2020 Spirit of the Water Essay Contest
Scholarship Opportunity for High School Students

As the old adage goes, a picture is worth a thousand words - even the complexity of an active ecosystem can be captured within a single snapshot. Scientific discovery and an emotional connection to the landscape often comes to be by seeing the splendor of nature and the devastation of negative impacts, such as soil erosion or flooding.

Through this essay contest, we seek to challenge Iowa high school students to take a deep understanding of a snapshot of nature and explore how a single moment in time can inform our understanding of water resources.

For the 2020 Spirit of the Water Essay contest, please do the following:

1. Select a photo from the three below and write an essay about what is seen within the photo.

High resolution images can be found here:
https://www.flickr.com/photos/159887253@N02/albums/72157709451065692

2. Select the Creative Writing Track or the Research Track for your essay:

Creative Writing Track: A written work that displays imagination or invention. Written works can be in the form of storytelling with the use of literary themes, character development, and expresses thoughts and emotions related to one of the photos. Creative writing can be fiction or non-fiction.

Research Track: An essay written with clarity and organization that synthesizes what is learned from written material and scientific discovery as related to one of the photos. Research essays require a minimum of three resources.

3. Write an essay about the image, including: conservation practices at work, geographic location, habitats, wildlife, human-ecology interaction, etc. Please emphasize water resource management and habitat activity observed in the image.

4. Submit your essay and student information form to hbates@iastate.edu by February 24, 2020 5PM Central Time

Essay length: 500-1000 words (approximately 4 pages double-spaced). Please use in-text citations when using a reference. The reference list does not count towards the required essay length. The reference list must use MLA formatting.

Submission Deadline: February 24, 2020 5PM Central Time

Winners will be recognized during an awards ceremony at the 2020 Iowa Water Conference.
All prize-winning essays will be published as an online anthology produced by the Iowa Water Center.

**Submission Guidelines**

Students enrolled in grades 9-12 in public, private, and home schools in the State of Iowa are eligible to submit an essay. All essays must be typed in 12 pt. font, double-spaced. Other submission materials include an application form found on the Iowa Water Center webpage for the contest ([http://www.water.iastate.edu/essaycontest](http://www.water.iastate.edu/essaycontest)). This form must be completed and sent with the essay to qualify for the contest.

The checklist for a qualifying submission for judging is the following:
- Essay
- Application form

Submissions must be submitted online via email to Hanna Bates at hbates@iastate.edu.

Recipients will receive confirmation upon submission. Submissions will be evaluated by a three-person panel representing members from the Iowa water community. The creative writing track and the research track will be evaluated within the same competition (i.e. there will be one 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize winner across all essays).

Essays will be evaluated on the following criteria (evaluation rubric is available at water.iastate.edu/essaycontest):
1. Creativity/Originality
2. Focus/Main Point
3. Organization/Format
4. Language/Style
5. Grammar

Students and teachers are encouraged to reach out to Hanna Bates, hbates@iastate.edu or 515-294-5650, if they have any questions regarding the contest.

**Prizes**

1st Place
$500 cash prize
One full college course scholarship or 4 credit hours total at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory ($1700 value)

2nd Place
$300 cash prize
2 credit hour course scholarship at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory ($900 value)

3rd Place
$300 cash prize
About the prizes

The Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, located in West Okoboji Lake, is owned by the state of Iowa and operated through the Board of Regents. Its mission is: 1) to provide science classes and research opportunities for university students, and 2) to offer Outreach Programs and provide services through the state universities.

Scholarship winners may choose any summer academic course at the Lakeside Laboratory. For an example course offering list, please visit http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/lakesidelab/university/courses/index.html. In general, one semester hour is equivalent to one week of a residential course. Credits earned at the Lakeside Laboratory transfer to the Regent Universities within Iowa as well as other colleges. To transfer to other universities and colleges, students are encouraged to contact those respective institutions regarding credit transfer. The scholarship amount for credit hours is only available to the Iowa Lakeside Lab and the cash value will not transfer to other college and universities to take courses.

Students with prize-winning essays will receive cash prizes via personal check within 30 days of the awards ceremony. Students receiving scholarships to the Iowa Lakeside Lab will receive a certificate to submit to the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory when registering for courses. The certificate for coursework will expire four years after high school graduation, and students are encouraged to enroll in a course when they are academically prepared and can fit it in their schedule.

For more information, please contact Mary Skopec, Director of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, mary-skopec@uiowa.edu or 712-337-3669 ext 5.
Photo 1 – Sunrise Spread

Location: Cardinal Marsh, Winneshiek County Iowa
Photo by: Ross Evelsizer
PHOTO 2 – Driftless Riffles

Location: Silver Creek, Howard County Iowa
Photo by: Hunter Slifka
PHOTO 3 – For Whom Does the River Flow

Location: Little Cedar River, Mitchell County Iowa
Photo by: Emily Martin