



## Choose Your Event

### Geography Awareness Week 2010 Event Ideas

#### Geography Awareness Week is November 14-20, 2010

Celebrate freshwater by choosing an activity from the list below--or make up your own!

Whether you want to involve an entire community, a classroom, a college group, a few friends, or participate on your own, there's an activity here that's right for you.



#### **3.7 Mile Walk for Freshwater**

In the United States and other developed nations, getting water is as simple as turning on the faucet. However, about two-thirds of the world's families don't have running water in their homes. Women and children in developing regions of Africa and Asia are primarily responsible for collecting and carrying water from source to home. The average woman in these regions walks 3.7 miles a day carrying freshwater. Acknowledge these women by hosting or participating in a 3.7 mile Walk for Freshwater.

- To find water charities to partner with to host a walk, check out the Freshwater Global Action Atlas at [ActionAtlas.org](http://ActionAtlas.org).

\*For more details on planning a Walk for Freshwater, see the 3.7 Mile Walk for Freshwater "Event Planning Guide" included in this packet.



#### **Are You Smarter Than a \_\_\_\_\_ (teacher, geography major, town official)?**

Host a freshwater trivia night at a college or local school. Reach out to members of the community and get creative with picking teams. Pit professors against students or teachers against parents, and encourage teams to choose water-themed names. Use our trivia questions ("National Geographic Bee Freshwater Trivia") or come up with your own questions about local water resources. Get local businesses to provide prizes, and donate a portion of any entry fees collected to a water charity. Have fun!



#### **Geocaching**

Geocaching is a high-tech scavenger hunt. Players use global positioning system (GPS) devices and clues to navigate to the locations of hidden treasures or "caches." Earthcaching is similar to geocaching, except rather than searching for hidden stores, participants attempt to identify the coordinates of places--usually unique landscape features such as ponds, rock outcrops, or other geologic formations. Geocaching and Earthcaching are great ways to enjoy the outdoors, explore new places, learn how to

use GPS technology, and practice map-reading and navigation skills.

- To geocache or earthcache you'll need a GPS receiver or GPS-enabled smart phone. You'll also need a map of the region you'll be exploring and a method of transportation to visit the caches, such as walking, biking, or driving.

- Go to [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) and [www.earthcache.org](http://www.earthcache.org) to learn more about geocaching and earthcaching and to find registered caches near you. Or, go out and create your own geocache around freshwater features in your area. Include natural bodies such as ponds and streams, as well as water towers, storm drains, irrigation systems, and other human-built water infrastructure. Create teams and compete to find the caches!



### **Freshwater Field Trips and Family Trips**

Learn about water in a real-world setting! Classes, families and other groups can learn about their local watershed and freshwater resources by visiting:

-Local freshwater bodies

- Rivers
- Lakes
- Reservoirs
- Streams
- Creeks
- Ponds

-Local freshwater management or interest groups

- Parks and Recreation Departments
- Water Quality Control Boards
- Freshwater Conservation Organizations
- Waste-water Treatment facilities
- Local government dealing with local freshwater issues

### Fundraise for your field-trip.

We know funds are tight, especially for schools, but these out-of-the-classroom learning experiences are truly priceless. Find fundraisers (such as a 3.7 Mile Walk for Freshwater—see above) that students can participate in to make your field trip possible Solicit local businesses and organizations (especially ones related to freshwater) to fund your field trip or donate money or snacks for a brown-bag lunch.



### **Watershed Clean-Up**

Take care of your local watershed with your family, class, college group, community group, friends, etc. Join together to do a trash cleanup around local freshwater bodies (rivers, streams, ponds, etc.).

- ⋮ College groups: Partner with a community school to do a watershed clean-up. Help kids with a fundraising project to pay for the fieldtrip. Then, make t-shirts, buttons, stickers, or other fun items for students to wear. Work in teams and have a competition to see who can pick up the most garbage!



## Freshwater Fair

Get the community together for a Freshwater Fair. Hold the fair at a local park, school or other public location and invite local water groups, such as government water agencies, parks and recreation departments, non-profit conservation networks, and water professionals (e.g. riverboat captains, fishermen, scientists, environmental engineers) to set up tables with information and activities about local water resources. Don't forget to invite members of the community to attend!

### Suggestions:

- Ask local businesses to donate money, reusable water bottles, snacks, t-shirts, prizes, etc.
- Have activities such as water bottle exchanges and freshwater games (e.g. trivia)
- Have a "Get-to-Know Your Utilities" section and provide information about the flows of water into and out of homes in your community.
- Display photographs and a map of your community's watershed(s).
- Discuss dangers to the water supply from improper disposal of hazardous waste and trash.
- Demonstrate methods and techniques that can be employed by the community and individuals to start using and conserving water responsibly
- Invite community members to share stories and create artwork about local water sources
- Invite your town librarian or historian to talk about the history of water bodies in your town and share books on the topic
- This can also be organized as on-campus Freshwater Fair for college communities.



