



Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival



Summary Report 2025

Inspiring Young Minds

**34 partners and
donors made the 2025
festival possible**



2025 Festival Overview

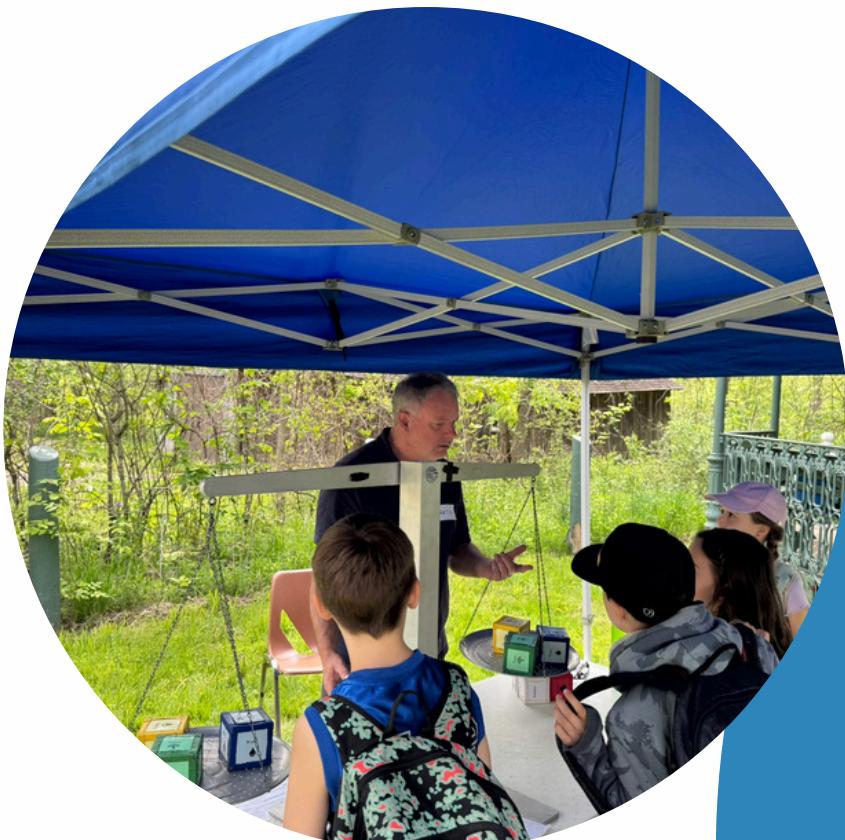
The 2025 Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival (WWCGF) continued its proud tradition of engaging students in grades 2 to 5 with the essential topic of water and water stewardship through dynamic, hands-on learning. This year's hybrid format allowed to continue our efforts to increase accessibility and engagement. Thanks to the continued support of our donors, dedicated partners, the hard work of festival volunteers, and the passion of our Board of Directors and Organizing Committee; attendees enjoyed hands-on activities and interactive displays, fostering a deeper understanding of water, groundwater and conservation. For the 2025 in person festival, we returned to the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum from Friday, May 23 to Thursday, May 29, while the virtual festival was aired on Tuesday, June 3.

Registration invitations for the 2025 Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival were sent to all local school boards, as well as a distribution list of private schools and home school groups. Due to increasing operational costs, the student participation fee was raised to \$15 per student, which helped cover over 40% of the total festival expenses. The remaining costs were generously subsidized by our dedicated donors, ensuring the event remained accessible and impactful for all attendees. With an outstanding successful festival this year, the 2025 festival engaged more than five thousand children in fun, hands-on learning activities and videos that emphasized water conservation and sustainability. This report highlights the key moments, successes, and collaborative efforts that made this year's festival another impactful milestone.

2025 In Person Festival

The 2025 in-person Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival was held from Friday, May 23 to Thursday, May 29 at the **Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum**. This engaging and educational event was made possible through the generous support of **34 partner organizations and donors**. A total of **252 high school students** and **530 volunteers** (professionals and subject matter experts) played a vital role in leading interactive activities, helping to communicate scientific concepts in fun, accessible ways. Through their involvement, volunteers gained valuable leadership experience while promoting important messages about water, groundwater, and conservation.

