

Water Rocks! Multi-State Youth Education Summit

November 2016



Background

Based at Iowa State University, Water Rocks! is Iowa's premiere, award-winning statewide water education campaign. Using art, music, technology, and interactive educational games and activities, Water Rocks! travels all over Iowa to K-12 schools and community events, reaching 20,000+ people each year, in order to inspire audiences about the challenges and opportunities of protecting Iowa's water resources. In order for Water Rocks! to extend its reach even farther beyond its direct outreach efforts, Water Rocks! professional development Summits provide educators with both education on timely, pertinent agricultural and environmental issues, and the tools to extend their youth outreach efforts on these topics into their own classrooms and programs.

Objectives

It has long been a goal to take the Water Rocks! campaign beyond Iowa and make it regional, as well as go beyond the formal classroom. Over the years, numerous non-traditional educators, such as extension and 4-H educators, naturalists, Soil and Water Conservation District and DNR youth outreach coordinators, watershed coordinators, and STEM coordinators have shown an interest in being engaged with Water Rocks! professional development Summits. This Water Rocks! Multi-State Youth Education Summit was offered to help build a multi-state youth water education network by bringing together non-formal educators from select states across the North Central Region and training them on the youth-tested and -approved Water Rocks! training and materials for use in their own outreach efforts.

Summit Design

The two-day Water Rocks! Multi-State Summit took place on November 1-2, 2016 at Reiman Gardens on the campus of Iowa State University. The design of the Summit included multiple sessions that combined technical knowledge-building and interactive training on youth outreach games/activities, consisting of the following components:

Expert Presentations

Summit participants heard presentations from ISU faculty on the topics of water quality and nutrient transport from agricultural land, soil erosion, climate change, and consumption habits. These presentations were designed to build up educators' technical knowledge on scientific research related to pertinent, timely environmental issues.

Water Rocks! Youth Outreach Presentations

Each expert presentation was followed up with a demonstration of a Water Rocks! hands-on educational presentation, with each presentation including hands-on lessons, games, and activities. This component was designed to provide educators with practical, proven tools for teaching youth about a variety of conservation topics. Presentations included the following:

- "We All Live in a Watershed"
- "Dig Into Soil"
- "The Wonderful World of Wetlands"
- "Trees, Bees, and Biodiversity"

Additional topics were covered in smaller breakout sessions, including “Geocaching 101,” “What’s in Your (Storm)water,” and “Managing the N Factor.” Attendees also got a chance to play the “Rock Your Watershed! Game,” an award-winning online game, and preview the new Water Rocks! Assemblies.

Water Rocks! Music Videos and Documentaries

Several award-winning Water Rocks! videos and PSAs were shown to Summit participants. A major strength of the Water Rocks! campaign is its use of the arts to teach STEM concepts to young people. Previews of Water Rocks! videos provided regional educators a chance to view some of what’s available on the Water Rocks! website, and opened the door for discussion of how they might utilize the more than 100 Water Rocks! songs and music videos to inspire youth in their outreach programs, and maybe even begin using music and the arts in their own innovative ways moving forward.

Regional Roundtables

In addition to learning about Water Rocks!, the Summit provided for open discussion and sharing of ideas between educators from across the region. Each state was asked to present a unique and transferable teaching method/game from their own programming to the larger group. Additional time was built into the Summit for state teams to confer as a group about the challenges they face in their outreach efforts, successes they’ve had in working with schools and communities, and opportunities they envision for partnering in the future. These “regional roundtables” allowed for open dialogue and problem-solving discussions to occur among educators who face similar goals and challenges in their outreach work, and also set the stage for future partnerships.

Regional Representation

Three states from the North Central Region were invited to bring teams to the Water Rocks! Multi-State Summit: Illinois, Missouri, and South Dakota. These states were chosen because they not only had existing youth programs related to water quality education and outreach, but also because partners in these states had expressed a desire to expand their youth outreach programming. Additionally, non-formal educators from across the state of Iowa were invited to participate in order to expand the impact of the Summit.

