



VILAS COUNTY LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2007 Land & Water Conservation and Environmental Awareness Speaking Contest winners

Six Northland Pines Middle School 6th graders from Ms. Dar Kadulski's class [Language Arts 6] and sixteen 7th and 8th grade students from Mrs. Laura Weber's and Mrs. Becky Pokrandt's class [Communications 7 & 8], participated in the *2007 Vilas County Conservation and Environmental Awareness Speaking Contest* this October. On Thursday, October 18th, at the Northland Pines Middle School, these twenty-four students competed in the final judging event for the speaking contest. The purpose of the contest is to heighten students' environmental awareness and understanding for the conservation of natural resources such as soil, water, energy, air, minerals, wildlife, and forests. The event is also an opportunity for students to hone their presentation skills and practice the art of public speaking. The speaking contest is sponsored by the Vilas County Land and Water Conservation Committee working with the UW-Extension youth development agent Nancy Anne Livingston and local teachers.

2007 participants spoke on topics ranging from forest management, groundwater, aquatic invasive species, and West Nile Virus to wildlife subjects on wild turkeys, pine martens, *Blastomycosis*, Wisconsin deer populations, mountain lion sightings, and elk, to environmental themes exploring global warming, acid rain, and loss of pollinators. Judges for the event were impressed with the organization of the speeches and by the overall high quality of the student presentations.

"The students had speeches that were well-crafted from beginning to end, and loaded with interesting information about their topic; hats off to the students and teachers for their hard work and commitment to learning about wildlife and environmental issues important to Vilas County and beyond," said one judge, Gary Milanowski, from Cloverland. "The students did an exceptional job with their speeches; every student should be congratulated for their effort," said Leon Kukanich, another judge who helped with the event from the Vilas County Land and Water Conservation Committee. Speeches were given in two divisions - the elementary division (grade 6) and the junior division (grades 7 and 8). Trophies were awarded to the top three students in each division. Certificates and pins were presented to everyone who took part in the event.

Sixth grade students involved in the elementary division speaking contest included: Joseph Miller, Cayla Tennikait, Angele Marie Gehrke, Rebecca Anderson, Jessica Anderson, and Carly Ridderbusch. Seventh and eighth grade students who competed in the junior division included: Jordan Welnetz, Brie Fuller, Seth Jensen, Cory Sprinkel, Tess Holperin, Brandon Wallace, Melissa Wagner, Paige Healy, Christian Svetnicka, Duane Heikkenen, Samantha Hernandez, Kaelan Hyatt, Caleb Grosskopf, Victoria Schwenn, Aisha Calis, and Adrian Adams.

In the elementary division, first place was awarded to Jessica Anderson for her speech entitled "*Acid rain strikes again!*"; Rebecca Anderson earned second place for her speech examining Eurasian water milfoil invasion entitled "*The Eurasian invasion*"; and third place went to Carly Ridderbusch for her speech called "*Buglers of Clam Lake*". First place in the junior division went to Christian Svetnicka for his speech entitled "*What is Eurasian milfoil?*"; second place went to Victoria Schwenn for her speech investigating global warming entitled "*Global warming—Is it hot in here?*"; and Melissa Wagner placed third for her speech entitled "*Buzz or no buzz?*".

The first-place winners in each division advanced to the area speaking competition held at the Wausau School Forest on October 25th, 2007. The area contest includes conservation speech winners from ten other counties in the North Central region of Wisconsin. Christian Svetnicka finished second at the area contest in the junior division.

Anyone interested in additional information about the speaking contest can contact Patrick Goggin, county conservationist with the Vilas County Land and Water Conservation Department, via e-mail < pagogg@co.vilas.wi.us > or by telephone at (715)-479-3747.



Pictured from (l) to (r) are the winners of the elementary division:
Jessica Anderson (first place); Rebecca Anderson (second place); and Carly Ridderbusch (third place).



Pictured from (l) to (r) are the winners of the junior division with judges:
Judge Gary Milanowski; Christian Svetnicka (first place); Victoria Schwenn (second place); Melissa Wagner (third place); and Judge Ted Ritter.



Seventh and eighth grade students who competed in the junior division included:
Speaking contest participants with judges Gary Milanowski and Ted Ritter.
Their teachers are Laura Weber and Becky Pokrandt.



Christian Svetnicka receiving his second place trophy at the regional speaking contest from NCLWCA president Tom Rudolph. The contest is held annually in conjunction with the North Central Land and Water Conservation Association's (NCLWCA) meeting at the Wausau School Forest.