

## **Good Enough To Share Chalk on the Walk**

### **Introduction**

In 2012 Raystown Lake (NAB) hosted its first annual *Chalk on the Walk*, a sidewalk chalk-art competition to promote the water safety mission. The Corps of Engineers and the National Art Education Association (NAEA, Indiana University of Pennsylvania Chapter) partnered to offer this event to the public, free of charge.

### **Summary**

Sidewalk chalk-art is not new, but growing in popularity. Exhibitions and competitions are held around the country and attract first-time to professionally paid chalk-artists. We were introduced to this idea by one of our Seasonal Rangers who hosted a *Chalk on the Walk* event as a college fundraiser.

Our objective was to raise water safety awareness, not money. As such, *Chalk on the Walk* was sponsored and available to the public free of charge. Registered visitors were provided all materials and supplies and tasked with creating a water-safety themed piece of sidewalk chalk-art. Prizes were awarded to entries that best promoted water safety awareness.

There are two aspects that made this event a stand-out success: our ability to partner, and the interpretive processes used.

### **Partnership Aspect**

Key to our partnership with NAEA was a contact we had with their local Chapter, who was also a Seasonal Ranger at the project. However, the same results could also be achieved with other partner options: your local Arts Council, Friends organization, College or High School, Marina / Concessionaires, etc.

Because of our partnership, there were dual objectives for this event. For the Corps, our objective was to raise water safety awareness. For NAEA their objectives were to promote the Chapter, art education (in this case water safety), and to showcase public art.

Our roles were based on our available resources. The Corps provided the location, art supplies, promotional materials, and oversight. NAEA provided volunteers who worked before the event with promotions, and organizing sponsors, funding, and prizes. NAEA volunteers also worked during the event coordinating registration, judging and awards.

As anyone in the NRM community and especially the Water Safety program can tell you, resources are scarce. It is important to point out that a partner is not required for a *Chalk on the Walk* event, but in our case they made the event a true success. NAEA was able to provide the missing resources; specifically the incentive for visitors to participate (i.e. prizes) and volunteers to thoroughly organize and host the event and competition.

### **Interpretation Aspect**

The success of Chalk on the Walk was measured by not only attendance, but also its ability to deliver on our interpretive objectives. Our interpretive objectives were for visitors would learn about water safety, feel that it was important and ultimately play safe around water. This event incorporated several (Tilden's) principles to fully realize our interpretive objectives:

- It was relatable. Sidewalk chalk art is fun, active, social, imaginative, etc. Visitors were attracted to the event because it related to their vacation at the lake.

- It revealed meaning. Visitors were tasked with creating a water safety message that would stand out for its ability to be evocative, in addition to being informational. This meaning was internalized by the artists in the process.
- It was art. Visitors were tasked with creating a message that was creative and attractive.
- It was provocative. Visitors were tasked with creating a message that would motivate others to play safe around water safety. As a result, the provocation was internalized to the artist.
- It addressed the whole person. In the process of creating, visitors related their experiences at home and on vacation into their message.
- It addressed children & adults. The activity was just as applicable to the children drawing as it was for their parents and families who joined-in alongside them. Each, applying their own ideas and creativity.

A unique aspect to this event was its ability to connect with multiple audiences. First, the obvious, were the visitors who entered the contest and created a message. The second were the passing visitors who observed or judged the messages. Although the experience of each audience was different, the interpretive objectives remained consistent.

We wanted to judge the success of our program on more than attendance numbers. We evaluated our program on our ability to deliver the interpretive objectives, stated previously. To evaluate we used several techniques, in addition to tracking numbers. These techniques included:

- Direct audience feedback: both audiences were asking questions, sharing insight, volunteering to participate, making positive comments, etc.
- Direct measure of behavior: both audiences preferred to participate in the event over other planned activities (swimming, sunbathing, boating, picnicking, etc.)
- Observation of attention: Visitors were thoroughly engrossed creating or judging the messages, with little break in that attention.
- Length of participation: On average, visitors spent at least an hour creating messages. Some visitors spent 4+ hours on their artwork. Some judges also spent upwards of an hour evaluating the messages.
- Unobtrusive measure of interest: This included observing the behavior of visitors throughout the event. Examples included visitors (adults and children) with chalk on their arms, legs, feet, hands and faces who were too busy creating a message to care about cleaning it off. Or, the amount of “inspiration materials” (defined in logistics below) taken from the registration table. Or, the number of “fan favorite” judging slips handed out to beachgoers versus the slips returned to the judging box. Or, the family who arrived by boat and were so busy participating in the event, they failed to remove their lifejackets- even after 30 minutes after being on land.

## **Logistics**

Listed below is the logistical information needed for hosting a similar event. Keep in mind that as planned we knew there was a good possibility that Chalk on the Walk would become an annual event. It would be very easy to adapt this event into something less involved.

## Rules

(See exhibit I) These rules were adapted from similar events. We included a photography release to insure photographs could be used in future promotions.

