

# Whitehall Middle School GreenScreens Film Festival

Connecting students, the White Lake community, and the environment through film



## Community Partners

- WMGLSI
- The Howmet Playhouse
- Community Foundation for Muskegon County
- Collin Zeerip, Heritage Farms in New Era
- Dan Gorman, WDS Food Service Director
- Lynn DeVlieg, School Garden Advocate
- Film judges—Tameka Dandridge, (US Fish & Wildlife Service), Elizabeth Christiansen (JOIDES Resolution), and Robb Zoellmer (WMGLSI Field Coordinator)



West Michigan  
Great Lakes  
Stewardship  
Initiative



## Our Project

**“The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it.”—  
Sir Robert Swan**

When 8th grade students at Whitehall Middle School learned about the environmental history of White Lake, as well as ongoing threats to the Great Lakes, this quote inspired them to take action! After conducting water quality testing and stream studies on six tributaries of White Lake, they researched the chemical pollution and habitat degradation that led to the lake being listed as a U.S. EPA Great Lakes Area of Concern in the 1980s. Through field trips, community inventories, mapping exercises and research on restoration work conducted by community activists and organizations, students learned more about the issues that affect our watershed, as well as other communities within our state. Armed with this new knowledge, students not only created films to explore these issues in depth, but they also planned a film festival for our middle school and community.

The 2nd annual GreenScreens Film Festival took place on May 5th, 2015 at the historic Howmet Playhouse in Whitehall. This free community event included a screening of the documentary *Food, Inc.*, which was selected by the film festival student planning team after considering 10 professional environmental films. In addition, the top four student films—as decided by our film jury—were announced and screened as well. From the dangers of plastic microbeads in the Great Lakes, to the PBB contamination of livestock in the 1970s, our student films covered a wide range of environmental topics. Over 60 top quality student films were created by our young environmental stewards during their English and science classes. By giving our students the freedom to select their own topic of interest, digital filmmaking program, and filmmaking team, their enthusiasm and engagement were very high. We look forward to developing this film festival into something that in future years will involve middle school students from other schools in Muskegon County, and that attendance by community members continues to grow.

## Whitehall Middle School 2014-15

### School Year Team:

- 160 Students
- 7 Teachers
- 8th grade English, Science, and Math classes



*Learning more about the environmental issues facing our community!*





Filmmaker David Ruck (*This is Not a Chocolate Factory*, and *I Want to be an Astronaut*) speaks to our 8th grade students about telling a story through film.

## Learning Objectives: Students will....

- Learn about the environmental history of the White Lake area.
- Learn how to conduct water quality tests.
- Conduct stream studies of the Little Manistee River and tributaries of White Lake.
- Raise Chinook salmon in our classroom tank to better understand their role in a healthy watershed.
- Research and create a short film about an environmental issue or event pertaining to the Great Lakes region.
- Learn how to tell a story and connect with people through filmmaking.

# 2014-2015 School Year Project Timeline

