



Project Narrative

Raindrop to River Conservation Carnival

2015 National Environmental Achievement Awards

Public Information and Education Award

Introduction

Capital Region Water hosted the Raindrop to River Conservation Carnival (Conservation Carnival) at the 2014 Kipona Festival (Kipona) held during Labor Day weekend in Harrisburg, PA. Kipona, a Native American word meaning sparkling water, is the community's largest celebration of water and has been held annually for almost 100 years. Over the years, less and less emphasis was placed on celebrating water and the Susquehanna River during the festival. Capital Region Water sought to change this with the Conservation Carnival and educate the public about pollution prevention and bring water back into the limelight of the festival.

The Conservation Carnival was designed with free educational games that participants could play to earn free prizes. There were 5 games created in line with a Raindrop to River education poster that was provided to participants starting with a watershed themed game and finishing with a Susquehanna River quiz. The Conservation Carnival also included conservation orientated partner organizations, a misting tent, and a tap water bar made from recycled wood.

The Conservation Carnival games were as follows:

- Watershed Bean Toss – Participants learned about watersheds while playing a customized Cornhole game.
- Litter Sweep Challenge – Participants learned about litter pollution in stormwater while sweeping a litter ball from a storm grate into trash cans.
- Can the Grease Toss – Participants learned to not pour grease down drains with a can toss game.
- Take Aim at Pollution- Participants learned about different sources of water pollution by taking aim with a water gun in this target game.
- Susquehanna River School – Participants were quizzed about their Susquehanna River knowledge.

Eligibility

The Conservation Carnival stands out as an exceptional educational program because of the level of interest generated and the fun, hands-on educational experience it provided. Participants waiting in lines for Carnival Games showed that this model develops significant interest for both children and adults. This demand is then used to provide important pollution prevention educational information that participants learned by both listening to trained volunteers and playing the hands on games. This combination of passive and active learning helps the educational messages stick with the participants long after they leave the festival.

Not only is the Conservation Carnival fun, but it can be used at schools, block parties, and other community events to provide educational information.

Conclusion

Capital Region Water worked with 12 sponsors, 5 partners, and almost 50 volunteers to build and operate free educational games for participants. Free prizes were also offered, including water sprayers, t-shirts, and water bottles, depending on the number of activities completed by each participant. Over the course of the weekend, over 5,000 people visited the Conservation Carnival with 1,700 participants completing all five activities.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from participants, sponsors, and volunteers. After participating in the carnival, a large amount of people acknowledged the importance of keeping water sources clean from pollution. This response, along with the number of participants, shows that people are highly receptive towards events of this nature. Partner groups have also shown great enthusiasm about coming up with new ideas on how to further improve the Conservation Carnival for future use. These responses show that fun carnival games merged with environmental awareness can be a versatile education tool which can be used in various ways for various occasions.