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News Release

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Watershed Festival for 600 Taney County 5th Grade Students

The Taney County Elementary Watershed Festival marks its 10th anniversary this year. Over 4,500 area fifth grade students have attended the festival over the past decade learning important concepts about clean water and how water moves over, through and under the Ozarks.

The 2010 water festival will be held March 23 and 24 at the Tri-Lakes Center, 2527 State Highway 248 in Branson. Programs begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at 2 p.m. each day.

“Every year teachers tell us the interactive activities throughout the festival provide their students with fun and memorable ways to learn about Ozarks water quality issues, and how they can help,” said Debbie Redford, one of the original organizers of the festival.

This year students from Branson, Hollister, Forsyth, Taneyville and Kirbyville will visit five different stations, each teaching about a different area of water quality. Children get to participate in hands-on activities as they build their own watershed, watch groundwater move through soil and rock, change a stream course at the stream table and search for aquatic “Tattletale Bugs” that reveal water quality.

“The water festival is a great learning opportunity for kids. Our past evaluations show that about 75% of the participating children improve their knowledge about things like pollution, watersheds, erosion and a variety of other topics; and they have fun doing it.” according to University of Missouri Extension Specialist Wayne Dietrich, one of the festival coordinators.

The Watershed Festival is a collaborative effort between the Taney County Extension Office, James River Basin Partnership, City of Branson, Watershed Committee of the Ozarks and local businesses who provide support for the festival. The entire festival is staffed by area volunteers.

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