## Judging

We designed two forms of judging, a panel of pre-selected judges and ballots for fan favorite. Our panel of volunteer judges included representatives from the Corps, NAEA and the local arts council. Judges were asked to compare art in the following age categories: 6-12, 13-17 and 18+; according to the criteria listed on a

judging form (exhibit II). First and second prizes were awarded to each age category for the artists with the highest scores.

For fan favorite, event organizers walked the beach area inviting visitors to view the artwork and cast their ballot for fan favorite. Ballots were returned to the registration table where they were tabulated. The artist with the most votes overall received a separate prize. Fan favorite ballots gave visitors who may not choose to participate as an artist the opportunity to be involved in the event by voting.

### Promotions

We began promoting three weeks ahead of Chalk on the Walk. The following methods were used:

- Press Release (exhibit III)
- Fliers posted at bulletin boards, offices and local businesses. (exhibit IV)
- Advertisement in our weekly campground newsletter which is issued to all incoming campers
- A Facebook event was created where volunteers, contestants, and media could reference event information. (<http://tiny.cc/raystownchalk>)
- TV appearance on local news
- Banners and chalk art placed around the beach during the event to attract visitors to register

### Supplies

The following items were purchased by the Corps of Engineers in support of the water safety mission.

- Chalk. The quality of the artwork requires a high-pigment chalk. Children's "chalk buckets" are not advised as the pigmentation and colors are very poor (excluding the Crayola brand noted below). The following brands were recommended by NAEA, based on their experience with similar events:
  - Crayola Sidewalk Chalk – available at Staples and similar retailers. Price is approximately \$10 for 52 pack. Basic colors available, pigmentation is moderate.
  - Colorations Stubby Chalk – available at Discount School Supply. Price is \$22 for 160 pack. Basic colors available, pigmentation is good. Pieces are about half the size of your typical children's sidewalk chalk.
  - Eternity Arts Chalk – available only at Eternity Arts. Price is higher than most. This is professional quality chalk with all colors available. We only supplemented missing colors (black and violet) or popular colors (blue and orange) with this supplier. It should be noted this chalk is soft and is used quickly.
- Brushes & water. Cheap brushes are recommended to use water when spreading and blending colors evenly. Kids and new chalk-artists had fun experimenting with the brushes and it reduced the amount of chalk needed.

We recommend the following supplies as well:

- Registration table
- Forms: volunteer agreements, registration form, judging ballots
- Pens
- Camera
- Water coolers & cups (for drinking water and art supplies)
- Measuring wheel or tape measure to mark off drawing spaces
- Reference materials: water safety posters, coloring books, clip art, etc. for artists to gain inspiration from.
- Promotional materials: flyers, banners, etc.
- "water safety bags" for all child participants
- Prizes (see sponsors below)

## Set-Up

Before the event:

- Section off the entry spaces or “cells” and number them. We used 3x3 foot spaces for competition artists. Smaller 2x2 foot spaces were also marked for children under 5 to use as exhibition space.
- Set-up a registration table. Someone must be available at this table throughout the event to register artists, answer questions, manage supplies, distribute and accept voting ballots, etc.
- Place banners or draw directions on pavement in the area directing visitors to the registration table

During the event

- Monitor event to insure rules are followed
- Register incoming artists – we allowed visitors to show up anytime during the event as long as their entry was completed by 4PM.
- Encourage “fan favorite” voting and track ballots

During panel judging

- Insure artists have stopped their work at the same time
- Gather the judges together and explain the judging form and criteria. *Give them a limited amount of time to complete judging; otherwise they might be there for hours.*
- Insure judges limit their discussions between each other and the artists once judging begins
- Gather forms and tabulate winners.

After the event

- Contact the winners – we didn’t require artists to be present to win because of the length of the event
- Tabulate numbers and measure the effectiveness of the event.
- Distribute a press release announcing winners and thanking sponsors

## Sponsors

NAEA contacted local businesses, agencies, and concessionaires to sponsor prize packages. Donations included money, coupons, art supplies, artwork, recreation equipment, etc. Sponsors were recognized on promotions and at the event.

## **Results**

The event successfully accomplished its objective by raising water safety awareness amongst our visitors. In addition to the evaluation techniques listed under interpretation above, other notable results included:

- The 18-35 male demographic is identified as the group at highest risk of a water fatality. This event effectively engaged this demographic and we suspect that as the event grows experienced artists who also fall into this demographic will increasingly participate.
- 127 artists participated with the following distribution: 63 participants age 0-5, 40 age 6-12, 11 age 13-17, and 13 age 18+
- 93 of the 120 fan favorite ballots were completed and returned
- 9 volunteers were involved in the event
- Total direct interpretive contacts equal 229
- Many visitors viewed the event, but did not vote. As such, we also recorded the event as 1 indirect interpretive contact.

