

VMS 'Carp Control' Team's Success Is No Surprise To Their Teacher

Many people think the Asian carp is funny when they see videos of the flying fish hit boaters on the Missouri River. But Natasha Gault's Vermillion Middle School students know it's no laughing matter. They know the flying fish pose a threat to the Missouri River they call home.

The students have gained not only the attention of the Vermillion city and school leaders, but also state and national officials.

The Vermillion students are state winners in the Samsung Solver for Tomorrow Contest, which provides more than \$2 million in technology for schools. Students are challenged to show how science, technology, engineering and mathematics will improve their local community.

Gault admits she's not totally surprised by her students' success.

"Honestly, I didn't doubt it at all. I hoped for this, and tried to arrange every opportunity to have them be in that position, and while I'm pleased, I'm not surprised," she said. "These students are capable of things we can't even imagine."

As South Dakota's state winner, Gault and two VMS students, Sagarika Ghosh and Ethan Simmons, traveled to Austin, TX, to present their project at the SXSWedu Educational Conference. National awards will be presented to the top five teams during this conference. The top five teams receive an additional \$140,000 and a trip to Washington, D.C. for an awards ceremony. The results were not available at press time.



Vermillion Middle School eighth-graders who have been making public presentations about their Asian carp control research include Shelby Brady, Brooklyn Kirsch, Mady Gilbertson, Ethan Simmons and Sagarika Ghosh, who traveled to Austin, TX, Wyatt Waage, Stian Olson, Shay Peck, Madelyn Zevecke, Kinsey James, and Emily Rolfe. Part of this group is pictured above. (Photo courtesy of Vermillion School District)

A serious problem

The students decided to focus on the Asian carp, also known as the Silver carp or the Bighead carp.

Without action, the Asian carp — an invasive species — could drastically change the Missouri River in the Yankton and Vermillion areas. This fast-growing "super species" has been discovered on a stretch of river near Vermillion.

The students have researched and collected testimony on the Asian carp's threat to the Missouri River. The students also proposed viable solutions to the problem.

So far conservation groups and officials have kept the Asian carp below Gavins Point Dam. But even the presence of one carp above the dam near Yankton would change the upstream river forever.

"Virtually every part of the state is somehow touched by the Missouri River. Right now, we're fortunate because the Gavins Point Dam is currently preventing their (Asian carp) migration,"

VMS continued on page 19

Yankton's Largest Furniture Store

Over 40,000 sq. ft. showroom!

Best pricing with over 400 store buying power!

www.hatchfurniture.com
hatch
 FURNITURE
 & FLOORING
 Downtown Yankton & Sioux City

109 East Third, Yankton, SD
 605-665-4416 • 800-798-4663
 M-F 10-6, Sat. 10-5,
 Evenings by Appointment
 413 Pierce St., Sioux City, IA
 712-252-7750

