **4 months prior to the event**

- 1. Finalize which elementary schools will be participating based on response from invitations. Determine how many elementary students will be attending from each school.**  
At this time each school should be divided into groups of 30 students or less to determine how many groups will be attending WaterFest. This will determine how many volunteers will be needed to present programs. Nine schools participate in the Howell County festival with approximately 450 students that are divided into 20 groups. Small schools with fewer than 15 students are combined as needed to make groups.
- 2. Establish local sponsors for the event.** Contact local businesses for contributions, bottled water, sodas, ice, lunch items, paper for making copies, gifts for volunteers, prizes for banner contest, etc.
- 3. Design daily schedule for the event.** The schedule should be presented in several formats: one overall schedule, a schedule for each individual school group and a room schedule for each MSU classroom that will hold a particular WaterFest topic for the day. Examples of each type of schedule are shown in Appendix J.
- 4. Have someone double check the schedules** – Look at the three types of schedules (master, room and school) and make sure they are all consistent.
- 5. Reserve First United Methodist Church building** – The recreation room and the kitchen are used the entire day for the opening & closing exercises and for lunch break. Also, reserve an extra room that the volunteers can use for lunch.
- 6. Organize Banner contest** – Decide who will judge the banners, locate the banner holders from 2005, and acquire prizes for the most accurate banners.
- 7. Design and print brochure** – If you choose to have one to distribute to local businesses for soliciting donations.

## **3 months prior to the event**

- 1. Recruit presenters and guides for HCWF** – Send out a sign-up sheet to professors at MSU to post in classrooms for students to sign up to volunteer as a guide or presenter for the WaterFest. Signup should include name, phone number, mailing address, e:mail address, t-shirt size and whether they are interested in being a presenter or a guide.

2. **Assign activities to rooms** – Look at the rooms that have been used in past years. The Polluted Run-off activity should only be done in rooms without carpet to avoid having to vacuum. Try to keep all of karst and water cycle in the same building; polluted run-off in one building and surface water in one building.
3. **Contact resource presenters (if they are needed)**
4. **Decide if funding is available to purchase t-shirts** – T-shirts are given to each volunteer – committee member, presenters, guides, etc. If funding is limited a less costly way of identification could be used like buttons/pins with the logo.
5. **Design t-shirts and folders** – Decide if you will use the same logo from previous years or have someone design a new logo. Graphics for the packet cover need to be collected – cooperating agencies, sponsors and the logo – and given to whoever is going to design and print the cover. A photo of one of the winning banners from a previous year could be considered for the logo.
6. **Plan evaluation meeting for volunteers** - The volunteers should meet for a brief discussion right after the event when all of the elementary students have gone. The committee members should plan to meet within the week following the festival for discussion and evaluation of the event. .

## **2 months prior to the event**

**(HCWF committee should meet to discuss the following)**

1. **Follow-up with MSU students that signed up to volunteer.** Confirm their availability. Tell them the exact date and time for the event and the training for the presenters (guides are welcome, too). E-mail does not always work; it is best to call each student.
2. **Confirm 8<sup>th</sup> grade volunteers with Lois Reborne** – These 8<sup>th</sup> graders have studied water pollution concepts and are teamed up with MSU students to present lessons at WaterFest.
3. **Confirm t-shirt sizes.** – For MSU student volunteers, 8<sup>th</sup> grade volunteers, committee members and other volunteers. Get an exact count for ordering.
4. **Order t-shirts** – Hi-Tech Printing in West Plains has done the shirts in the past. The contact number is 417-255-1888. 100 t-shirts will run about \$600.00.
5. **Acquire or Purchase equipment** – Discuss what equipment will be needed for the event, what each presenter will need to do activities, what will be needed for the opening and closing activities, etc. Check on the availability of necessary equipment at the facilities, both MSU

classrooms and the First United Methodist Church community building. By this time everyone on the committee should know what he or she is responsible for bringing to the festival. Some last minute items might need to be acquired.