## Legislative Lobby Visit

Let local legislators know that you are a politically active constituent who cares about water issues and wants leaders to value geographic literacy.

1. Find out which water issues are plaguing your district and do some research on where your representatives stand.
2. Set up a meeting with one or more of your representatives. Talk with them about how important water issues are, and how critical it is for students receive a geographic education that prepares them to understand and respond to water crises.
3. Invite representatives to attend a community or school freshwater event and ask them to speak about why freshwater is such an important issue in their area.



## Host a Contest

Freshwater encompasses rain, snow, ice, glaciers, ponds, streams, puddles, watersheds, lakes and more. Organize a poster, art, photo or poetry contest about Freshwater.

### Suggestions:

- Develop a contest specific to water issues in your area. Is there a contaminated freshwater body? Is there a freshwater scarcity?
- Choose just one specific category of freshwater (e.g. precipitation, conservation techniques) to focus on for your contest.
- Have an open house where your school or organization showcases all of the cool freshwater contest submissions.

- **Teachers:** Host a school-wide or grade-wide contest. Display participants' freshwater work in classrooms, hallways, lobbies, etc. Determine winners by selection of a panel of teacher judges, or by popular vote of the students.
- **Newspapers:** Advertise the contest and the theme, and then run the winning submissions along with runners-up in the paper.

## Freshwater Resources



### National Geographic Freshwater Map Kits and Activities

GET LANGUAGE FROM ANNE HAYWOOD



### Freshwater Video List

Choose a movie from our Freshwater Video list to watch with your class, family, or a group of friends.



### Freshwater Book List

Choose titles from our freshwater book list that are both fun and educational. Books are organized by grade level and are great for parents, teachers, book clubs, and libraries.



### Freshwater Crossword Puzzle

Learn about freshwater while sharpening your mind. Perfect for individuals, teachers and students, or parents and kids.



### National Geographic Bee Freshwater Trivia


**Teachers-** Use these Freshwater quiz questions in your class as an engaging activity to start or end the day (or any time in between!)

**Students-** Organize a **quiz night** during Geography Awareness Week at a coffee shop, bar, or other local hang out.

**Community Groups-** Play with a group or even one-on-one.





## Plan Your Event!

 **Establish a Planning Team:** Seek support for the event from your principal/ adviser/ other key leaders. Form a team with volunteers, or other interested organizations. Clearly define and divide roles and responsibilities among a few team members, and meet regularly for event planning.

### ***Suggested Roles***

- **Event Leader:** Oversees the event's activities and timeline; organizes communication among team members; manages all aspects of event planning.
- **Activities and Event Logistics Coordinator:** Manages event activities, including food, games, and prize planning; gathers necessary supplies; coordinates logistics for the event.
- **Volunteer Recruiter Coordinator:** Recruits volunteers and helps ensure the event runs smoothly; creates a job list with volunteer names next to each task (e.g., greet and register guests, provide support for activity areas, take event photos, hand out refreshments).
- **Promotions Coordinator:** Places Geography Awareness Week posters in and around schools and throughout communities; coordinates invitations; connects with event partners and sponsors; contacts local and national TV, radio stations, and newspapers.

 **Schedule Your Event:** Allow two months or more to plan the event. Consult with school administrators, or other appropriate officials when selecting a time and place for your event.

 **Plan Your Event:** Meet with the planning team, and select activities from the "Choose a Geography Awareness Week Event" list.

Involve your community! Have your *Activities and Event Logistics Coordinator* work with the *Promotions Planner* to partner with local libraries, businesses, and community organizations. Think creatively when talking with potential event partners.

- Ask local food companies to donate refreshments.
- Ask local businesses to sponsor your event by providing prizes, supplies, or donations.
- Decide what supplies and materials you'll need for your event. (ie: posters, shirts, prizes, waivers, registration papers, etc).
- Provide local and school libraries with the "Freshwater Book List" and ask them to promote it through book corners, story times, book clubs and displays.
- Add a fundraising aspect to your event by raising money to benefit a variety of freshwater organizations that can be identified in National Geographic's Freshwater Action Atlas [provide URL].



**Promote Your Event:** Spread the word! Build excitement with students, parents, teachers, and community members!

- Distribute flyers that advertise the time, location and description of your event (See our “Geography Awareness Week Flyers” for a model you can download and print).
- Put up Geography Awareness Weeks posters and signs throughout your school, local libraries, businesses, and community organizations (hospitals, after-school care, etc.).
- Feature Geography Awareness Week in your school’s newsletter, local papers, on radio stations, etc.
- Promote the fundraising aspect of your event, if you have one. Companies are more willing to serve as sponsors if they know proceeds are going to a charity. Also, media will be interested in both the nonprofit organization benefiting from the event and the organization/club/school displaying such a commitment to the global community.



