

WaterBytes – The Organization PeakWater.org

*Recorded by Sean Whitehead
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Hi everybody and welcome back to WaterBytes. I am here to talk about an organization that is not all that well known, PeakWater.org. This organization was founded and created by Jenna Cavelle. Jenna is a college student, just like me, and she now attends the University of California-Berkeley. In the “Water in Society” class led by Dr. Guertin that I am a part of, we got a chance to learn about sites such as Three Avocados and Water.org. The founders of these sites decided to create their organizations because they personally witnessed countries and villages that had serious issues involving water. Just like those other organizations, Jenna created PeakWater.org when she saw a glaring need to improve the access to water for many poor villages during her community college trip to Southeast Asia.

PeakWater.org is a website that features a collection of various news articles that range from how to filter water using banana peels, to talking about severe droughts in East Africa. On the website, you can access articles that talk about water in the Poles, “Eurasia,” Australia, Africa, and even our very own country. Having access to articles involving water issues from all over the globe gives the viewer a wide range of topics to read about. Although PeakWater.org does have cool and interesting articles, such as the banana peel one, it also has a very serious cause that it wants to promote. Jenna says that PeakWater.org’s main goals are to “find conservation solutions,” and to “promote water literacy.”

While exchanging e-mails with Jenna, she expressed her opinion that she believes that the world's main issue with water is accessibility. Jenna notes that there is plenty of water around the world, her main problem though, being that the water does not make its way to everyone. She finds it extremely perturbing that people with money can have access to water, while people who do not have money have to struggle to survive. During Jenna's trip to Cambodia, she saw the Tonle Sap basin, which is a vital water source for many poor villages. She actually witnessed villagers urinating and defecating in this basin, and this is what made Jenna realize that something had to be done. The thought that the water that people had to use to drink and clean dishes with was also being used as a bathroom really made an impact on Jenna. Jenna is not focused on just foreign issues though, but she is also concerned with some domestic water problems. Being that she attends Cal-Berkeley, she is relatively familiar with the Los Angeles area. She knows that Los Angeles retrieves their water from a Sacramento delta, meaning the water travels hundreds of miles to get to Los Angeles. To Jenna, this is a dire problem due to the risk of an earthquake potentially ruining the pipelines, giving the chance for a major dilemma.

PeakWater.org is also trying to tackle another domestic water issue, which is a desalination plant being built in Santa Cruz, California. PeakWater.org believes that the art of desalination plants is one that is not yet mastered and these plants will ultimately end up doing more damage than good.

Jenna is currently doing research and trying to "find conservation solutions," and to "promote water literacy" in Indonesia. PeakWater.org has

actually raised enough money to buy a water well and water filters for some villages in Indonesia. PeakWater.org would like to accomplish more feats like this, and Jenna would ultimately like to see PeakWater.org be able to raise more money for other projects. So far PeakWater.org has teamed up with the director of the video [Blue Gold: World Water Wars](#) in hopes that this will help to spread the word of both water news and PeakWater.org. The volunteers on Jenna's staff often volunteer for various other organizations as well, which also helps get PeakWater.org's name out there. Although Jenna is extremely proud of the accomplishments she has brought to these villages, she also would like to see PeakWater.org expand even further. Currently, PeakWater.org's staff includes about a dozen people, most of which are students at either Cal-Berkeley or Cal-Santa Cruz. Being that they are college students, they lack two crucial resources that would help promote their organization: time and money. They do not have a large budget for advertising, so this is where our listeners can help.

PeakWater.org gains most of their interest through their Peak Water Facebook page and their Twitter account, which can be followed at [@peakwater](#).

PeakWater.org currently gets around 150,000 hits per month, but that number can sky rocket with the help of the Penn State community. The more that we help spread PeakWater.org's name, the more that awareness is going to be raised about the lack of accessibility of water, which means that more money can be raised to help combat these issues, and PeakWater.org can expand. For more information on PeakWater.org, and to check out the articles that are

updated daily by the staff, visit www.peakwater.org, and I would also like to thank Jenna Cavelle for donating her valuable time in answering my questions.

Supplemental Links:

1. www.peakwater.org
2. www.bluegold-worldwaterwars.com
3. www.waterfootprint.org
4. www.worldwater.org
5. www.harvestingrainwater.com
6. www.circleofblue.org

References:

Peak Water

http://peakwater.org/?page_id=3

The websites "About" page. Accessed April 7, 2011.