

WEST VIRGINIA  
**Water Festival Guide**

---



*Sponsored by WV Department of Environmental Protection, Project WET, and other federal, state, and local organizations, West Virginia Water Festivals are a one-day water focused education event for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. The festivals are designed to heighten children’s awareness about natural resources and their role in helping to protect them. Educators are also given the opportunity to obtain up-to-date information about natural resources and to learn of innovative approaches for teaching these concepts in their own classrooms. The presentations at West Virginia Water Festivals are primarily based on activities from the national Project Water Education Today (WET) curricula.*

**This short guide, in combination with Project WET activities in the *Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide 2.0*, provide what you need to know to get started, organize, and successfully host your event.**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is Project WET?.....Page 3

Water Festival Goals and Objectives.....Page 4

Quick Glance - General Overview.....Page 5

Getting Started - Steps to Plan a Water Festival.....Page 6

    Six Month Timeline Example.....Page 7

    Budget Template.....Page 8

Presentations and Presenters.....Page 9

Volunteers.....Page 11

Detailed Checklist.....Page 12



## WHAT IS PROJECT WET?

*Project WET is a water education program, designed by teachers and water resource professionals, with the mission of advancing water education to understand global challenges and inspiring local solutions.*

*Project WET water festivals are held globally to **educate students about water in fun, interactive environments** and offer alternative learning opportunities including structured learning stations and exhibits where students engage in **hands-on water activities and investigations**. While **grounded in water science principles**, the festivals **also promote multidisciplinary approaches** to learning by integrating social studies, geography, math, language arts, art and journaling.*

*Festivals are **planned at the community level** and learning stations and exhibits are led by employees, educators, community water experts, parents, or community members after completing Project WET training. Often, festivals coincide with water celebration days, such as World Water Day or Earth Day.*



*“One of the strengths of Project WET activities is that they go beyond providing accurate and unbiased science information. Water might be the content, but the methodology Project WET uses to deliver the content parallels what every good educator knows: that the most effective activities are relevant, hands-on, inquiry-based, culturally appropriate, and help students learn about their “place” in the world.”*

- Wendy Sturgis, Watershed Education Consultant, Center for Environmental Health Sciences at the University of Montana

For more information contact West Virginia’s Project WET Coordinator below:



Tomi M. Bergstrom  
Western Watershed Basin Coordinator & Project WET Coordinator  
WV DEP Watershed Improvement Branch  
601 57th Street SE, Charleston, WV 25304  
P: 304-926-0499 Ext. 43862  
Email: [Tomi.M.Bergstrom@wv.gov](mailto:Tomi.M.Bergstrom@wv.gov)

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Project WET Foundation believes that by creating an atmosphere of fun and exploration, we can successfully engage student's interest in our water resources and help them cultivate an understanding and sense of responsibility to the natural world.

**Education → Awareness → Understanding → Action**

*The goal of the West Virginia Water Festival is to heighten children's awareness about water and their role in helping to protect this critical natural resource.*



### Objectives:

1. Offer students an enriching and innovative way of learning about water as a natural resource that is essential to all living things.
2. Foster stewardship of the environment through positive action and awareness.
3. Introduce students to new career possibilities and jobs in their community.
4. Help teachers meet priorities in terms of educational needs and standards.

## QUICK GLANCE – GENERAL OVERVIEW OF A WATER FESTIVAL

Audience:	5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Number of Participants:	120-280 students
Stations:	6-14 stations ( <b>one class per station</b> )
Topics:	6 specific topics for presentation (duplicated)
Time:	9:30 – 1:30
Length:	25-minute stations
Transition:	5-minute switch

### Topics Addressed:

1. Water Quality
2. Water Conservation
3. Water Cycle
4. Watersheds/Nonpoint Source Pollution
5. Trash/Recycling/Plastic
6. Stream Ecology
7. Wetlands
8. Watershed Specific Topic (i.e., flooding, stormwater, wastewater, acid rain, acid mine drainage)



## GETTING STARTED – INITIAL STEPS TO PLAN A WATER FESTIVAL

1. Select a Project Organizer(s) to lead organizing the event. Note: Often this is two people, one organizing the schools and the other organizing the presenters. The Project Organizers should create and follow a set timeline to stay on track. ***See Six Month Timeline Example on following page.***
2. Organize a Project Committee that includes potential partners and interested parties.
  - a. Local, state, and federal organizations with water interest or education/outreach component
  - b. Conservation District, DEP, DNR, ACOE, Park Service, Green Team etc.
  - c. Water-based groups: fishing, boating, watershed organizations
  - d. Local resource companies – water company, solid waste authority
3. Determine a Date. If possible, select a back-up date.
4. Identify and Reserve the Event Location
  - a. Calculate the proximity to schools.
    - i. What is the traveling distance of attending schools?
  - b. Determine if there is a cost.
  - c. Verify bathrooms and hand washing stations.
  - d. Verify there is a backup rain plan/option (shelters, inside area).
  - e. Identify where water taps, electrical outlets, and parking is available at.
  - f. Verify any reservations in writing.
5. List and confirm partnerships to present, provide food, help setup/break down.
6. Create a budget and list potential funding sources or partners. ***See Example Budget on following pages.***
7. Seek County School Board Approval, if needed.
8. Reach out to schools and confirm class size, special needs, lunch, bus schedules, and attendance. Reach out to presenters to confirm activity, supply needs, and date reservation. Reach out to volunteers to reserve date and determine setup/break down needs.

