

June 23, 2004

Drinking Water Institute for Educators

JARROD'S KID'S

The St. Cloud Technical College - Water Environment Technologies Program, Minnesota Science Museum, MDH and AWWA hosted the 3 day Drinking Water Institute for Educators on June 21, 22 & 23 2004. 24, K – 12, teachers participated in the training. The intent of the program is to heighten awareness about the water industry and to encourage educators to work water related topics into their curriculum. Several mini training and interactive sessions were held involving the participants to help them better understand the importance of protecting and preserving our valuable resource.

One of the sessions involved the students from Detroit Lakes Minnesota who presented one of their projects incorporated into their classrooms. **Jarrold Christenson**, Public Utilities Director from the Detroit Lakes water and wastewater utilities, brought the group of four students to the institute. The students presented, to the 24 teachers, the importance of wet lands to migratory birds and the use of flyways as the mode of travel for the different birds. The fourth grade students from Detroit Lakes, **Quillan Oak, Brian Labat, Makenzie Gedrose and Ashley Lindberg**, did a fantastic job with the presentation and provided excellent feedback to the teachers in the institute and demonstrated the value of using projects such as theirs in their educational training. The students identified how migratory birds use the wetlands as resting and feeding places and the fate of the birds if and when they disappear. The students put together a brief video on a field project they did and how they incorporated that into several different classes they are taking in school such as English writing, math, and science. The students will complete at least 14 presentations like this before the summer is over and all of them have the opportunity to be mentors for the next year's fourth grade class. The students also present their study at the Detroit Lakes Water Festival in May of each year. It is also worth noting that the students require several mentors for this project including a parent advisor, Student advisor such as a teacher, a professional in various areas of projects selected and of course Jarrod Christenson who initiated this activity in the 1990's.

I would like to personally thank Jarrod and the students mentioned earlier for taking the time to share their experience and encourage them to continue with their efforts in bringing a heightened awareness to water as a valued resource. I also encourage everyone that gets a chance to see this presentation that you take advantage of that opportunity and maybe consider starting something similar in your community.