Two weeks before the Summit took place, the Illinois team cancelled their participation due to budgetary concerns. To fill the hole left by the Illinois team, Water Rocks! extended the Summit invitation to educators in Nebraska. Attending teams consisted of the following:

Nebraska:

- 2 representatives from the University of Nebraska Extension program

Missouri:

- 3 representatives from the Missouri 4-H program
- 1 representative from the Missouri Extension Water Quality program
- 1 representative from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources

South Dakota:

- 4 representatives from the South Dakota State University Extension program
- 1 representative from the South Dakota Discover Center

Iowa:

- 2 representatives from Black Hawk County Conservation

This cooperative project has been funded by the North Central Region Water Network. Partners of Water Rocks! include Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency/Section 319 of Clean Water Act), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center, Iowa Learning Farms, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and personal gifts of support.

- 2 representatives from Iowa State University's Reiman Gardens
- 2 representatives from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach/Jackson County
- 1 representative from Iowa State University and Outreach/Dickinson County
- 1 representative from Iowa State University and Outreach/Crawford County
- 1 representative from the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden

Participation in the Water Rocks! Multi-State Summit was provided free of charge to out-of-state attendees thanks to generous funding from the North Central Region Water Network, and to Iowa participants thanks to funding from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Learning Farms, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach/Extension Water Quality Program, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency/Section 319 of Clean Water Act). Funders covered the costs of Water Rocks! activity kits, valued at over \$800 each, for participants to take home for their future programming use. These kits included the same hands-on, interactive materials used for Water Rocks! presentations at the Summit, including: We All Live in a Watershed game, Habitat Hopscotch, Wetlands BINGO, Biodiversity JENGA, Creature Cache card game, Dig Into Soil game, Great Poo Pickup Relay Race game, Duck/Duck/Pollute game, posters, banners, plus all the Water Rocks! and Iowa Learning Farms DVDs and print materials.

Evaluations and Participant Reflections

The Water Rocks! Multi-State Summit was evaluated in three ways: the Water Rocks! team completed a self-evaluation immediately following the Summit that summarized their perceived positive and negative elements of the event; a Water Rocks! staff member and trained social scientist qualitatively evaluated the Summit proceedings from an external observer's point-of-view (written summary provided on pages 9-10 of this report); and all participants were asked to complete a post-event survey provided by the North Central Region Water Network.

The Water Rocks! team will reach out to Summit participants several times in the coming months to ascertain how they are using the materials provided in their activity kits, which modules they have found useful in their home programming, and how many youth they have reached with Water Rocks! lessons and materials in outreach programs.

Additionally, Summit participants were asked to send to the Water Rocks! team within two weeks following the event the following information: 1) a detailed lesson plan expounding how they plan to utilize Water Rocks! materials and lessons in their future youth outreach programming; and 2) a one-page written reflection on what parts of the Summit struck them the most, and led to their biggest takeaway from the event. The following pages include highlights and quotes from those one-page reflections provided by event attendees as to their experiences attending the Water Rocks! Multi-State Summit.

MO – Sarah Foster, University of Missouri Extension

Going into the Summit I was a little worried that the curriculum was only intended for younger audiences. Those worries quickly vanished after the first 30 minutes. It was amazing to see how vast of an audience the curriculum actually reaches out to. The Water Rocks! team was very enthusiastic and you could tell that they are truly passionate about their jobs. I liked how the team was able to incorporate how daily activities, such as agricultural practices, or buying a t-shirt, affect our water resources. By doing this, they put it into perspective about how important it is to be cautious about your daily activities and be aware of how to practice water conservation.

This cooperative project has been funded by the North Central Region Water Network. Partners of Water Rocks! include Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency/Section 319 of Clean Water Act), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center, Iowa Learning Farms, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and personal gifts of support.

MO - Debra Davis, University of Missouri Extension

I greatly appreciated the research presentations by university professors supporting the “why” of each major curriculum topic in the program. Knowing that these are the most current facts and ideology being taught in one of the leading agricultural research universities has given me more determination to educate the future generation to create solutions to the environmental issues. The strongest message for me was the topic of Climate Warming. I was surprised that within our group of educators, several held the opinion at the beginning of the presentation that human activity was not responsible for increased greenhouse gases and climate warming. At the conclusion, the clicker response reflected 100% of the participants agreed that human activity was responsible for climate warming. The factual, research-based studies conducted by NASA and NOAA were compelling and motivating to me to help find ways to help make changes in human activity.