Over the course of the festival, **4,594 elementary students** in grades 2 through 6 attended, accompanied by **1,046 teachers and guardians**. Participants came from four school boards—Waterloo Region District School Board, Waterloo Catholic District School Board, Wellington Catholic District School Board, and Upper Grand District School Board—as well as from private schools and home school groups. All attendees had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of water through hands-on activities and exhibits. They explored topics such as the water cycle, aquifers, aquatic ecosystems, and water quality, empowering them with the knowledge and inspiration to become future water stewards and environmental advocates.



4,594 elementary students attended the in-person festival at the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum

2025 In Person Festival

Volunteers

Volunteers were at the heart of the 2025 in-person festival, helping to create a welcoming, educational, and memorable experience for all who attended. Their time, energy, and commitment were key to the success of this year's event.

The Board of Directors and Organizing Committee worked with incredible dedication behind the scenes, ensuring every detail was in place and that each aspect of the festival ran smoothly. Their leadership, coordination, and passion for community engagement set the tone for an inspiring week of learning and discovery.

Volunteers brought the site to life—leading activity centres, guiding young participants, and sharing their enthusiasm for water education. This diverse team included subject matter experts, professionals from across the water and environmental sectors, and high school students who stepped into leadership roles with confidence and care.

For our high school volunteers, the festival also served as a platform for personal growth. Through hands-on experience and direct interaction with professionals, many gained valuable insight into potential career paths in water, science, and environmental stewardship. We hope these experiences will continue to shape their journey as future leaders and advocates for a more sustainable world.

This year we had the opportunity to engage two hospitality programs (Kitchener Waterloo Collegiate and Grand River Collegiate Institute) to provide lunch for our volunteers.



