



River WaterWorks, Inc
WaterWorks: A River Journey to the Sea
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Press Release:

WaterWorks: A River Journey to the Sea

The River WaterWorks nonprofit corporation is a recently created organization whose mission is promoting environmental watershed awareness. The goal of its current project, entitled *WaterWorks: A River Journey to the Sea*, is to make people aware of the origins and destinations of the water that they use on a daily basis for recreational and household use. The concept of the WaterWorks program is to follow the journey of a drop of water from the headwaters of a river all the way to the sea in a small vessel, such that the vessel becomes analogous to the drops of water with which it is traveling.

The journey departed from Lake Chautauqua over the 2005 Labor Day weekend in western New York State and is proceeding down the Allegheny, Ohio, and Lower Mississippi Rivers all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. The direct participants of the program are schools, museums, and communities along the banks of the Rivers where the WaterWorks vessel is stopping to present hands-on educational programs. The indirect beneficiaries are any schools or individuals away from the banks of the Rivers who are following the progress of the journey and the utilizing the interactive watershed message posted on the organization's website, <http://www.riverwaterworks.org>. The website is being updated on a regular basis directly from the river with communications equipment contained onboard the vessel.

The WaterWorks vessel, named the *BPV Libelula*, is constructed upon an 18 x 8 foot aluminum pontoon platform that draws about 18 inches of water. Its primary system of propulsion is a bicycle powered paddlewheel system with an auxiliary 25 horsepower outboard motor in place for emergency collision avoidance. Two bicycles, one each to port and starboard, drive independent paddlewheels located behind each pontoon. This is an arrangement capable of simultaneously providing both steerage and propulsion. The paddlewheels can also be linked together in unison to be driven by one or both bicycles, with steerage being provided in this scenario by a small rudder. When the boat is not in need of the bicycles, they can be easily removed from the vessel's propulsion system and ridden about on land. The vessel has a small shelter constructed on its deck capable of sleeping three crew members and housing the necessary supplies for the trip. Generation of electricity for purposes of communications equipment and onboard computer systems is accomplished by a battery bank and solar cell array. The nature of the vessel's renewable sources of energy complements the theme of personal resource responsibility, and how choices that are made upstream affect all those who live along the path on which the water flows as it makes its way to the sea.

The vessel is carrying an onboard water sampling instrument capable of measuring temperature, conductivity, pH, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen throughout the entire length of the rivers. The instrument, a YSI 6920 Sonde, is on loan for the duration of the journey by the YSI Environmental Corporation (<http://www.ysi.com/environmental.htm>). The instrument provides a source of raw scientific data that is useful in educating people about the basic principles of water quality.

The WaterWorks interdisciplinary watershed education program is being presented primarily to fourth grade classrooms in the schools along the river through a curriculum designed to meet the National Education Standards. In addition to the school presentations, the WaterWorks program is being delivered to general museum audiences on the floor of several museums and science centers located in cities along the rivers. The education program defines and illustrates the concepts of watersheds, groundwater, and conservation while simultaneously touching on a little bit of the rivers' historical culture. In particular, some traditional river music and entertainment is being highlighted as part of the educational program with the accompaniment of an upright string bass, which will be enduring most of the 2,180 mile river journey. The WaterWorks education program is part science, part history, part traveling vaudeville show, and a whole lot of fun.

The WaterWorks River Journey is funded primarily by the Sea Education Association (<http://www.sea.edu>), a nonprofit oceanographic educational institution based out of Woods Hole, MA. Additional funding and donations come from the Project Aware Foundation, numerous individuals, and small businesses.

The journey is expected to conclude near the end of December 2005 after about four months of river travel. The WaterWorks project will hopefully provide a context to make people more aware of the importance of their water resources, striving towards the ultimate goal of having people and communities take responsibility upon themselves to actively protect and preserve their aquatic environments. Feel free to investigate the current status of the program on our website, <http://www.riverwaterworks.org>.