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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Water Rocks! in the classroom**

AMES, IA— Give the Water Rocks! team 40 minutes and they can teach kids about watersheds, soil, or biodiversity in ways that stick. The team visits K-12 classrooms all over Iowa to provide a fresh look at some complicated science concepts like water pollution, soil structure, and wetland functions.

*"The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are still talking about all you taught them. It was great to have you share your knowledge and expertise in a kid-friendly, exciting way that makes learning important concepts fun."*

Water Rocks! is a statewide youth water education campaign using a variety of resources to bring awareness and appreciation of water. In addition to school visits, Water Rocks! includes music videos, a computer game, informative videos, geocaching, learning activities, and a teacher summit.

Teachers can request the Water Rocks! team for a visit between February and November at no cost to the school. The team works with the teacher to decide the appropriate topic based on grade level and what is being explored in class. The visit may include the Conservation Station, a trailer that houses a rainfall simulator showing the impact of rainfall on different soil and urban surfaces.

The Water Rocks! team developed the original activities to accompany the lessons. Upper elementary and middle schoolers may learn about the "Wonderful World of Wetlands" by playing Wetlands Bingo and Habitat Hopscotch. They could "Dig Into Soil" and learn about their connection to the soil with the game "6 Degrees of Soil." Or they could play the original, competitive card game "Creature Cache" to learn about biodiversity and ecosystems.

*"I wish it was bad weather outside so we could play this game during indoor recess!"*

Lower elementary students learn songs like "What Does a River Want To Do?" and "We All Live in a Watershed" to more easily recall concepts like watersheds and natural resources.

The “Conservation Pack” enlists the help of the Conservation Dogs to teach about working together to help protect and preserve the earth.

*“Thank you so much for teaching us about our valuable natural resources. We had fun singing, dancing and getting wet.” – Kindergarten class*

Lessons about water, as well as water quality, can get downright gross. Using representations for oil, poop, bacteria, fertilizer, shampoo and more, students each add one of these “pollutants” to a gallon jug of water to see the cumulative effect of their actions. The chocolate syrup, crushed cookies, rice, powdered drink mix, and cocoa, are combined to make a great visual, yet disgusting, lesson.

*“I loved the science experiments. They were awesome. The water looked like barf when we put the fertilizer in. It was nasty.”*

“Each lesson we teach is based in science, but we strive to make these concepts relevant and real for young people,” says Ann Staudt. “Our activities are highly interactive and fun, while helping students better understand the complexities of the environment around them.” Staudt is the science director and an educator with Water Rocks!

Two to three Water Rocks! team members go to the schools and present to one classroom at a time. Lessons take 30-45 minutes per group. The team tries to get to as many schools as they can but staff and days are limited. So the team will enlist the help of other Iowa educators. The team will conduct the inaugural Water Rocks! Summit this summer. Selected teacher pairs from 15 school districts will meet in Ames June 11-12 to learn about water, soil, agriculture, and environmental issues, along with hands-on activities to help teach these concepts. They will hear from Iowa State University faculty working in these fields as well.

To see the videos, music videos, listen to songs, or play the Rock Your Watershed! game, go to the website: [www.waterrocks.org](http://www.waterrocks.org). The online classroom request form and the 2014 schedule is on the website as well. Follow Water Rocks! on Facebook and Instagram.

Partners of Water Rocks! are Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center and Iowa Learning Farms.