**530 professionals and
252 high school
students volunteered
during the in person
festival**



19 organizations helped
deliver 63 hands-on
activities

2025 In Person Festival

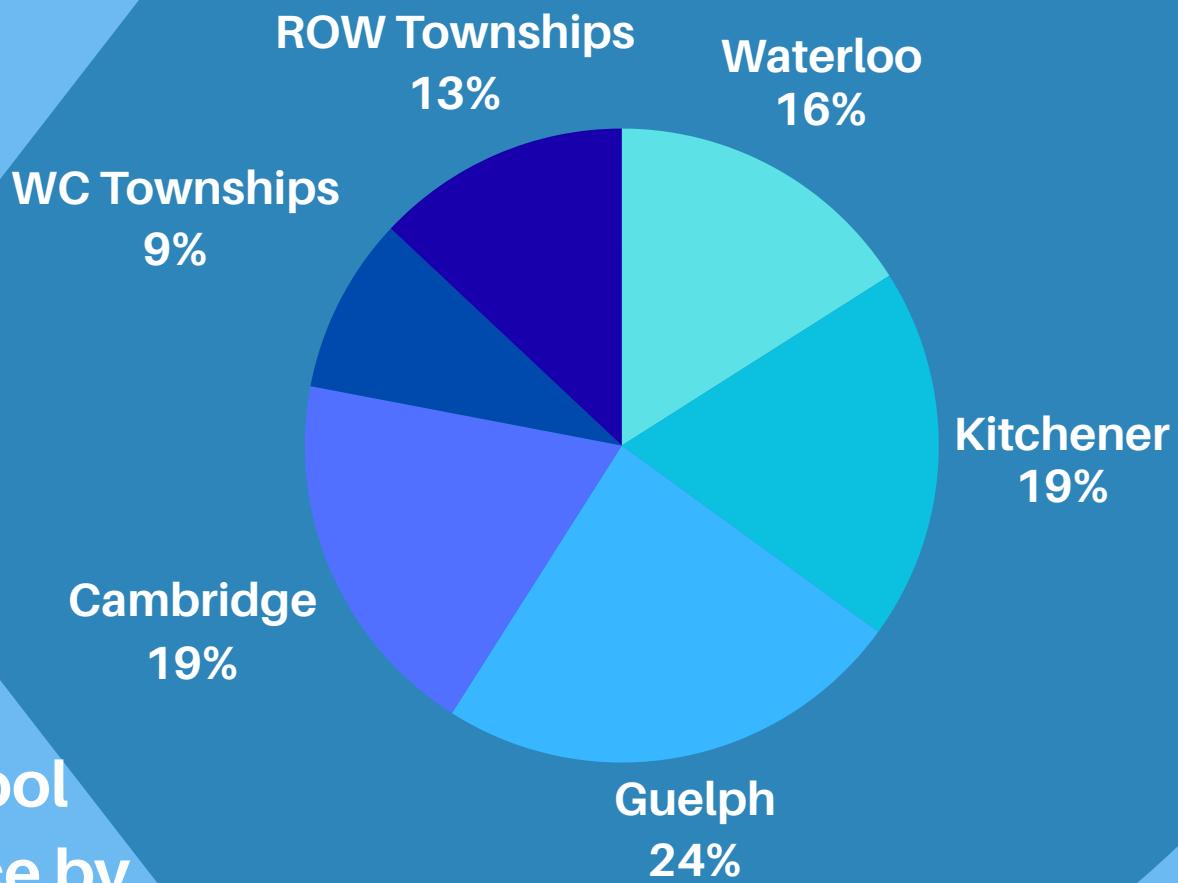
Programming

The 2025 WWCGF featured an impressive lineup of **63 unique activity centres**, each thoughtfully designed to align with the Ontario Curriculum for grades 2 to 5. These engaging and educational stations allowed students to explore a variety of water-related topics through hands-on learning experiences. Nineteen different organizations contributed one or more activity centres, bringing with them subject matter experts and professionals who helped deliver accurate, real-world knowledge in an interactive and age-appropriate way. Hosted at the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum, the festival took full advantage of both its indoor and outdoor spaces, creating a dynamic and flexible environment where students could explore and learn in a variety of settings.

This year, the festival was fortunate to welcome Crow Shield Lodge, with Elder Clarence Cachagee offering two blessing ceremonies that helped us respectfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge and traditions for our volunteers and VIP guests.

Programming Partners:

University of Waterloo-Earth Science Museum, Region of Waterloo Public Health, Waterloo Region District School Board- Outdoor Education, Wellington County, City of Guelph, Wellington County Museum, Mining Matters, Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum, Grand River Conservation Authority, Wellington Source Water Protection, City of Waterloo, Water Cycles Expedition, Aardvark Drilling, Centre Wellington, Region of Waterloo Waste Management, City of Kitchener, Region of Waterloo Water and Wastewater Services, Wellington County Solid Waste Services



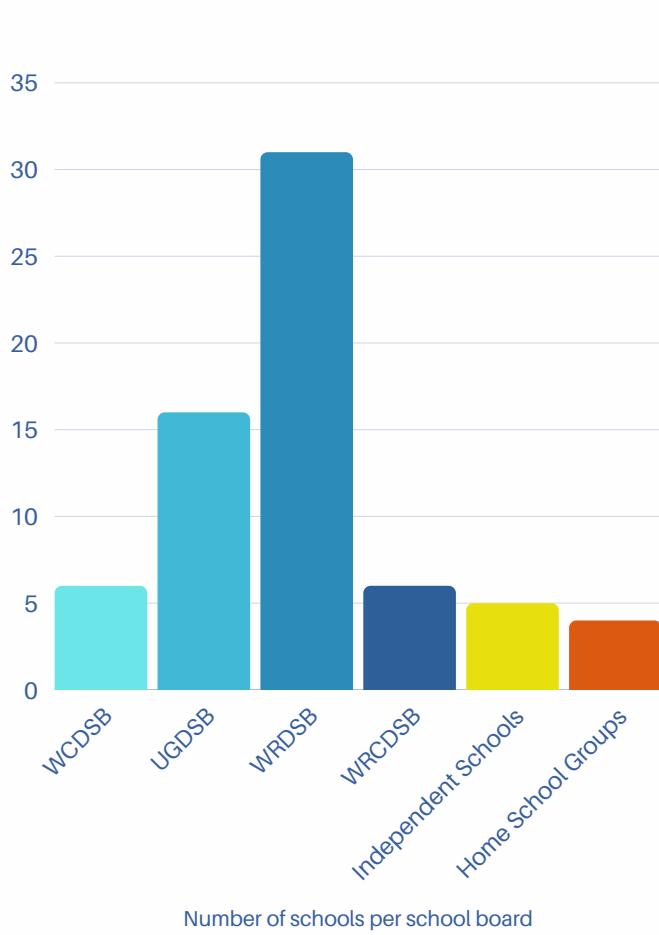
2025 School Attendance by Location

*Please note that some Wellington County attendance is reflected under Guelph due to school boundaries.

