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Grants help local teachers focus on water education

By Cindy Barks
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PRESCOTT - In an effort to get the message about the importance of water out to the next generation, a local organization is tapping those who deal daily with children: local educators.

Project WET, (Water Education for Teachers), a state program that focuses on water education, put the spotlight on teachers recently by awarding four grants and two "outstanding water educator" awards.

As a result, students throughout the area will have access to programs as varied as water-quality testing at Red Rock State Park, a water audit at Abia Judd Elementary School, a water exhibit at [Sharlot Hall Museum](#), and a "splash" education event at Bradshaw Mountain Middle School.

Under local sponsorship from the Central Yavapai Water Conservation Partnership, the Project WET awards were the featured event at a dinner this past week at Prescott's Manzanita Grille.

Prescott Valley Water Resource Manager John Munderloh pointed out that the dinner was the partnership's effort to get local water experts talking together.

"The point of what this event is to interface a little bit," Munderloh said prior to dinner, which attracted about 60 officials, teachers, and water advocates.

By targeting teachers, the program aims to influence water awareness at a young age.

"We're putting it to work where the rubber meets the road," Munderloh said of the program's efforts.

Jason Krug, for instance, said the \$500 grant he received from Project WET would help to improve an ongoing program that sends school children out in the Sedona-area Red Rocks to get an up-close look at the importance of water quality.

The Red Rock State Park's "Biotic Water" program regularly brings in students from Prescott, Prescott Valley and West Sedona to test the water quality and stream flow in Oak Creek, said Krug, a park ranger and environmental educator.

The money from Project WET will allow the program to update its equipment, Krug said.

Ashley Fine, a teacher at Prescott's Primavera School and [Northern Arizona University](#) student, plans to use her \$500 grant to help create a Sharlot Hall Museum exhibit showcasing the area's water history.

Fine, an active water advocate in the community for several years, said the idea for the exhibit came up while she was helping with a recent wildlife symposium at the museum. When the discussion turned to water, Fine said, "My eyes lit up."

Other organizations helping with the exhibit include: the [Salt River Project](#); the Yavapai County Community Foundation; the Hulmes Family Trust; the Citizens Water Advocacy Group; and the Open Space Alliance.

Fine expects the exhibit to be ready by about April.

Other grant recipients include:

- Shelli Read, a fourth-grade teacher at Prescott Unified School District's Abia Judd Elementary School, who plans to conduct a program where students will use previously established school water audit procedures to learn about water use in the school and elsewhere.
- Gail Pereira, a teacher at Humboldt Unified School District's Bradshaw Mountain Middle School, who plans to conduct a May 2008 "splash" event that will focus on basic water-use educational topics such as conservation strategies and water's importance to the

future.

Along with the grant awards, the Central Yavapai Water Conservation Partnership also presented two "outstanding water educator" awards to Fine and Tammy Naef, a teacher at Beaver Creek School in Rimrock, who conducts a seasonal stream channel survey to measure the shape and form of School House Draw.

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