I wasn't sure at first about embracing the value of music with the lessons, but changed my viewpoint after experiencing and learning how it can be incorporated into many facets of the presentations. The songs are catchy, repetitive, engaging, and I believe are appealing to all the ages for the curriculum. The tunes and fun lyrics help reinforce the lessons and will be fun to use in our workshops! I'm excited to teach my colleagues some of the songs and help us break out of our predictable and rather boring adult personalities.

The final personal challenge I am taking away is the message in the presentation made by Jackie, “The Making of a T-Shirt”. It is easy to believe how insignificant our decisions or actions can be. However, the impact of the ripple effect can help encourage us to take a stand and help influence the decisions to prevent unnecessary waste of natural resources. The next day after the workshop I was involved in a camp planning conversation without 4-H staff and shared the challenge of thoughtful and meaningful use of t-shirts in our programs. And to consider USA-made products. The simple retort is the additional cost to which I replied that there is a higher human cost involved. It will be a slow process and I am going to take up the cause. I found the NPR program which originally aired this story and will continue sharing this message and making much more personal responsible decisions.

Thank you for your dedication to educating the future generations and helping protect our natural resources. Together, we can make a difference!

MO - Dan Downing, University of Missouri Extension

The professor that did the presentation on Climate Change was excellent. I believe this to be the best, most concise, minimally debatable way of presenting the material I have seen. I too was surprised how many of our “class” did not feel humans were impacting climate change but, after hearing her presentation changed their opinions.

For me the highlight of the training was seeing fundamentally the same concepts as we have been discussing over the past 20-30 years packaged and presented in new, lively, entertaining formats, breathing new life into the science.

Thanks for a great, energy-filled educational experience.

This cooperative project has been funded by the North Central Region Water Network. Partners of Water Rocks! include Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency/Section 319 of Clean Water Act), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center, Iowa Learning Farms, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and personal gifts of support.

MO - Mary Culler, Missouri Department of Natural Resources

About a year prior to attending the Water Rocks! Summit at Iowa State, I was introduced to the Water Rocks! website by our MU Extension state water quality specialist. Over the last year, I have spent several hours on the Water Rocks! website, watching the music videos and looking through the materials on the website. I was very impressed by the materials and how entertaining and fun the songs are, and I began to share the website and links to videos with other colleagues. Last February 2016, I showed the “Environmentally Conscious Robot” video to about 60 attendees at Missouri’s Non-Point Source workshop at Lake of the Ozarks. The mobile Conservation Stations shown on the Water Rocks! website, along with another mobile education trailer developed by the Boone County, Iowa Soil and Water Conservation District, were inspiration for me in my role as a watershed coordinator to try to put together a similar watershed education station for use in Missouri.

What struck me the most during the Summit was the importance of music and movement to learning these science concepts. The Water Rocks! program has found unique ways to make learning about these concepts fun and memorable. What also struck me is how positive, enthusiastic, and talented the Water Rocks! team is, and they are a testament to how big things can happen when people are passionate and enthusiastic about something. To see their success in a primarily agricultural state was something that I reacted to passionately because I think there is a need and opportunity for my region of northern Missouri to have more water education and to present the education in a way that is fun and exciting.

MO - Willa Williams, University of Missouri Extension

The most striking part of the training is how much the materials were well thought out and had innovative ways of being presented. I have been involved with water festivals for many years and we have done similar hands-on lessons, however, the Water Rocks kit is the most professionally developed that I have seen. For so long we have worked with expensive tools such as the Enviroscape and groundwater models that do not combine the physical activity, reading, and STEM learning. We have also used inexpensive tools like tarps to describe a watershed (which can get very dirty on a fair building floor). The curriculum covers many more topics to give students and educators a clear picture of the environment and how it can be affected.

I love to teach soils and the activity where we trace products to the soils is fun and reminds me of a similar activity in one of my undergrad ag business classes. Instead of just telling us to use dice and paper, the kit uses whiteboards, foam dice, and a banner which are much more interactive and have a professional brand.

NE - Amy Timmerman, University of Nebraska Extension

The two-day Summit covering Water Rocks! was spectacular! There are several items from Water Rocks! that have stuck with me. One of the biggest items about Water Rocks! is that the entire program is outside the box and uses several everyday items/games to reinforce the topics discussed with the youth. These interactive activities in my mind are the items that will stay with youth the longest and potentially have them actually retain the information presented to them.