Location	Number of schools
City of Waterloo (Waterloo)	11
City of Kitchener (Kitchener)	13
City of Guelph (Guelph)	16
City of Cambridge (Cambridge)	13
Wellington County Townships (WC Townships): Drayton, Fergus, Harriston, Moorefield, Arthur	6
Region of Waterloo Townships (ROW Townships): Ayr, Conestogo, Elmira, New Hamburg, Wilmot, Winterbourne, Breslau, Wellesley	9

*Please note that some Wellington County attendance is reflected under Guelph due to school boundaries.

Attending Schools per School Board

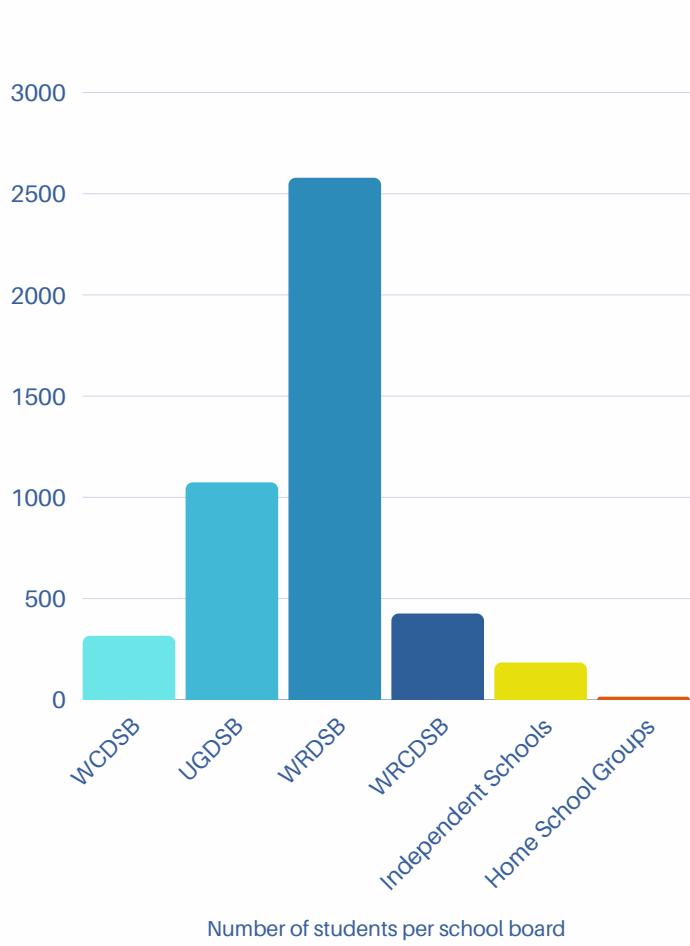


School Board	Number of school
Wellington Catholic District School Board (WCDSB)	6
Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB)	16
Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB)	31
Waterloo Region Catholic School Board (WRCSB)	6
Independent Schools	5
Home School Groups	4



