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Water Rocks! receives 19 Iowa Motion Picture Association Awards

AMES, Iowa — The Water Rocks! team came home with 19 awards at the 25th Annual Iowa Motion Picture Association Awards Gala, held on April 16 in Pella, Iowa!

The big winners for Water Rocks! were the story of a helpful robot ready to spread the word on watersheds in *The Environmentally Conscious Robot*, and *Please the Bees*, a pop filled music video teaching about the important role pollinators play.

Please the Bees came away with six awards, winning Awards of Excellence in the categories of direction (Jacqueline Comito) and art direction (Comito & Nathan Stevenson). The video also won Awards of Achievement for editing (Alyssa Dreeszen), original music score (Ann Staudt), director of photography (Dreeszen), and educational production.

The Environmentally Conscious Robot won an Award of Excellence for visual effects - mechanical (Andrew Bentler), as well as Awards of Achievement in the categories of best actor (Bentler), original music score (Staudt, Todd Stevens, Bentler), and educational production.

The country music video *Salute to Wastewater* garnered an Award of Excellence for corporate and community marketing in addition to an Award of Achievement in visual effects (Joshua LaVille). Other Water Rocks! videos taking home awards were *Clouds Are Cool* (visual effects – LaVille), *Soil Health Style* (original music score – Stevens and Comito; corporate and community marketing), *The Ocean Blue* (original music score – Stevens), *Use Less Water* (director of photography – Dreeszen; live action entertainment – short form), and “The Power of Water” (live action entertainment – short form).

Water Rocks! program director Jacqueline Comito was energized by the awards: “It is great to see our innovative approach to science education is receiving kudos not only from the people we serve but from our peers in the film

industry in Iowa. We took a risk with our approach to Water Rocks! and it is gratifying to be recognized for the work and to see the impact across the state.”

So what was Comito's biggest reward from Saturday night? She said it was sharing the laughter with the audience as clips of the videos were shown.

She added, “I can only hope that while watching our videos, people learn something, have a great laugh, maybe sing along, and then decide to become more environmentally conscious like our robot.”

Water Rocks! is a unique, award-winning statewide youth water education program that fosters the interplay of knowledge, caring and engagement among Iowa's youth. Visit the Water Rocks! website to learn more and to watch the videos: www.waterrocks.org. Follow Water Rocks! on Facebook and Twitter.

Partners of Water Rocks! are Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (USEPA Section 319), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center and Iowa Learning Farms.

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