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**CONTACT:**  
Kelley O'Brien 404.463.3259  
or  
Grace Trimble 404.463.3192

## **Forsyth County Student Wins Water Essay Contest**

Paul Weiler, a student at Liberty Middle School, is the Forsyth county and overall winner in the third annual Clean Water Campaign/waterSmart Essay Contest. Weiler, a 7th grader received a \$100 cash prize. Commission Chairman Jack Conway presented his award Monday on November 8, 2004.

In honoring Weiler with his achievements, Chairman Conway went over the history of Forsyth County's commitment to providing clean water to residents by saying, "In April of 2000, Forsyth County opened one of the first water treatment plants in the state of Georgia that uses ozone to disinfect the water. During the treatment process, ozone is bubbled up through the raw water, creating cleaner, safer water. Fewer than five plants in the state of Georgia are believed to be using this new, state-of-the-art treatment process." Representatives from Keep Forsyth Beautiful, Jennifer Szabo and Karen Gaspar, presented Weiler with a photo from a Rivers Alive cleanup event that he conducted with his scout troop. Szabo said that Weiler and his father worked diligently last year to have a successful Rivers Alive Event. Kelley O'Brien, from the Clean Water Campaign, presented Weiler with a poster size version of his essay and said, "Paul's essay illustrated small steps that we can all take at home to improve water quality." O'Brien also strongly encouraged that the class compete in the essay contest next October.

The annual essay contest is held to encourage children and parents to address the growing need to improve water quality and conservation efforts in Georgia. Students researched and shared their thoughts on why conserving water and preventing water pollution is important for the future of their river, lakes and streams. The main goal of the essay contest was to encourage students to create inventive solutions to water conservation and water quality in metro Atlanta.

"We need to get people to pay attention to the water problem. People need to know what's going on or they can't help the problem," Weiler said in his winning essay. "We must continue to educate people about conservation and the dangers of pollution. If we don't act to preserve our water now, what will future generations do?"

The contest was open to sixth, seventh and eighth graders in Bartow, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding, Rockdale and Walton Counties. Winners were selected in each county and an overall winner was selected from the county winners. County winners were awarded a Clean Water Campaign / waterSmart certificate given by their respective elected official at an award presentation. To view the essays go to the Campaign's website ([www.cleanwatercampaign.com](http://www.cleanwatercampaign.com)) and click on the essay contest link.

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In honor of the essay contest, Governor Sonny Purdue declared the month of October 2004 as WATERSMART MONTH in a proclamation given to the Campaigns. In the proclamation, he said, "I encourage all citizens to promote the importance of year-round water conservation and pollution prevention for the future of Georgia's natural resources.

**About the Clean Water Campaign**

The **Clean Water Campaign** is a cooperative, multi-agency public education initiative spearheaded by local governments in metro Atlanta, supported by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District and managed by the Atlanta Regional Commission. Its mission is to build awareness of water quality problems and solutions in the Atlanta region.

**About waterSmart**

*The waterSmart program was initiated by the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority to educate metro area residents about "state of the science" methods for conserving water while maintaining beautiful lawns and landscapes. waterSmart tips were developed in conjunction with the Georgia Water Wise Council and the Cobb County Extension Service.*

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