Students from 68 schools attended the in-person festival

Attending Students per School Board

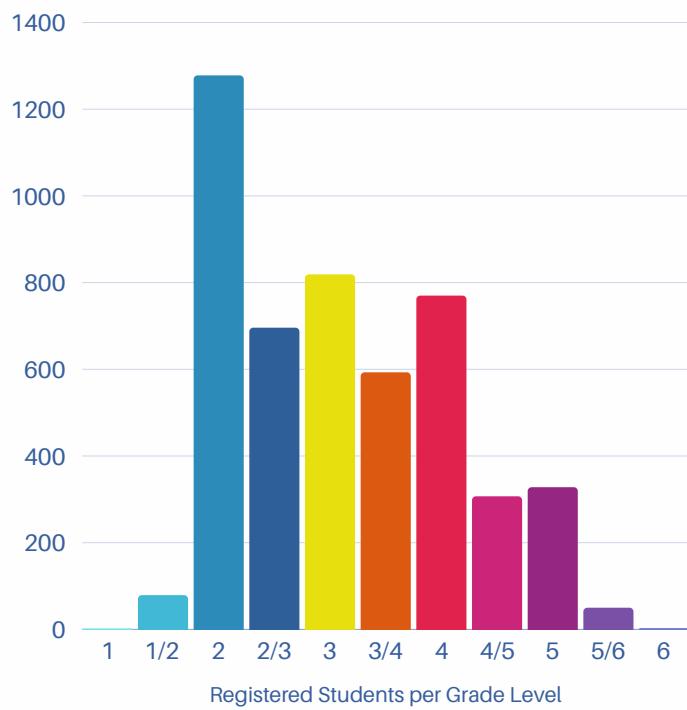


School Board	Number of students
Wellington Catholic District School Board (WCDSB)	316
Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB)	1,074
Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB)	2,579
Waterloo Region Catholic School Board (WRCSB)	426
Independent Schools	184
Home School Groups	15



5,019 students were reached during the in-person and virtual festival

In Person Registered Students per Grade Level



Grade Level	Number of students
1	2
1/2	79
2	1278
2/3	696
3	819
3/4	593
4	770
4/5	307
5	328
5/6	50
6	3



141 busses helped bring elementary and high schools students to the festival

Media and Community Engagement

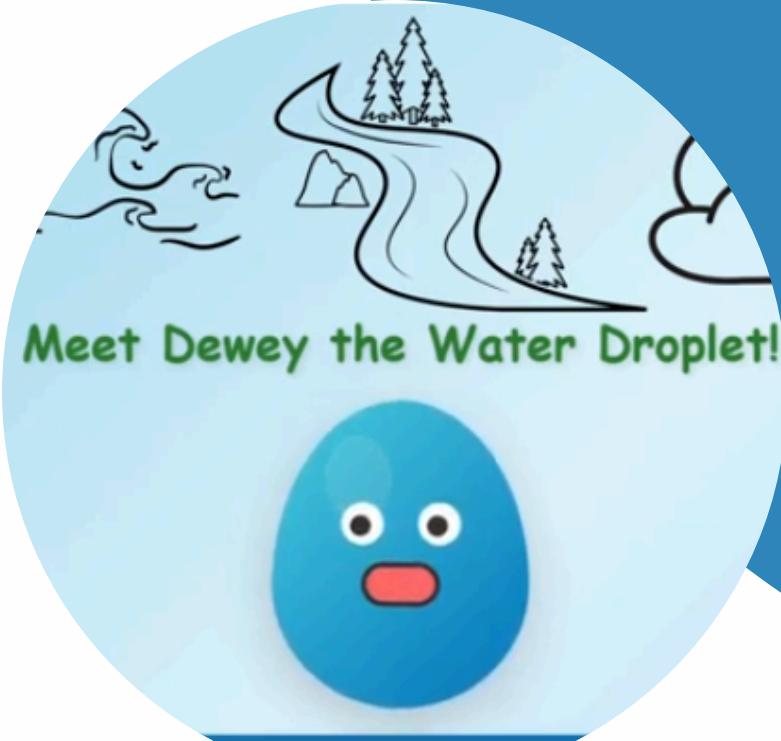
Communication and community engagement were key pillars of the 2025 Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival. This year, the festival saw significant growth in digital outreach, driven by a refreshed and updated website that recorded a 33% increase in views and visitors during the week of the festival compared to 2024. The website served as a central hub for information, and educational content, helping to enhance the overall festival experience.