## SIX MONTH TIMELINE EXAMPLE

### March (approximately 6 months before event)

- Local festival lead planner meet with Project WET Coordinator – establish goals, potential partnerships, funding sources, volunteers, location, review timeline
- Email invite to be on the water festival planning committee – date and time of initial meeting

### April

- first planning meeting – establish date, location; what needs to be done, by whom and by when
- request approval for festival by County Board of Ed (for student attendance and bus transportation)
- establish how many classes you want to attend (think of space of location, amenities, and about how many presenters you have available) send out festival announcement/invitations to principals, and teachers (include flyer and registration sheet).
- send out festival announcement/invitations to presenters/volunteers (include information such as date/time/location, number of students expected, expectations of the presentation – interactive, educational, 30 minutes long etc., deadline date and contact info)

### May

- close registration for schools, tally up classroom totals
- confirm presenter needs and activities, confirm volunteers and duties
- keep an open line of communication to the attending schools by sending an email confirmation with a checklist for teachers, and to expect more news at the beginning of the school year

### June/July

- planning meeting with State Coordinator to ensure on track
- host Project WET training for WF presenters (if needed)
- order shirts/backpacks/water bottles (optional)

### August

- create schedules and map
- compile and email logistics package and reminder for teachers, presenters, and volunteers (include information on the West Virginia Water Festival Curriculum in Schoology)

### September

- Confirm teacher names and contact info, student numbers, special needs
- Send final info packet to teachers/presenters
- Contact press/state representatives and/or write press release (optional)

### October (post festival)

- Thank presenters and volunteers, provide photos, total number of students, and request for evaluations/feedback
- Thank you to students/teachers/principals and request for feedback/evaluations.

**Note: Highlighted items can be download from our WVDEP/Project WET webpage.**

## FUNDING/BUDGET

Many of the items listed below in the budget may be optional or not needed. Many times, partnering organizations can supply items at no cost, but each festival is different. This is a budget with different items for you to consider in your planning.

<b>Budget</b>	<b>Need</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
Activity Development Supplies			
Equipment Rental			
Festival Location Fees			
Festival Training Sessions			
Food/Beverages			
Logo Design/Artwork			
Volunteer Tokens of Appreciation			
Photographer/Videographer			
Printing and Reproduction			
Signs/banners/decorations			
Travel/Lodging Expenses			
Transportation (buses)			





## PRESENTATIONS & PRESENTERS

Stations may vary according to your location and how many classrooms you have attending. The following information is meant to guide you to appropriate activities from the *Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide 2.0* that can be presented at stations, but it is not a complete list.

### **Topic 1**                      **Water Quality/Aquatic Species**

Activity Options:            Macroinvertebrate Mayhem (WET, 343)  
                                      Water Quality? Ask the Bugs! (WET, 421)  
                                      Water Resource Specialist presentation – live aquatics

### **Topic 2**                      **Water Conservation**

Activity Options:            Common Water (WET, 249)  
                                      The Long Haul (WET, 273)

### **Topic 3**                      **Water Cycle/Forms of Matter**

Activity Options:            Incredible Journey (WET, 155)  
                                      A Drop In The Bucket (WET, 257)  
                                      Blue Planet (WET, 125)  
                                      Molecules in Motion (WET, 33)

### **Topic 4**                      **Watershed/Pollution**

Activity Options:            Sum of the Parts (WET, 283)  
                                      A-maze-ing Water (WET, 231)  
                                      Seeing Watersheds (WET, 187)  
                                      Blue River (WET, 135)

### **Topic 5**                      **Trash/Recycling**

Activity Options:            Green Jeopardy  
                                      There is No Away (WET, 453)

### **Topic 6**                      **Watershed Specific Topic**

*(i.e. water safety, flooding, stormwater, wastewater, wetlands)*  
Activity Options:            Super Bowl Surge (WET, 405)  
                                      Stormwater (WET, 395)  
                                      Make a Mural (WET, 515)

### **Other Water Festival Activities:**

Germ Busters (WET, 57)  
Healthy Habits (WET, 63)  
H2Olympics (WET, 13)  
Water Crossings (WET, 487)  
On Track with Hydration (WET, 95)

