

Arco and Mackay 5th and 6th grades participate in water awareness activities

By Maddie Mocettini-Hansen

Last Thursday, September 19, the Mackay and Arco elementary 5th and 6th grade students got to participate in 5 different water awareness activities put on by the Eastern Idaho Environmental Education Association and its partners. These

activities were some that are usually part of the goings on at The Greater Idaho Falls Water Festival during water awareness week in Idaho Falls every May. The Water Festival is a yearly one-day education fair for 5th and 6th graders. Mrs. Kimball had tried, with no luck, to get a spot in

that water festival for her class for years but it had always remained full. This year she was successful in bringing some of that water festival here for our local 5th and 6th graders to learn and enjoy.

Station 1 was sponsored by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). It was titled "Edible Aquifer Protection". The students used a cup with different sizes of edible layers of filtration to visualize how water is filtered through the ground to aquifers. They also discussed different sizes of straws to represent wells sucking out the filtered water.

Station 2 was sponsored by the INL STEM and called "Let's Make a Water Filter". Again using cups, the students used various materials to filter out their water and got to observe how each additional layer filtered out different hazards in the water.

Station 3 was also put on by DEQ and was called "Macroinvertebrate Mayhem". With a title like that and a poster of different enlarged photos of macroinvertebrate would the students be able to hold attention? The poster was just the intro and very soon into the lesson students were learning, through a game of race, about how you could tell what the health of an ecosystem was by simply looking at the microscopic bugs that dwelled in the water. The classes also were shown the hazards of bacteria by having certain students try to race while dealing with extra circumstances such as a potato sac or having to spin or flap with their arms, representing bacteria.

Station 4 was sponsored by Veolia Nuclear Solutions' ESER program. This station, titled "Incredible Journey", demonstrated through various means, the life cycle of water. They produced 'clouds' and loud bangs by combining liquid nitrogen and boiling water. They also produces amazingly huge bubbles!

Station 5, again sponsored by DEQ, was titled "The Amazing Physics of Water". The students spread all around the tennis court at the Kid's Park in Mackay to do different activities at this station.

These hands-on stations seemed to capture the 5th and 6th grade classes. Flint Hall, a board member of the Eastern Idaho Environmental Education Association, said that at every event he just hopes that the kids "recognize the need for taking care of our water" and he was thrilled to be able to bring pieces of the Water Festival to Mackay. If you want more information on The Eastern Idaho Environmental Education Association, The Greater Idaho Falls Water Festival, or their partners, you can visit <http://www.eieea.org/>.



Station 1- Water filtration



Station 3- Macroinvertebrate Mayhem



Station 4- Incredible Journey