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PRESS ADVISORY

Flint River GREEN Student Summit this Friday

More than 300 area middle and high school students gather to share their scientific findings and recommendations on water quality at the Flint River GREEN Student Summit at Kettering University.

Flint, MI. May 12, 2015 – During the last school year, students and their teachers from more than 15 school districts in Genesee, Lapeer, and Saginaw counties collaborated with mentors from environmental professions to perform water quality tests* on our Flint River Watershed’s rivers and streams. They braved the elements, pulled on waders, and hopped in the river to collect water and macroinvertebrate samples. Using scientific methods to test local streams and rivers, area students evaluate the health of their stream, research the reason(s) their stream scored the way that it did, and identify actions in practices or policies that will help them protect, preserve, and improve their local waterway. On Friday, these student scientists will present the findings along with action plans at the Flint River GREEN Student Summit from 8 am until 2 pm at Kettering University.

The Flint River ‘Global Rivers Environmental Education Network’ (GREEN) is a nationally replicated program in its 26th year. It provides students with an outdoor hands-on experience in water quality testing. The capstone of the program is the GREEN Student Summit where students share this information with their teachers, peers, and community officials.

Rebecca Fedewa, executive director of the Flint River Watershed Coalition, praised the teachers, mentors, community partners, and the students in anticipation of the Student Summit. “Teachers and mentors are vital to the success of GREEN. The real world knowledge they bring from their respective fields, as well as the hands-on assistance at the testing sites, further exposes students to the value of environmental stewardship and potential career paths in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. The excitement generated through this program has lasting impacts in our communities and in the lives of all the participants.”

GREEN mentors offer assistance in both the classroom and at the testing site. Working closely with teachers, mentors speak with students about GREEN and introduce them to the tests they will perform. Mentors share knowledge about the test, the proper way to perform the tests, safety procedures, and how to interpret results. These volunteers offer insight as to what may cause a result to be high or low, as well as help students develop action plans.

Each year, the FRWC surveys students about their perceptions of the watershed before and after participation in Flint River GREEN, and asks students if they believe they can have an impact on the health and vitality of their local river. Last year, just 34% of the students entered this program believing that the Flint River is clean and healthy and 64% said they believe they can make a difference. After participating in this science based program, more than 80% of students



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emerged from the experience knowing that the Flint River is healthy and 90% know they can make a difference in the health of our Flint River...and want to help.

“The dramatic upward shift in those numbers and attitudes always inspires me, especially knowing that these young people now feel empowered to make a difference in their community, working to keep our watershed clean and healthy,” said Fedewa. “Our future is in good hands.”

Flint River GREEN is generously supported by the Genesee County Drain Commission’s Our Water program and General Motors. The program is run in partnership with the Genesee and Lapeer County Intermediate School Districts, Earth Force, Michigan State University Extension and 4H, Kettering University, and the City of Flint.

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Flint River Watershed Coalition: Partnering to Protect, Preserve, and Improve the Flint River Watershed. The Flint River Watershed Coalition is an organization representing individuals, businesses, community organizations, and local units of government sharing a vision of a healthier Flint River Watershed. We envision a day when the future of our drinking water is secure and the integrity of the Flint River is protected. We believe that all people should have access to the river for recreation, swimming, and fishing as well as the economic value it provides to our communities. To learn more about the Flint River Watershed Coalition and Flint River GREEN, go to www.FlintRiver.org

The Federal Clean Water Act requires select municipalities identified by the EPA to obtain stormwater permits under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, including many in Genesee County that came together under the Genesee County Community Water Quality Consortium (GCCWQC). Led by the Genesee County Drain Commissioners Office, GCCWQC is a collection of municipalities, school districts, county organizations, and non-profits charged with overseeing the “Our Water” public education activities required by Phase II Stormwater regulations of the NPDES permit program. They bring awareness, education, and promote stewardship on the ways to prevent stormwater pollution and keep our waters clean. Flint River GREEN is a public education program administered by the Flint River Watershed Coalition and generously supported by the Genesee County Drain Commissioner’s Office. It serves to support the Genesee County Community Water Quality Consortium compliance with the Phase II Storm Water Regulations of their NPDES permit. You can read more about the “Our Waters” program at: www.cleargeneseeewater.org

** Water quality test results for GREEN 2014 Class can be found on page 8 of the [2104 Flint River GREEN Annual Report](http://flinriver.org/blog/publications) at <http://flinriver.org/blog/publications>. Final result for 2015 will be released later in the year once all data are tabulated.*

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