

The Oxbow

FROM THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE WATER COMMISSION

Project WET Facilitator Network: The Heart of Water Education

By Bill Sharff

During the early years of Project WET in North Dakota (1987 to 1992), the WET Program offered a variety of educational programs and materials on North Dakota's water resources. In these formative years, graduate credit and summer multi-credit workshops, along with other educational offerings, were delivered through individuals largely recruited through the State Game and Fish Department's Project WILD and WILD Aquatic facilitator network system.

Then, in late 1992, North Dakota became a member state in the newly developing national Project WET program.

In 1993, North Dakota Project WET began to develop guidelines and policies for its own facilitator network system. Project WET facilitators promote, organize, and conduct Project WET events for K-12 formal and non-formal educators and students.

Facilitators must attend a Project WET leadership training workshop and conduct Project WET educational programs. Programs range from one-hour in-service sessions, to water festivals, community events, and even intensive summer multi-credit institutes, to name a few.

North Dakota's Project WET director is responsible for developing, training, and maintaining a statewide network of Project WET facilitators.

A network of facilitators that deliver Project WET programs is essential, and ideally, they should be located in all areas of the state.

Facilitators are the local contact for schools, natural resource agencies and organizations, and youth organizations. They provide information on Project WET programs, and collect information from those who want to attend or develop Project WET educational programs.

Facilitators can be K-12 educators; post-secondary educators; natural resource specialists and managers; 4-H, scout, campfire and



2009 Project WET Facilitator Award Recipients

First Mate (15-74 hours):

Darlene Boyle, elementary educator, Fargo/West Fargo
 Amber Mattson, elementary educator, Fargo/West Fargo
 Melody Staebner, elementary educator, Fargo/West Fargo
 Lori Clark, Cass Co. Soil Conservation District, Fargo (not pictured)
 Amy Schimetz, L. Metigoshe State Park, Bottineau (not pictured)



Navigator Level (75-149 hours):

Hank LaBore, elementary educator, Ft. Yates
 Leslie Hagemeister, elementary librarian, Fargo (not pictured)



Captain Level (150 - 299 hours):

Dave Marquardt, elementary educator, Fargo
 Dianne Ornberg, elementary educator, Fargo

Commodore Level (300 - 499 hours):

Virginia Deitz, elementary educator, Fargo

Lifetime Achievement Award (at least 1,500 hours and/or long lasting contribution to water education):

Kim Belgarde, elementary educator, Fargo
 Ila LaChapelle, secondary educator, Walhalla
 Christine Laney, program manager, River Keepers, Fargo



Hank LaBore



Ila LaChapelle

From left: Darlene Boyle, Melody Staebner, Amber Mattson, Dave Marquardt, Dianne Ornberg, Virginia Deitz, Kim Belgarde, Christine Laney.



other youth leaders; park naturalists; corporate educators; science center and zoo educators; and other individuals who possess a knowledge and interest in natural and water resource education.

There are many benefits and incentives to being a Project WET facilitator, but the type of benefit and incentive depends on each facilitator's involvement in the program.

The following describes the levels of program attainment that a facilitator can earn based upon the number of hours completed:

- Crew Level - upon completion of Facilitator Leadership Training Workshop
- First Mate Level - upon completion of 15 hours
- Navigator Level - upon completion of 75 hours
- Captain Level - upon completion of 150 hours
- Commodore Level - upon completion of 300 hours
- Admiral Level - upon completion of 500 hours

In addition to the six levels of Project WET facilitator attainment, facilitators are also eligible to receive the North Dakota Facilitator of the Year Award (Educator or Resource) and/or the Lifetime Achievement Award. These awards recognize a facilitator for outstanding contributions, innovative practices, and extraordinary commitment to the Project WET program. To receive the Lifetime Achievement Award, the facilitator must have completed at least 1,500 hours of Project WET programming, and/or made a significant, and long-lasting contribution to water education in a community, region, or statewide setting.

All facilitators who receive Project WET awards are recognized for their achievement through Project WET facilitator name badges and pins, and based upon the level of the award, varying shaped wooden plaques with engraved nameplates, and a wide assortment of Project WET promotional items.

Project WET offers facilitators an excellent stipend and expense program for their participation in Project WET programs. Following the completion and verification of an approved Project WET educa-

tion program, a facilitator is paid a stipend through fees collected from workshop participants and/or other Project WET program funding.

Project WET has also established a mentor program in which trained and certified facilitators provide training to other interested individuals in their local areas to become Project WET facilitators. With appropriate training and documentation, these individuals are then certified by the state Project WET director to deliver Project WET educational programs.