- 6. Send materials to classroom teachers – Teacher Pre-Packet Material (See Appendix D)**  
(pre-test, vocab words, objectives, standards, schedule, rules, contest info., name tags, websites, WF materials)
- 7. Notify MSU staff** – Remind them of the exact time and date of the event and the presenter training if MSU facilities are to be used. Send a posting of all rooms and buildings that will need to be open. Give them a list of all equipment that will be needed in each room. Request that someone be there to open these rooms by 7:00 a.m. Get a contact phone number for emergencies (water leak, spills, toilet problems, etc.).
- 8. Notify First United Methodist Church (FUMC) staff** – Remind them of the exact time and date of the event. Request necessary equipment for the opening and closing activities such as sound equipment or stage. The HCWF has given a donation in lieu of rent for the community building use. Make sure this is discussed with the church regarding the amount and send this ahead of time. Discuss donation amount and/or send the donation ahead of time.
- 9. Send article to MSU student newspaper** – Announce the event.
- 10. Invite Politician** - Invite any local or state politician interested in promoting water quality to come to the event; they should be introduced to the audience. They may be asked to say a few words with regard to the WaterFest and/or water quality. Provide a name and cell phone number for the person to contact onsite.
- 11. Locate crayfish costume** – Mary Palmer should know where to locate the Missouri Department of Conservation crayfish costume.
- 12. Recruit crayfish** – Find a willing participant who will wear the crayfish costume the day of the event and interact with the kids during the opening and closing activities and at lunch.

## **1 month prior to the event**

- 1. Presenter Training** – All volunteers are requested to attend a four-hour training on WaterFest. The WaterFest committee members conduct the training held at Missouri State University – West Plains Campus. On training day, presenters are assigned a topic for WaterFest. If a presenter expresses a particular interest in one of the topics, they may be assigned to that topic. When assigning presenters to rooms, take care that there is at least one presenter in each of the

rooms that was able to attend training. Generally there are two presenters for each room and five rooms for each topic. The final number of classes depends on how many elementary students will attend. In the past there have been approximately 450 elementary students. Appendix F contains detailed handouts for the presenter training. If possible, give the presenters their props and materials so they will be familiar with them on the day of the event.

2. **Organize opening & closing** – Assign these duties to committee members.
3. **Invite local Newspaper (The Daily Quill)** – Request that the local newspaper attend the WaterFest. Invite them for the entire day but suggest the opening or closing ceremony if they are unable to stay. Provide a name and cell phone number for the person to contact onsite.
4. **Send article to “Grizz Bizz” (Student Newsletter)** - Announce the event.
5. **Prepare day of event teacher packets** – There will be 21 – 22 groups, each leader should have a packet.

**See Appendix G – Teacher WaterFest Packet.**

(pin, evaluation forms, rules, post test, welcome letter, list of contributors, etc.)

The WaterFest pin is worn by the leader of each student group to help the presenters identify that person from other chaperones in the group.

6. **Prepare master email (guides and presenters)** – Send out a reminder/welcome letter to all volunteers stating the time that they should arrive, where they should report to and remind them to wear a watch. Provide a name and cell phone number for the person to contact onsite.
7. **Advertise on websites** – Announce the event on the Bryant Watershed Project Atlas website, MSU website, MDC, etc.
8. **Purchase prizes & supplies** – Prizes for the banner contest and gifts for the volunteers (presenters and guides).
9. **Design certificates for volunteers** – This is a thank you certificate for each volunteer. The certificate can also be used by the SMSU students to show proof to their professors that they assisted with the festival and can be added to their portfolio.

## **2 weeks prior to the event**

1. **Pick up t-shirts, label and distribute** – The t-shirts may need to be paid for if this hasn't been done. Put the name of each volunteer on the label for the correct size. Put them in a box organized by type of group, ie. Guides, Karst Presenters, Soils, etc. The t-shirts will be picked

up the morning of the event at the Christian Life Center (community center) when everyone checks in.

2. **Photocopy/organize activity materials** – Make sure there are extra copies of activity materials for each topic (Karst, Water Cycle, Polluted Run-Off, & Surface Water). Presenters should have received these materials at training but some may not have been at training and some may have forgotten their materials.
3. **Organize lunch** Deli sandwich trays, chips, cookies, sodas & water work well. Also consider pizza if a business will donate some or give a discount. Plan for the number of volunteers, committee members, MSU students, etc.; for the Howell County WaterFest, this is usually around 70 – 80.
4. **Make arrangements for recycling containers for cans and bottles at lunch.** Plan to have at least 8 recycling containers available for the event.
5. **Send scrolling message to Missouri State University electronic message board**
6. **Organize cell phones** – It is critical to have a way to communicate the day of the event, make a list with the committee members' cell phone numbers and have everyone bring their cell phone the day of the event.
7. **Assign clean up crew** – Have some extra volunteers that were not presenters or guides clean the Christian Life Center, or use the guides if there are not enough volunteers.
8. **Assign “last minute” person** – Assign a committee member or associate to trouble shoot. (copy extra materials, fill-in for an absent guide or presenter, emergency)
9. **Name tags for volunteers** – Print name tags for all volunteers
10. **Select presenter for closing**
11. **CD rom photo display** – Digital pictures should be taken in the morning during the opening exercises and sessions then displayed on a big screen at lunch time.
12. **Confirm MSU janitor set up** - (parking lots, AV equipment, rooms)
13. **Other**

