

Freshwater Tool Kit



What Is It? Origins, Purpose and How to Use

WHAT: Water is beloved by many who have created volumes of wonderful water and freshwater educational resources locally, nationally and internationally over the last 40 years. The **Freshwater Tool Kit** is a new resource in Milwaukee that has integrated concepts from many of these great resources to teach the foundational knowledge of water resources, or “water basics”. We believe that learners with a strong understanding of water basics will become more engaged when they learn about in-depth water resource concepts and issues such as assessing, managing and protecting our water resources, and be more motivated to become a solution to protecting our waters.

ORIGINS: The origin of the Tool Kit is the *Just Add Water Program* created by Jill Frey and Kae DonLevy in 1995 to be used as a brief introduction on “water basics” prior to a fieldtrip for students to a beach cleanup on Milwaukee’s Lake Michigan beaches. The content was further developed from input by teachers, students, and a dozen local environmental education organizations, the WaterPartners, until 2010. Together these organizations shared this program with over 5,000 teachers and students in Milwaukee. This project was also shared with other Wisconsin coastal schools in Superior, Bayfield, Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Racine and Kenosha. This project was funded by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP) throughout most of the project and was supported by the WaterPartners. In 2011 the *Just Add Water Program* was further developed and used as part of the Shorewood Waters Project and then in 2016 morphed into an easy to use menu of activities as the *Shorewood Water Tools for Teachers* program. The **Freshwater Tool Kit** is a new iteration of this content created in 2019 with the support of 20 local environmental organizations, the newly organized WATER Connectors.



PURPOSE: The purpose of the Freshwater Tool Kit is to create *free* tools for environmental educators and teachers that offer:

- Foundational information and activities on water resources, our local freshwater waterways and the history of water use in Milwaukee.
- Free and easy access to activities that educators can quickly utilize rather than spending a significant amount of time searching through volumes of curricula, lesson plans and extensive online resources.
- Connections to local environmental education organizations, their program offerings and contact information. It is important that teachers have access to information on how to get support to get the kids out of the classroom and immersed in activities in and on our waterways.

- Training possibilities for staff or teachers that are new to the area or for those that could use a refresher using the Freshwater 101 presentation. The presentation is loaded with interesting current facts and local historical details and the world water crisis.

HOW TO USE:

Teachers: The Freshwater Tool Kit has a variety of multi-disciplinary activities focusing on the world's and local water resources. The activities comply with Wisconsin state education standards, including the Environmental Literacy and Sustainability standards, and STEM are appropriate for learners from 1st to 12th grade. Each activity lists the recommended grade level with some activities containing versions for multiple grades.

Environmental Educators: Educators with local environmental groups and centers can use some of the Tool Kit activities as appropriate with their programs and can share the Tool Kit with teachers in schools with which they work. The Freshwater 101 presentation is also a helpful tool to launch at the beginning of any program for any age to ensure learners have a strong water resource foundation to help ignite their respect, stewardship and passion for water. The Freshwater 101 presentation is also perfect to use for adult audiences.

The Freshwater 101 presentation and Milwaukee Waters Map and history can be used as a training tool for staff to become experts on local waterways, organizations working on water and the history of Milwaukee's water resources. It's important we all have a strong and consistent knowledge of our water resources and the facts about world water resources when we educate future water guardians.



We hope you enjoy these resources and help us create guardians of Milwaukee's freshwater resources. Share your feedback and ideas with us to create an even better tool kit for future learners.