

NACWA Award Entry

Public Information / Educational Program:

“World Water Day”

Introduction

At NEW Water, we strive to be a community leader in providing water information, and to help improve water quality in Northeast Wisconsin. We are proud to do our part by treating approximately 38 million gallons of water each day, and returning it clean into the environment. We decided to harness World Water Day as an opportunity to educate our community on water issues facing not only our planet, but also our community; to engage our stakeholders; and to celebrate successes and efforts underway in our community to improve water quality. As we recognize that there is truly “one water,” we invited the Green Bay Water Utility to partner with us on this educational program.

Our World Water Day Educational Program outreach event included: launching a “NEW (Northeast Wisconsin) Watershed Champion Award”, for which we worked with stakeholders to select a worthy recipient: A science teacher and his high school Conservation Club; securing a \$1,500 award from a local bank for the Club; presentation of awards for the Mayor, and County Executive to laud them for their efforts to improve water quality. We also used the event as an opportunity to launch our newly revitalized Jack Day Environmental Education Center, which had been shuttered and unused for many years. The event was standing-room only, received excellent media attention, and served as a celebratory and educational community event to help position NEW Water as a leading source of water information, and water quality improvement efforts in Northeast Wisconsin.

Program Narrative



Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt speaks at NEW Water's World Water Day, March 2014. The event was standing room only, and was attended by community leaders in education, business, government, and science.

As an organization, it is our goal to become a preeminent source of water information in Northeast Wisconsin, and also to help improve our impaired watershed. Our World Water Day event was created to move us toward these goals, and to position NEW Water as a community convener, educator, and leader.

The World Water Day event included convening key stakeholders including: the NEW Water Commission, elected officials, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay partners, the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, the Nature Conservancy, and other environmental partners, and many more. We created a “buzz” around the event by creating an award, which we intend to continue each year. We selected Charlie Frisk, a veteran science teacher who has spearheaded watershed improvement efforts in Baird Creek. We also awarded Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt for his efforts to get the community “back to the water,” and to

appreciate our river and bay. We also awarded Brown County

Executive Troy Streckenbach (who appoints the NEW Water Commissioners) for his efforts on phosphorous reduction.

We worked with the Green Bay Water Utility to promote the event, and set up their “water bar,” which we used to serve tap water as refreshments, out of commemorative, take-home, co-branded bottles.

Our lineup of speakers was the following: Tom Sigmund, Executive Director of NEW Water, Nancy



Quirk, General Manager of the Green Bay Water Utility, the Mayor, the County Executive, and Bob Atwell, CEO of Nicolet National Bank. Mr. Atwell is a concerned citizen who supports NEW Water’s water quality improvement efforts. NEW Water organized a financial

donation from Mr. Atwell for Charlie Frisk and his students, to support their water quality improvement efforts in Baird Creek. The highlight of the show was Charlie Frisk and his students, who gave a wonderful presentation of their work in Baird Creek, complete with a slide show, and poster boards displaying their project around the Jack Day Environmental Education Center.

We leveraged the event to launch the newly refurbished Jack Day Environmental Education Center, which had fallen into disuse over the years. We would like the Center to serve as “headquarters” for Adaptive Management and phosphorous reduction, and it helps to position NEW Water as a community leader and partner in these efforts.

Conclusion



Above: Tom Sigmund, Executive Director of NEW Water, with Mayor Jim Schmitt, and Nancy Quirk, General Manager of Green Bay Water Utility, at NEW Water's World Water Day Educational Program Event 2014.

NEW Water's World Water Day event was a success, with standing-room only attendance, excellent media coverage, and kudos from NEW Water key stakeholders, including our Commission, our elected officials, and community leaders in business and academia. We intend to repeat the event, to continue to help to educate the public about water issues facing our planet, and our community, as well as to serve as a platform to position NEW Water as a community leader and partner in water quality improvement efforts in Northeast Wisconsin.