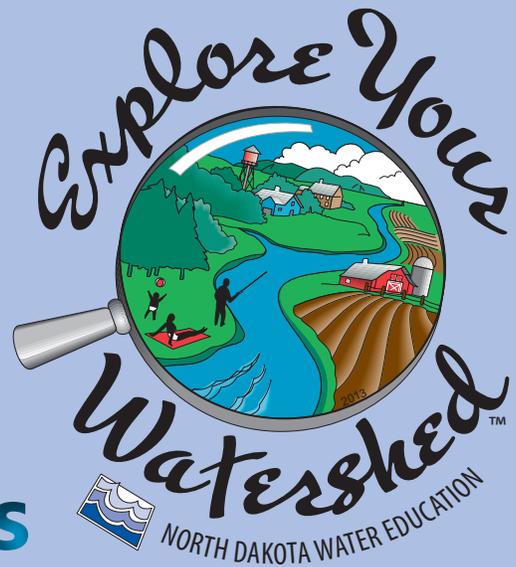




North Dakota Water Festivals Reaching Record Number Of Students



The primary goal of the North Dakota Water Education Program and Project WET, offered by the North Dakota State Water Commission, is to raise awareness of and offer practical solutions to water issues throughout the state.

North Dakota water festivals are just one way water education is provided throughout the state. The festivals consist of multiple structured learning stations designed for elementary-age students to actively engage in hands-on water-related activities and investigations. Station topics include the hydrologic cycle, ground water, non-point source pollution, spring water, watersheds, water quality, wetlands, water management, water conservation, soils, the properties of water, and many more.

North Dakota Water Festivals facilitate and promote the learning, awareness, appreciation, knowledge, exploration, and stewardship of water resources with a focus on how that water interacts with both the human and natural environments. Students walk away with the knowledge of how water moves through living and nonliving systems, and binds them together in the complex web of life. They also learn that water is important for all water users, and sustainable water management is crucial for social and economic stability and a healthy environment. Awareness of and respect for water resources can encourage a personal, lifelong commitment, responsibility and positive community participation. Students are exposed to these concepts through indoor and outdoor educational experiences. Through these complex experiences students learn how to think, not what to think. The presentations are factual, while providing the students with guidance as they evaluate their choices and make informed decisions.

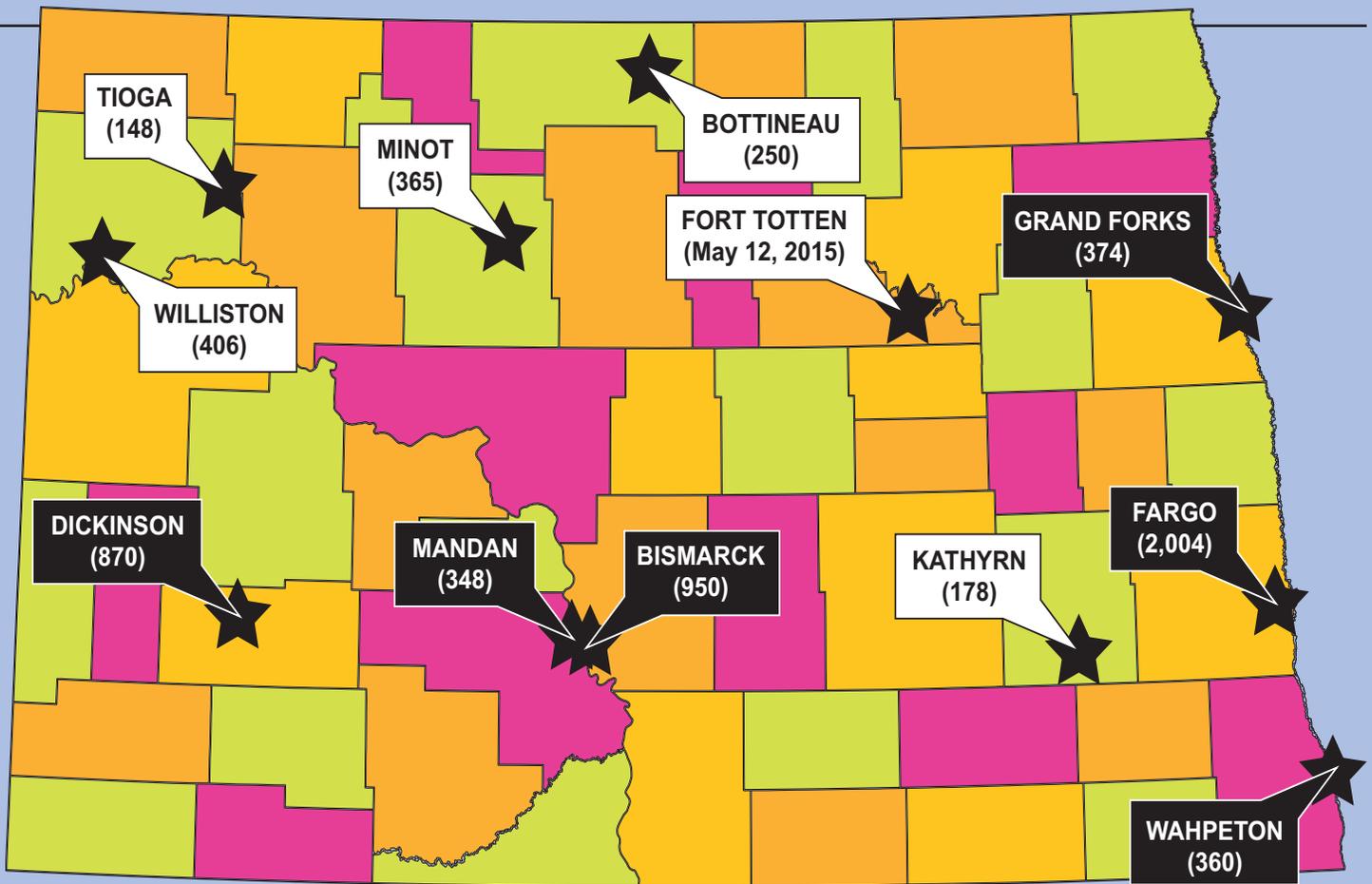
All water festival programs are based on the following criterion:

- ◆ **Interactive:** Engagement through inquiry-based strategies
- ◆ **Multi-sensory:** Activities use as many senses as possible
- ◆ **Adaptable:** Can be completed in indoor/outdoor settings
- ◆ **Contemporary:** Activities incorporate higher-level thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making
- ◆ **Relevant:** Activities can be localized
- ◆ **Solution-Oriented:** Activities link awareness to understanding to action
- ◆ **Measurable:** Activities provide simple assessments to measure student learning
- ◆ **Scientifically Accurate:** Activities are field-tested by educators, children, and experts



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The map illustrates the location of North Dakota's water festivals and the estimated number of students in attendance. White are the new water festivals, black are existing water festivals. Based on 2014 participation.

The success of water festivals throughout the state is a direct result of the partnerships between North Dakota's Water Education Program, and several hosting organizations that manage and organize these festivals throughout the state.

In recent years, the number of North Dakota's water festivals have grown by 100%, from six to twelve. Participation has increased by 50%, from 3,812 (3rd - 5th grade) students in 2012, to 5,755 students in 2014.

The most recognizable increase in participation was in the Fargo Red River Water Festival - coordinated by Christine Laney, Executive Director of River Keepers. That festival grew from a 4-day festival into a 5-day festival in 2014, with an increase of over 400 students in less than two years, and opening up opportunities to schools from Moorhead, Minnesota.

This cross-boundary concept also exists with other festivals located near bordering states where they have opened registration, in order to give the students of neighboring states an opportunity to participate and learn about water. This is done to help ensure good stewardship of our water resources in river basins that go across state lines.

With the number of opportunities currently in place, an estimated 1 out of 4 North Dakota students in grades 3-5 attend a water festival each year. During the 2013-2015 biennium, North Dakota Water Education program has served 29,695 students and adults through water festivals and other educational events in the state.

The North Dakota Water Education program is currently working on developing additional technologies and tools to make information and educational curriculum available

online by identifying quality online educational programs (such as Discoverwater.org) that will assist in giving residents an understanding of our water resources. The water education program is also collaborating with high schools to establish educational, and hands on real-world opportunities that integrate technology as a tool, as well as increasing awareness and developing skills that promote understanding of best management practices to sustain water quality and accessibility.

As the population continues to grow in North Dakota, so too do the efforts to bring water education to students today, so that they can be informed stewards and managers of our precious water resources.



2014 WATER FESTIVALS

The following is a listing of North Dakota's water festivals along with the hosting entity/proponents who work very hard to make them a success in their local area.

Fargo Red River Water Festival
River Keepers served 2,004 (Grade 3)



Grand Forks Water Festival
Dakota Science Center served 374 (Grade 4)

Prairie Waters Water Festival (Kathryn)
Prairie Waters Research Center served 178 (Grade 5)

Wahpeton Red River Water Festival
Chahinkapa Zoo & Fargo served 360 (Grade 5)



(Coming In 2015)
Fort Totten Water Festival
ND State Historical Society (Grade 5)

Bismarck Water Festival Bismarck Public Schools
served 950 (Grade 3)

Make A Splash Water Festival (Dickinson)
Southwest Water Authority served 453 (Grade 5)

Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Center Water Festival (Williston) ND State Historical Society served 406 (Grade 5)

Morton County Water Festival (Mandan)
Morton County Soil Conservation District served 348 (Grade 5)

Tioga Water Festival
Tioga Elementary School served 156 (Grade K-5)



Bottineau Water Festival
ND State College of Science served 250 (Grade 5-6)

Minot Water Festival
Ackerman-Estvold served 365 (Grade 5)