I plan on using the songs to help engage the younger youth (Pre-K – 3rd grade). On a personal note, my 3 & 5-year-olds are able to sing some of the songs already and enjoy listening to them in the car. From my experience in working with Extension, we always want to have the individuals with the science knowledge creating the curriculum/programs. Your team really showed how a very interactive and knowledge-based curriculum/program can be built even without the personal expertise. The amount of teamwork within the team to attain the science and assure that it is correct is amazing. This a true example of how things really should work within Extension.

This cooperative project has been funded by the North Central Region Water Network. Partners of Water Rocks! include Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency/Section 319 of Clean Water Act), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center, Iowa Learning Farms, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and personal gifts of support.

SD – Anne Lewis, South Dakota Discovery Center

This is a strong and user-friendly program. You do not have to be a content expert to use the activities. The music and the videos make the program approachable and high energy.

I really liked the more formal and traditional presentations embedded throughout the Summit. This integration was effective and I thought helped activity facilitators better understand the issues they would ultimately be teaching.

SD – Aminah Hassoun, South Dakota State University Extension

In my county and at many of the schools that I partner with, there are very few learning opportunities that are engaging and empowering for youth. I feel that the poverty of education and environmental pollution are related causes of the much bigger problem that is a relational disengagement of individuals from their communities and to the environment. However, I think people young and old yearn for a healthy and fulfilled life—and part of that in any community is accomplished through investing in youth and empowering them to be proactive in their choices and make positive changes in the world. As a youth educator, I tend toward a more hands-on learning approach because I really think it is the best way to engage active learners.

I really appreciate the opportunity to have learned about the Water Rocks! curriculum. The program's passion for environmental conservation and education of youth are reflected in the activities and resources it provides educators and learners.

SD – Katherine Linnemanstons, South Dakota State University Extension

I have taught a wide-range of water quality lessons ranging from chemical testing to macroinvertebrate surveys to using place-based education as the basis; however, what struck me most about the Water Rocks! Curriculum was the variety of new activities I had never before seen and the manner in which some activities, like Duck Duck Goose and hopscotch, were converted into conceptual learning tools. These activities, especially when combined with the engaging lessons and music, are a great resource to add to my collection of skills to engage youth in natural resource related issues.

One other favorite part of the Summit in general was the manner in which it was organized. There often is such a large disconnect between academia and the public, especially in science-based fields where the terminology used and processes described can quickly leave people confused. Even in Extension, which was initially created to educate the public about the latest applicable research from the land grant universities in their respective state, the specialists and the educators often work separately of each other. I greatly appreciated the guest lecturers that came to the Summit to walk us through their research and projects. This organizational style of the Summit worked incredibly well, and I may find myself using a similar style in any future adult and teacher trainings I perform.

SD – Nathan Skadsen, South Dakota State University Extension

When it came to the curriculum pieces that were demonstrated, one of my favorites was the “We All Live in a Watershed” session. Part of what I like about this section of activities is that they are equally relevant to urban and rural kids, which is a struggle to find sometimes. Living in Minnehaha County we have the large city of Sioux Falls, lots of row crop and pasture land, and the Big Sioux River, so it will be easy for youth to visualize the local systems being modeled. It is also a great way to teach youth that even if they don't live within sight of a body of water, they are still impacting water through their actions.

This cooperative project has been funded by the North Central Region Water Network. Partners of Water Rocks! include Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency/Section 319 of Clean Water Act), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center, Iowa Learning Farms, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and personal gifts of support.

SD – Christine Wood, South Dakota State University Extension

Going into the Summit, I was slightly apprehensive about how I was going to be able to bring back the materials from Water Rocks! and make it more than just another curriculum on the shelf collecting dust. I was unsure of how our programming staff would receive a curriculum built around music and water. However, after attending the Summit I have nothing but positive ideas about how this curriculum can be adapted into existing programs across the state to not only enhance those programs but provide additional water education. Additionally, I see lots of potential for utilizing it to help bridge gaps between our youth programming and current research.

One of my favorite things about the Summit was the inclusion of the hard science. It is often difficult for our county 4-H Staff to connect what they are doing with the current research happening on campus. Geography as well as audiences create this challenge. Doing the training in this fashion really links what is happening in research and show the importance of providing youth education in those areas. This training style is definitely something we will incorporate as we bring back the content to the rest of our staff. One of my favorite parts about the structure of the curriculum is that it can be used as a whole, building upon itself; or you can pull various components to help build ideas under other focus areas (habitat, conservation, agronomy practices, etc.). This I think will make it much easier for our staff to adopt it.