Humpty Dumpty (WET, 335)  
Invaders (WET, 263)  
The Thunderstorm (WET, 209)  
Super Sleuths (WET, 113)  
The Rainstick (WET, 529)

*teach students how to think, not what to think*

**If you have any new presenters, schedule a time to review their activity and presentation beforehand.** Ensure presenters will do their best to make sure the presentations are:

- **Accurate and Science-Based**
- **Fun and Interactive**  
Water Festival participants are not passive observers. Engaging students through questioning and other inquiry-based strategies, educators become facilitators involving students in hands-on lessons and encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning.
- **Multi-Sensory**  
Activities engage as many senses as possible. Research shows stimulation of multiple senses enhances learning.
- **Relevant**  
Information is not delivered in isolation. Water Festival presenters are encouraged to localize activities to give them relevance.
- **Solution-Oriented**  
Project WET and West Virginia Water Festival Coordinators believe in linking awareness and education to action and solutions. Students are encouraged to think critically and cultivate problem-solving tools.
- **Mindful of Standards**  
Help teachers teach their students and meet curriculum standards. A list of Science Standards can be viewed here: <https://wvde.us/tree/early-learning-p-5/grade-5/science-grade-5/>

When you recruit presenters initially, provide them with the information that they need to know, such as:

- expectations for the activities
- expectations of the day (remember, the festival is supposed to be engaging and interactive)
- timeframe of the day – schedule/map
- number and age of kids
- how to keep student’s attention and talk on a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level
- contact info for questions or more information

After the event, thank presenters for their time and expertise. Include them on a social media post with photos or in a press release to recognize their efforts.

**Contact the WV Project WET Coordinator for a list of presenters, if needed.**

## VOLUNTEERS

Having extra hands, the day of the event is always a good idea. Surprises may arise where the event organizer needs to give it their immediate attention. Having responsibilities or tasks delegated out to volunteers will ensure the event runs smoothly. Recommendations on how to organize your volunteers are noted below.

Decide what tasks you need volunteers for and how many. Some common tasks are listed below:

- Set-up, Break-down
- Direct Buses, Greet Schools
- Pick-Up Presenter Lunch, Provide Water
- Escort students to bathrooms
- Occupy a First-Aid Station

Always have at least one volunteer on hand that can step in to present if need be (a back-up presenter). When you recruit volunteers, verify their contact information, and supply a schedule and tasks they will be responsible for beforehand.



## DETAILED CHECKLIST



WEST VIRGINIA  
project **WET**  
WATER EDUCATION TODAY

### **6 Months Prior to Festival**

- Meet with Water Festival Coordinator
- *4 months prior to festival*
- Site confirmed/rain plan
- School board ok'd attendance and transportation
- Schools confirmed
- Letters of acceptance/rejection sent if necessary
- Presenters contacted
- Presenters trained (Project WET workshop) if necessary
- *2 months prior to festival*
- Meet with Water Festival Coordinator
- Schools confirmed (contact info, student numbers, special needs etc.)
- Presenters confirmed (activity assigned)
- Volunteers confirmed (job assigned) – greeter, water station, check on presenters, press, timekeeper, photographer, on-site presenter evaluations etc.
- Back up activity planned
- Water access at site (spigot/hose)
- Bathrooms
- Drinking water/cups/water bottles
- Plan for lunch/food – kids (large buckets with teacher names)
- Plan for lunch/food – presenters
- Media invite
- State representatives/mayor etc. invite
- T-shirts/backpacks ordered
- Supplies purchased
- Rain plan
- Nametags – presenters/volunteers/kids
- Tents/tables/chairs
- Electricity needed?
- Signs/balloons/station signs
- Timekeeper
- Photographer
- First aid station
- Recycling station
- Bus parking plan
- Contact press/state representatives etc.
- Create packet for teachers/presenters
  - Map
  - Schedule

- Directions
- Photo release
- Instructions
- Request for contact info
- Get contact info for everyone
- Supplies- tents, tables, chairs, etc.



***Week Before Festival***

- Share Information Packet to Teachers
- Directions, instructions, map, and schedule to presenters
- Check on facility – water, electricity etc.
- Contact media/representatives

***Day of Festival***

- Registration Table – greeter/nametags
- Orange vest for coordinator (optional)
- Whistle for station change
- Water station set up
- First Aid station set up
- Recycling station
- Bus parking
- Presenter lunch station set up
- Tents and signs posted
- Signs/balloons for location
- Have go-to bag on site
  - Map
  - Schedule
  - Contact info
  - Scissors
  - Tape
  - Markers
- *Post Festival*
- Thank you to presenters/volunteers
- Thank you and information to teachers
  - Student and teacher evaluations
  - Project WET information (workshop date)
- Press release
- Report to county board etc.
  - Request for continuing education credits for teachers attending WET workshop