

LOCAL NEWS



Courtesy photo

SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS – Seven Oscoda Area Schools' eighth grade students, with teacher Michael Berenkowski, display their presentation graphic at the youth watershed summit in Alpena.

Students take part in watershed summit

OSCODA — Nearly 200 students from across northeast Michigan, including eighth graders attending Oscoda Area Schools (OAS), convened in Alpena on May 21 to showcase and share their water science studies and stewardship projects to one another through displays and presentations.

The students, who have spent the year studying water quality and water-related human impact within their respective watershed, gathered to celebrate the diverse attention that our rich Great Lakes and freshwater resources are receiving through place based education in northeast Michigan.

Each class gave a presentation on the methods and contribution of their individual stewardship project, shedding light on how the issue of water quality extends to all schools and communities.

OAS students presented on water quality sampling in their community through partnership with

the Pine River/Van Etten Lake Coalition. The students went out multiple times this spring to help monitor the health of the water at these sites through biological and chemical methods of testing. They identify macro-invertebrates and nutrient levels to determine water health.

"The value of events like the Youth Watershed Summit," says Daniel Moffatt, school liaison with the Northeast-Michigan GLSI, "is that these experiences provide real-world learning opportunities for students and introduce them to the community as valid partners who address important environmental stewardship issues."

Through their projects, students are fostering a better understanding on the social, economic, and environmental importance of Michigan's water resources, and also realizing how the Great Lakes and people are inextricably interconnected.

Throughout the day, the stu-

dents were the primary audience and also the key contributors to the message of water stewardship, but during the year they had worked in important community partnerships with organizations such as: US Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Sea Grant, NOAA's Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the Department of Natural Resources, Huron Pines, 4-H Youth programs and the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative.

Funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, through a grant secured by the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments and the Great Lakes region of NOAA Education's B-WET Program, eleven schools across seven counties attended the summit, all representing the growing network of watershed education efforts connected regionally through the Northeast Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative. See more about the initiative at www.nemiglsi.org.