IA – Katie Bopes, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Jackson County

I always believe that it's easier to take and retain information and experiences better when I am able to be involved and engaged in the activities. When we are able to actually be a part of the presentation and take part in the activities and games it is easier for us to then to be able to present them. It makes you more knowledgeable and in-tune with the materials you are presenting and activities you are trying to get the students engaged with.

It was beneficial to be presented the background information and statistics on each module. Being able to see the figures that back this program will help us when presenting it to schools or having our own workshops or field days with the lessons and modules.

IA – Hannah Lister, Black Hawk Co. Conservation

I had a wonderful time attending the Water Rocks! Summit. I found both days to be incredibly useful and I have every intention to use the activities and information given to us and replicate it in schools and camps. As someone who has no educational background in natural or environmental sciences, I was very grateful for the chance to attend this Summit to not only learn more about the issues, but to also learn about how to make the issues engaging and exciting for children to learn about (because let's face it, water quality issues can be a pretty dry subject at times).

One thing that I really appreciated about the Summit was that it hit on a wide variety of topics that all connect to water quality, but they all still managed to be vastly different. This is important because it will help me reach a wider audience than if I were to only talk strictly about water quality. It is important to me that I can still tie-in water quality to almost any topic that I teach. Overall, it was a great experience, and a great resource that I plan to utilize on a regular basis.

This cooperative project has been funded by the North Central Region Water Network. Partners of Water Rocks! include Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency/Section 319 of Clean Water Act), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center, Iowa Learning Farms, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and personal gifts of support.

IA - Katie Shelton, Black Hawk Co. Conservation

When I received the agenda, I was really excited to see such a wide variety of speakers and topics. I've attended other conferences in the past where the topics and speakers have been focused on water, but I thought the creativity and scope of the topics and speakers were outstanding. I was also very happy to see that we would be actually doing the activities. It allows you to understand the tone in which the activity was designed, which for certain activities is crucial to its success.

Sometimes water topics can be fairly boring and technical. I have found more complex issues hard to convey to children, to the point where they walk away with a deeper understanding than just --"our water is dirty". I really like that the Water Rocks! program addresses more complex water issues, such as nitrate movement through the soil and tile lines. Water Rocks! also makes even some of the simpler topics a bit more exciting and, dare I say, sexy. It promotes engagement and stimulating discussion amongst not only the children that are participating but also with adults that may be either participating or observing.

One other aspect of the Water Rocks! program I was pleasantly surprised with was the inclusion of the arts into their programs. There are so many children who connect with art either visually or audibly. The inclusion of art in the Water Rocks! programming is well-mixed so that you can "sneak it in" (which, again, is unfortunate that we have to do this). It allows children with all types of learning strategies to get involved, understand, and, hopefully, retain the information that is being presented.

IA - Zachary Myer, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Dickinson County

The Iowa Water Rocks! Summit was filled with excitement and energy. However, one of the things that I enjoyed most about the Summit was the layout. Listening to professors speak about a given topic and then transitioning into the activities that we are able to do with the youth really made a strong link in my mind what we are trying to convey to the youth.

One of the sessions that I learned most from would have to be the first, Water Quality, Soil Health, and Nutrient Transport: A Midwestern Perspective. I had not heard of all the ways to prevent nitrogen from running into the stream. Knowing the different methods of buffer strips or other options also allows you to teach an older audience and use the watershed activity but be able to add meat to the lesson.

I really appreciate the videos. I think having those is such a great tool to utilize if it is a longer program. For a facilitator to be able to take a break and for the students to have a chance to listen to someone else's voice for even a minute. The fun and engaging style of the videos doesn't make you feel guilty at all to use them either.

While people could certainly get the curriculum and create some of the supplies themselves, seeing the activities in action and hearing the professors speak was well worth my time. I am extremely confident I will be a much better teacher and advocate of the topics after the Water Rocks! Summit.

This cooperative project has been funded by the North Central Region Water Network. Partners of Water Rocks! include Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency/Section 319 of Clean Water Act), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center, Iowa Learning Farms, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and personal gifts of support.