**Wrap-Up Logistics** before the big event: Two weeks before the event, arrange for at least two wrap-up meetings with your planning team.

- **Activities and Event Logistics:** Have all the activities been confirmed, supplies gathered, and ample space mapped out for each activity? Have the proper officials and administrators been contacted? Do you need event participants to sign a waiver?
- **Volunteers:** Have enough volunteers joined the event team and accepted positions of responsibility? Are all the activities covered?
- **Promotion:** Are students, parents, faculty members, and community members excited about the event? Have posters been placed strategically throughout the campus, school and local community? During the week before and the day before your event, make reminder calls to the media, send reminder notes to faculty, students, teachers, business leaders, related organizations, parents, etc.
- **Photos:** Assign one or more still and video photographers to the event.



## Publicize Your Event!

### Make a Splash With Participants and Press!

Now that you've chosen an event to organize during Geography Awareness Week, you need to publicize your event to attract participants and members of the press. Reaching the public through the media is the most effective way to let people in your community know about your Geography Awareness Week event. You'll want to develop media announcements before the event, and stories about the event after it has happened. Below are suggested steps to make a splash about freshwater events in your community.



#### Reaching the Media

- Identify your target demographic(s) for event participants—Families? Teachers? Businesses and Organizations? The general public? Target your media outreach appropriately toward those audiences.
- Create a media list of the education and local interest/metro reporters and community calendar editors in your area, including reporters for daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television stations, and websites. (See whether your Geographic Alliance or other supporting organization already has a media list that they can share with you).
- Include mailing addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, and fax numbers on the media list.
- Call the news desks at each office to confirm this information.
- Contact your local media outlets (newspaper, radio, television, etc.) to see if they would like to report on the event. Ask them questions such as:
  - Are they able to help generate a news story about a Geography Awareness Week community event?
  - Will they feature Newspaper in Education activities, such as freshwater trivia questions, crossword puzzles, and word searches during Geography Awareness Week (Nov. 14-20)?
  - Would they cover teachers celebrating Geography Awareness Week in their classrooms?
  - Do they have a website where members of the community can share their stories and engage with journalists online?
- Ask the local media what you can do to help facilitate coverage of Geography Awareness Week. Ask which reporters to contact, and offer to develop promotional materials and story outlines. Also offer to participate in or help set up interviews.

#### WAYS TO SPREAD THE WORD

- ✓ Flyers,
- ✓ Facebook groups/statuses,
- ✓ Twitter,
- ✓ Word of mouth,
- ✓ E-mail blasts,
- ✓ Newspaper ads,
- ✓ Posters around communities and schools,
- ✓ Mailers,
- ✓ Newsletters,
- ✓ Ads in other organizations' newsletters,
- ✓ Reminders in community newsletters

### **Preparing the Press Materials and Spokespeople:**

- Customize the Geography Awareness Week local template press release template to include information about your organization and event.
- Identify individuals in your group or organization who will speak with the media that attend the event. Make sure they are comfortable serving this role and can speak accurately and articulately about your program to media representatives.
- Give the designated speaker(s) copies of any prepared press materials and briefly outline the key points and messages you'd like them to include in any interviews.

### **Sending Out Your Customized Press Release**

- **A week** or 10 days before your event, send your customized version of the local press release to reporters on your media list via email, first-class mail, or fax.
- **A few days before the event**, call the reporters to see if they are interested in covering the event and ask whether they need any additional information, such further details about the program, or directions to get there.
  - Sample conversation: "My name is xxxx, from xxx organization. I'm calling about the Geography Awareness Week event at our school on xxx date. It's a very visual event with a xxxx (examples). We hope you'll be able to cover it."
- Keep the call short and to the point, and have all your facts at hand.
- Send out your press release (fax and/or email) immediately after the event has concluded to media who did not attend.

### **Working With Media on Event Day**

- Set up a media check-in table (with a media sign-in sheet), at a prominent location, with a sign identifying it as "Media."
- On event day, at least one volunteer should dedicate time to working with the press. They should be at the check-in table to greet reporters, answer questions and help facilitate interviews.
- Have copies of the customized press release and the event's program available for reporters.
- Television reporters with film crews will need electrical outlets for their equipment, so have events in locations where these are easily accessible.
- Press will need the best view of student displays, games, and presentations. Make sure to have seats designated as "Reserved for Press" where appropriate, with easily visible signs.

### **Following Up With Media After the Event**

- Following the event, check out the "**Report Back**" section on the Geography Awareness Week website ([GeographyAwarenessWeek.org](http://GeographyAwarenessWeek.org)) to find out how to report key details of your event to National Geographic.
- Write Thank-You letters to everybody who partnered, sponsored, or donated to your event.
- Have a debrief meeting with your team to discuss how things went, what went well, and things that you could work on for next year.
- If you collected any contact information from event attendees, process and save it.
- Start getting excited for next year!