SWC Construction Crew Receives Award

The State Water Commission's construction crew recently received a formal letter of thanks and an award of recognition from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for its contributions toward the Discovery Farms Project.

The Commission's construction crew includes members Dan Bahm, John Edwards, and Darron Nichols.

The purpose of the Discovery Farms project is to have local, state, and federal natural resource agencies cooperate with working farm and ranch operations to implement best management practices to reduce environmental impacts – while maintaining farm profitability.

North Dakota's Discovery Farms Project involves two cattle and grain operations near Underwood and Dazey, and a cropping



John Edwards, Darron Nichols, and Dan Bahm.

operation with drain-tile fields near Embden. The construction crew's role in the project was to assist with the construction of data collection shelters at each of the sites.

In its letter of thanks, the USGS said of the Commission's construction crew, "because of their background and knowledge in construction and expertise in working in water-related settings, their input and suggestions during the construction phase were invaluable."

Congratulations to Dan, John, and Darron on another job exceptionally well done!



COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

The North Dakota State Water Commission (Commission) held a meeting at the State Office Building in Bismarck on March 23, 2009. In action items, the Commission:

- Approved a list of projects to be funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), through the Safe Drinking Water Act State Revolving Loan Fund. Funding will be provided in the form of a grant/loan program administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through North Dakota's Health Department. The ARRA fundable project list includes 18 projects at a cost of \$18.72 million.

The Commission's role in ARRA fund disbursement is two-fold. First, the Health Department must administer and disburse those funds with the Commission's approval. Second, the Health Department must establish assistance priorities and expend funds pursuant to the priority list, after consulting with, and obtaining approval from the Commission.

The Commission also approved an amended comprehensive priority project and fundable project list for 2009.

- Approved a cost-share request in the amount of \$683,400 to assist with costs associated with repairs at Sweetbriar Creek Dam. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$1,381,800. Morton County and the Game and Fish Department will also be cooperating on the project.

- Approved a cost-share request from Morton County in an amount not to exceed \$935,639 to help with costs associated with Harmon Lake recreation area facilities.

- Approved a final payment to the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust in the amount of \$151,564.

- Approved a cost-share request from the Three Affiliated Tribes in the amount of \$80,000 to fund a feasibility study that will look at development of irrigation on the reservation.

- Approved a \$36,500 cost-share request from the Richland County Water Resource District for snagging and clearing on the Wild Rice River.

- Agreed to increase a \$630,000 spending limit to \$1 million to complete the Red River Valley Water Supply Project operations plan; to start permitting, environmental, and financial planning; and pre-final design task orders.

- Authorized the State Engineer to execute NAWS water service contracts with Kenmare and the Upper Souris Water District, and amendments that provide terms for interim water supplies from Minot.

- Authorized the State Engineer to award a NAWS contract related to the Kenmare water storage tank to Caldwell Tanks out of Louisville, Ky. Caldwell Tanks submitted the lowest bid of \$1,841,000.

- Authorized the State Engineer to award a 488-acre Southwest Pipeline seeding contract to Precision Landscaping and Construction out of

Minot. Precision submitted the lowest bid of \$99,930.

- Approved the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's \$65,000 request from the Water Development Research Fund (WDRF) for a long-range water supply plan for Burke, Divide, McKenzie, and Williams counties. The WDRF is not part of the Commission's budget, but the Commission and District jointly approve expenditures from it.

- Voted to stop taking new applications and approved \$625,000 in additional funding for the Drought Disaster Livestock Water Supply Project Assistance Program. Applications already submitted will be allowed to proceed if funds are available.

- Approved a resolution of appreciation to Roger Johnson, who was elected president of the National Farmers Union. Johnson was elected to the Office of Agriculture Commissioner in 1996, and has served as an ex-officio member of the Commission since that time.

The official meeting minutes can be downloaded from the Commission's website at www.swc.nd.gov, then click on "About the SWC."

A Note About 2009 Spring Flood Events

At the time articles were being developed for this issue of the *North Dakota Water* magazine, several areas throughout North Dakota were still in the midst of unprecedented flood fights. Therefore, because of the ongoing nature of those events, and in consideration of the magnitude of what had already happened, it seemed inappropriate to try to cover those events in just a few short pages of one issue. Instead, the State Water Commission will be working in cooperation with other agencies, and the North Dakota Water Education Foundation to develop a special issue of *North Dakota Water*—devoted entirely to the flood of 2009.



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