Social Science Observational Reflections

From a professional observer's point-of-view, the overall flow and content delivery at the Multi-State Summit was extraordinary. Summit proceedings were centered around dialogue and interaction with attendees, which is key to keeping participants' interest and understanding of the material at high levels. Showings of Water Rocks! music videos often followed academic-style, expert presentations, helping to spark participant energy levels before delving into the hands-on, interactive module demonstrations.

Water Rocks! Director Jacqueline Comito did a great job of opening the Summit with a summary of how the Water Rocks! program functions, and what it seeks to do. Comito points out that "A song can do something a half-hour lecture can never do," expounding on the ways in which the Water Rocks! team seeks to make science fun through the use of art and music. She points out that the Water Rocks! team is intentional about how they do outreach, seeking to reach both rural and urban audiences, pointing out that the relatively small Water Rocks! staff of six turns down 57% of requests for school visits each year.

Perhaps the most compelling move Comito made during her opening remarks of the Summit was to call upon the audience to make personal connections to the environmental issues related to Water Rocks! programming. In answer to this call, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach's Water Quality Program Manager, Jamie Benning, shared how she plays Water Rocks! music CDs for her 5-year-old daughter while riding around town in their family's vehicle, and the ways in which the child has connected with the scientific concepts covered in those songs through that exposure. It is personal testimonials like these that speak to the scope of application of Water Rocks! lessons that can help educators who are new to the program envision how the concepts and materials might be used in their own professional and personal lives after the Summit. Including even more of these personal stories as a tool for brainstorming materials use could be a useful strategy for engaging participants at an even deeper level in future Summits.

In one-on-one conversations with Summit participants throughout the event, it became clear that teams from each state face a multiplicity of challenges in reaching their intended audiences. Among the challenges faced are:

- The ever-present need for obtaining funding to support their outreach efforts
- The difficulty of getting programs into schools when teachers and administration are focused on how guest presentations will meet their benchmark standards
- Language barriers in diverse school districts and the difficulty of translating educational materials
- Staffing to cover the demand for outreach
- Competition with other environmental educational programs
- The lack of transparent and useful program evaluation methods
- The need to whittle down large-scale lessons to fit into 3-5 minute presentations for use at high-trafficked community events and festivals

Many teams expressed an interest in hosting a Water Rocks! visit to their home states to help reach audiences that would benefit from the Water Rocks! message. As one example of the partnership that was built during the Summit, the South Dakota State University Extension team plans to bring in Water Rocks! in 2017 to offer Water Rocks! Assemblies as part of their Big Sioux Water Festival. Summit participants were told that the best way to get the message out to their target audiences will be to take Summit lesson plans and provided materials, and put them to good use in their existing outreach efforts.

At the end of Day 1, time was offered to state teams to meet in small groups and discuss the potential for using the Water Rocks! activities in their future programming. After these small-group meetings, the teams reconvened as a large group to share their thoughts on the potential for partnerships, programming needs

This cooperative project has been funded by the North Central Region Water Network. Partners of Water Rocks! include Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency/Section 319 of Clean Water Act), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center, Iowa Learning Farms, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and personal gifts of support.

and challenges. The majority of this large group time was spent sharing concerns over challenges each group faced in their outreach programs. Attendees were eager for this broader discussion, which could allow for problem-solving the programming challenges each region holds in common, and for brainstorming the development of program evaluation methods that could help them better gauge the success of their outreach efforts. Future Water Rocks! Multi-State Summits could benefit from building in additional large group discussion time that more directly fosters dialogue addressing challenges in outreach programming.

The two-day Summit had an overall light-hearted, positive atmosphere. "I want to play more games!" exclaimed one Summit participant during an event break. No matter what age, we all want to play more games. The Water Rocks! Multi-State Summit offered educators a chance to do that, and equipped them with the tools to use those games in their youth programming. Above all, it's the experience of learning that lasts with young people, and the more fun we infuse into how they learn science and environmental conservation, the more likely those young people will carry those lessons with them into adulthood. This Multi-State Summit was one more step in the Water Rocks! campaign to spread the fun of learning about protecting our natural resources beyond the formal classroom, and beyond the state of Iowa.

This cooperative project has been funded by the North Central Region Water Network. Partners of Water Rocks! include Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency/Section 319 of Clean Water Act), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center, Iowa Learning Farms, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and personal gifts of support.