## **Exhibits**

I – Contest Rules & Registration Form

II – Judging Form

III – Press Release

IV – Flyer

V – Photographs

VI – POC information

EXHIBIT I: Contest Rules

National Art Education Association & the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**CHALK THE WALK  
AT RAYSTOWN LAKE**

(please print, all information must be provided in order to compete)

Cell Number

(Office use only)

Artist Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Artist Agrees to the following rules:

1. Competition is open to ages 6+. 5 years of age and younger may participate as an exhibition artist.
2. Artists are limited to an assigned 3x3 foot space for competition. Organizers reserve the right to remove submissions which are incomplete, paltry, irrelevant or otherwise make poor use of competition space as they deem necessary to allow for more dedicated work.
3. Submissions may only be produced between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
4. Art must incorporate a theme which promotes water safety awareness.
5. Artists may use source material as inspiration. Stencils are not permitted.
6. No profane, commercial, political or otherwise offensive material. Organizers reserve the right to disqualify and/or remove any material they deem offensive.
7. Chalk is available free of charge on a first come, first serve basis but supplies are limited. Artist may bring other media or supplies and must be approved at registration. Water is allowed for blending/filling in area.
8. Artist agrees to allow organizers and media to photograph the artist and/or their work for publicity purposes.
9. Artist will be courteous, friendly and helpful to fellow artists and members of the public.

**A suggested entrance donation of \$10 to benefit NAEA is appreciated!**

The undersigned acknowledges and hereby forever discharges, releases and holds harmless the National Art Education Association and the US Army Corps of Engineers from any loss or damage to my person or property while participating in this event. By signing, the applicant certifies that all information provided is true and correct.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Chalk the Walk Schedule**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Details</u>
9:00 a.m.	Registration opens	Registration table located near Lighthouse snack bar
10:00 a.m.	Competition / Exhibit spaces open	Located along upper walkway, see registration table for exact location for each artist
12:00 p.m.	"Fan Favorite" judging begins	public invited to judge work in progress (closes at 6:00)
4:00 p.m.	Competition / Exhibit spaces close	All artist work must stop
5:00 p.m.	Formal judging	
6:00-7:00 p.m.	Judging ends; winners announced shortly thereafter. Winners will be contacted following the event; artists need not be present to win. Prizes may be claimed from the Visitor Center located in Seven Points.	

**EXHIBIT II: judging forms**

**Raystown Lake Chalk on the Walk  
Fan Favorite Form**

relevance to water safety theme ■ originality  
(was it copied) ■ creativity ■ technique ■ use of  
space ■ overall appearance

Based on the criteria above,  
my favorite cell is number:

Cell No.

**Raystown Lake Chalk on the Walk  
Judge's Form**

Cell No. \_\_\_\_\_

Age Group \_\_\_\_\_

	(poor)	Scale			(excellent)
	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance to theme	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Originality	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Technique	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Use of space	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Overall appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>				
additional comments					<b>TOTAL</b>



# NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:  
Date: July 31, 2012  
Release # 12-22

Contact: Melissa Bean  
Park Ranger  
814-658-6812  
[melissa.j.beam@usace.army.mil](mailto:melissa.j.bean@usace.army.mil)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Raystown hosts sidewalk art contest

**RAYSTOWN LAKE, Pa.** — Visitors are invited to “Chalk the Walk” at Seven Points Beach on August 11, 2012. The Indiana University of Pennsylvania chapter of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) and the Corps of Engineers are hosting a sidewalk art contest to allow visitors to show off their art skills while promoting water safety awareness.

The contest is open to the public and is free of charge. All ages may enter. Registration begins at 9 a.m. Entries can be drawn anytime between 10 a.m. through 4 p.m. Winners will be contacted following judging; artists need not be present at judging to win.

Prizes will be awarded in the following categories: ages 6-12, 13-17, and 18 and up. First place prizes will be awarded to those entries that are most creative and effective in promoting water safety awareness. Additional prizes will be awarded to fan favorite. Exhibition entries and participation awards are available to children under six years of age.

Chalk and basic art supplies will be provided. Artists may use their own materials, upon approval. In the event of rain the contest will be held on September 3, 2012. For a full list of contest rules call event organizer Olivia Mays at (814) 658-6809 or go online at <http://tiny.cc/raystownchalk>.



Artists compete in a similar Chalk the Walk event at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. This will be the first Chalk the Walk event at Raystown.

For more information, visit <http://raystown.nab.usace.army.mil/> or call (814) 658-3405.

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# Chalk on the Walk

at Raystown Lake  
(Seven Points Beach)

Saturday, August 1st

10am - 4pm

Judging 5pm-6pm

All ages are welcome to enter contest.  
Free of charge but donations for NAEA  
are greatly appreciated. Prizes are available  
for ages: 6-12, 13-17, and 18+. Participation  
prizes are for ages 0-5. The theme for the  
contest will be:

**Water Safety**

**Hosted by IUP's Student Chapter:  
National Art Education Association**





**Artists of all ages complete their entries for Chalk on The Walk at Raystown Lake.**



**A young visitor is so involved in his artwork at Chalk on the Walk at Raystown Lake he forgot to take off his lifejacket!**



Examples of some of the artwork produced at Chalk on the Walk

**EXHIBIT V – POC for this event**



**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Raystown Lake**

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