## **Week of the Event**

1. **Assign someone to prepare the teacher packets for the day of the event.** (See Appendix G for contents), make appropriate number of packets in folders.
2. **Order or confirm donated food items for lunch.**

### **3. Go over the WaterFest day of event checklist.**

1. Make sure teacher packets are prepared.
  2. Have collection boxes ready for teacher evaluations and post test for the event day.
  3. Have schedules ready for posting on classroom doors.
  4. Have extra copies of presenter materials for each topic.
  5. Have extra copies of evaluations presenter and event
  6. Prepare post-test copies for each student (about 500), have the presenters administer the post-test at the end of the last session of the day (add 10 minutes to the final session for this purpose).
4. **Schedule setup time with committee members** – Set a meeting time for the committee members and presenters for set up. This may be the evening before or the morning of the event. Notify presenters of the scheduled time.
  5. **Synchronize watches (room clocks)** – Have someone physically check that working clocks are in each room.
  6. **Print out certificates** – Confirm correct spelling of names for each volunteer. Certificates should be given to each presenter, guide and other volunteers.
  7. **Instill fun in each other** – Remind committee members that all the hard work will be rewarded.
  8. **Organize bus parking** – Arrange parking for buses on or near SMSU campus.
  9. **Organize lunch prep** – Provide a place for volunteers sit and rest for lunch
  10. **Organize clean up** – If guides will be doing the clean up, go over what is needed during training.
  11. **Schedule evaluation meeting with presenters and guides** – Committee members should meet with the presenters and guides following the event to discuss how the event went.
  12. **Designate someone to check in the MSU student volunteers**

### **Day of the event**

1. **Committee Check in** - Each committee member should check into a central location first thing when arriving at the event. The best location is the Christian Life Center.
2. **Set up Volunteer check in** – Every volunteer must check in when they first arrive at the Christian Life Center. Have any materials ready for them along with their t-shirt.

- 3. Train the group leaders** – Schedule for early a.m., assign leaders to a school.
- 4. Group leaders will meet the teachers as they arrive.** Step on the bus and introduce themselves to the group and welcome everyone.
  - Ask the teachers to come off the bus but have the students remain on the bus until time to enter the building for the opening exercises.
  - At this time guides will collect pre-test from the teachers, give the teachers their packets for the day and go over the instructions.
  - Show the teachers how to fill out the evaluations.
  - Explain when and where lunch is and where they can put their coolers and sack lunches.
  - Instruct the teacher to put their button on and explain why.
  - Point out the schedule for the day. Each teacher or group chaperon will have a schedule specific for his or her group.
- 5. Check on Presenters** – Assign a person in each building to monitor the classes. Check on presenters, make sure equipment is working and that the presenters have all the supplies they need. This person should also know whom to contact in an emergency.
- 6. Pick up lunch** – Assign someone to pick up the lunch and have everything ready by 11:00 a.m.
- 7. Give Post-test to the elementary students** – During the last session of the day distribute post-test and collect results.
- 8. Presenters straighten up class rooms** – Presenter should assure class rooms are clean and tidy before departing and that the rooms are in the same set up as when they arrived.
- 13. Presenters should return unused activity materials** – Designate a central location for all materials to be returned at the presenter training session. Remind presenters when they check in where the materials are to be returned. The Christian Life Center would be a great place.
- 1. Evaluation meeting** - Presenters and guides can meet with the WaterFest committee members to discuss the festival.
- 14. Clean up FUMC Christian Life Center**– vacuum, clean up the kitchen, sweep up the bathrooms, flush the toilets, etc.

## **1 week after event**

- 1. Send thank you notes to everyone who contributed to the event.** These should be printed on the WaterFest Letter Head.
- 2. Send Thank you to First United Methodist Church for the use of the Christian Life Center.**
- 3. Evaluate the event.** Meet with the WaterFest committee the following week to discuss the event, things that went well, things that need to be improved and discuss ideas and thoughts for the following year.
- 4. Schedule the first meeting for next year.**
- 5. Send thank you article to Grizz Bizz** – Recognize EVERYONE who contributed to WaterFest.
- 6. Send thank you article to Take Note** – Recognize EVERYONE who contributed to WaterFest.
- 7. Send thank you article to Quill editor** – Recognize EVERYONE who contributed to WaterFest.

**Send thank you letters to teachers** – Include test results; copy the administrator for the school.