

Clark County Watershed Monitoring

By

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As you may know, Wy'East has been monitoring the water quality of the wetlands this year. A couple of weeks ago some of the Wy'Easters joined over twenty classes from throughout Clark County doing the same thing, monitoring other water sources, at the 12th Annual Watershed Congress.

On June 4th, six 3rd and 4th graders walked over to the WSU campus where the Watershed Congress was being held. When we got to WSU we got our name-badges. Then we went to the snack room and grabbed some granola bars. Next, everybody went to the auditorium to introduce the schools in attendance. One of the organizers asked the audience questions about water testing. Olivia answered one and she won a bug scope for the classroom. After that, we went to the school presentations.

In our section of school presentations we saw four different schools present their testing results. Over all, the water quality for most of the streams deserved a B+. Most of the rivers, lakes, and streams had lots of macro-invertebrates, good levels of dissolved oxygen and pretty clear looking water. However, these water sources also had surprisingly high levels of fecal-coliform (a bacteria that grows when there is water contamination from animal/human poop) at some time during their studies. Our class did not present any of our findings from the wetlands study because this was our first year participating in the project.

After the presentations, all the kids gathered again in the auditorium. Judy Bufford, a woman who works for The Water Center, had one student from each water study come up to the front. They all stood in a line that ranked their water sites from excellent to poor. Judy talked about how the streams closer to the cities and further down the watershed weren't as clean as the ones along the perimeter of the watershed. This is probably because by the time the water gets to the city, the stream has collected a lot of pollution along the way.

Judy Bufford is the person who would come to our school to help us test the water quality of our wetlands. She came once a month and she always came at the end of the day. She brought equipment to test the water with. Some of the things we tested for were: dissolved oxygen, temperature, and turbidity (how clear the water is). On the first day we tested the water this fall, when our wetlands did not have much water in it (only about one foot in diameter), we had some poor results. Our dissolved oxygen level was too low. Judy took some water and brought it to her lab to test it for fecal coliform. The fecal coliform results were very high and unsafe. So high nobody was supposed to touch the water. Now, our fecal coliform level is safe because there is a lot more water in the wetlands. A few weeks ago we found tadpoles in the water. Last week, we even found three bullfrog tadpoles. Judy took those three tadpoles with her and froze them because they invade and eat our native species of tree frogs.

We hope you like learning about the Clark County Watershed Congress and our wetlands water quality study. We hope we get to present at the Watershed Congress next year. We had a lot of fun during these science studies.

Clark County Watersheds

A watershed is the area of land that drains (sheds water) to a stream or system of streams. Watersheds can be large or small and smaller watersheds are nested within the larger watersheds.

Clark County, with its abundance of streams, has eighteen major watersheds. Each watershed is further divided into sub-watersheds or sub-basins, often named for the small creeks and tributaries that feed into the main stream.

To learn more, the [Clark County Stream Health Report](#) provides a comprehensive overview of the condition of Clark County streams, rivers and lakes.

Information from: <http://www.co.clark.wa.us/water-resources/watersheds.html>