An aggressive and coordinated social media campaign played a vital role in amplifying the festival's visibility and reach. Our LinkedIn page, for example, experienced a remarkable 400% increase in impressions and reactions, reaching over 8,700 views and nearly 400 reactions throughout May. These digital platforms were not only used to share engaging content and festival updates but also to publicly recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions of our volunteers and donors. This focus on digital engagement helped to foster a stronger connection with the community and encouraged continued support for the festival's mission.



Website Statistics for the week of the festival

**33% more views
and visitors to our
website compared
to 2024**



425 students watched
the virtual festival in the
first 24 hours

2025 Virtual Festival

During 2025 and with support from the **City of Kitchener's Youth Climate Action Fund**, a YouTube premier was aired on Tuesday, June 3rd at 10:00 a.m. This virtual event allowed teachers to access curriculum-relevant content without financial or physical barriers. The 2025 Virtual Festival can be accessed [here](#).

The videos that make up the 2025 virtual festival were created by students from Wilfrid Laurier University, the University of Waterloo and Centennial College with the support of subject matter experts.

This year, **441 students** were registered to watch the premier. Within the first 24 hours, the video received 17 views, translating to an estimated total of **425 students engaged**. This estimate is based on an average class size of 25 students, assuming that teachers streamed the festival to their entire class using a shared device.

All past virtual festivals are available on our [Water Education YouTube channel](#). Resources were shared with all registered educators to complement the video content ([Teacher resources](#)). These included materials that could be used to prepare students before the event or to reinforce learning afterward.



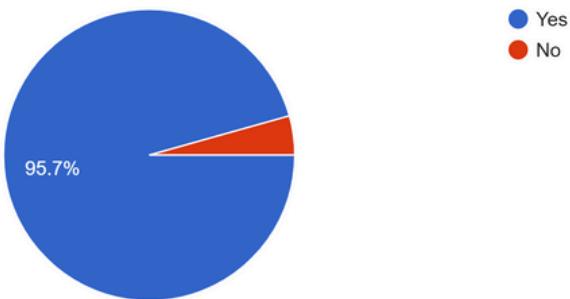
1046 teachers and parents attended the 2025 in-person festival

Teachers' Evaluation

Following the festival, we invited attending educators to complete an evaluation to help us understand their experiences and identify areas for improvement. Below are some of the valuable suggestions and general comments they shared.

- Were your expectations met?

Responses	Percentage
Yes	95.70%
No	4.30%



- Any suggestions on improving your experience?

“Hands-on, interactive activities were a hit—students preferred movement-based over trivia.”

“It would be helpful if the grades for the activities were posted on the booths”

- General Comments about your experience.

“Many students claimed “this is the best trip ever!” so it was definitely a hit overall! This year I found the ‘crowd’ a bit less than previous visits which was great. “

“By the afternoon we had waits but they weren’t super long. Bussing was incredibly organized and easy to navigate, and everything was explained clearly leading up to the trip and on the day of the trip! Thank you!”

Volunteer and Partner Support

We extend our deepest **gratitude to all** volunteers and partners who made the 2025 Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival a success. Their hard work and dedication ensured a seamless experience for attendees, both in-person and virtually. With their support, we successfully engaged the community in groundwater education, fostering a deeper understanding of this vital resource. Together, we are making a significant impact!



Donors and Partners



Centre Wellington



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Looking Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

As we close the chapter on a successful 2025 festival, we're already planning ahead for an exciting year to come. The 2026 Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival will take place at Marden Park in the Township of Guelph/Eramosa.

With the support of our community, businesses, industry and different levels of government, we continue to grow, adapt, and deliver meaningful experiences that inspire young minds and future changemakers.

We invite organizations, educators, professionals, and community members to join us in 2026 as:

- **Volunteers** – Help lead activity centres, support logistics.
- **Partners** – Join our Organizing Committee and contribute your expertise
- **Donors** – Support water education and youth engagement through financial or in-kind contributions.

Together, we can continue to create hands-on, impactful programming that sparks curiosity and fosters a deeper understanding of the vital role water plays in our lives. If you'd like to get involved or learn more about partnership opportunities, please reach out to Beatriz Gomez at waterfestival@wwcfg.com or visit our website at www.wwcfg.com .

We can't wait to see what we'll achieve together in 2026!





**For more information
about the festival or
this report contact**

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