



Introduction to Geography Awareness Week, 2010

FRESHWATER!

Geography Awareness Week is **November 14-20**, the goal of which is to bring attention to geography by focusing on the global freshwater crisis. **We want you to get involved!**

The purpose of an annually celebrated Geography Awareness Week is to draw attention to what geography is, why it is important, and how American citizens can ensure access to a robust geography education that prepares them to participate in global social and economic activities, and to make decisions regarding people, places and environments. Established in 1987 by a joint resolution of Congress, Geography Awareness Week helps to get out the word about the relevance and importance of Geographic literacy.

Geography is the study of places and the relationships between people and their environments. Geographers explore both the physical properties of the Earth and the human cultures spread across it. They also examine how human culture interacts with the natural environment, and the way the natural environment can have an impact on people. Geography seeks to understand where things are found, why they are there, and how they develop and change over time.

FRESHWATER!

The Earth is **71%** water. **97%** of that water is in the ocean. That leaves only **3%** as **freshwater** for all of the plants, animals, and humans that use it.

BUT WAIT, there's more, or rather less: **98%** of the Earth's freshwater is locked up in **glaciers** or deep within its crust. This means that **less than 1% of ALL water on Earth is available for use.**

Our glaciers are melting due to climate change, and our aquifers are being mined faster than they can recharge.

Most of the water we can still easily access is being **polluted** and requires extensive and expensive treatment before we can use it.

The average amount of water a **family** in Asia and Africa uses in one day is a little less than **5 gallons**. An **individual** in the United States uses an average of **100 gallons of water a day**.

In some regions in Asia and Africa, typically a woman in the family is responsible for walking to the nearest source of water and carrying it all back. The average distance she will have to walk and carry water is **3.7 miles a day**.

Every drop of water is part of the global system. Taking care of your water means preserving it for others at home, around the world, and for the future.

Geography Awareness Week 2010 explores the world through examining the state of our planet's freshwater. Test your knowledge of freshwater with our trivia questions or host an event dedicated to freshwater. Check out the freshwater books and videos on our list of resources or build a giant, free, freshwater map. Get involved in celebrating freshwater and in educating others about the fragile state of our most precious resource.

Getting involved is as easy as **1-2-3**.

- 1.) Choose a freshwater event or activity from the list.
- 2.) Plan your event using the step-by-step guides.
- 3.) Publicize your event to get out the word about the freshwater crisis.

Go to GeographyAwarenessWeek.org after hosting your event during Geography Awareness Week to report back to National Geographic about how it went!