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**waterSmartSM Honors 12 Cobb County Students
in Seventh Annual Allatoona Ally Artist Challenge**

- Talent of local students on display at Allatoona Ally Autograph Party on Feb. 7 -

MARIETTA, Ga. (Jan. 27, 2012) – The Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority (CCMWA) and Cobb County Water System applaud the winners of the Seventh Annual Allatoona Ally Artist Challenge. The top 12 drawings will be featured in a coloring book and a ceremony will be held to honor the artists on Tuesday, Feb. 7, at the Cobb County Central Library at 5 p.m. The winners will be sworn in as Junior Water Deputies and a Lake Allatoona representative will speak to students and their families about water conservation.

The Artist Challenge called for Cobb County fourth- and fifth-grade students to draw Ally, the scaly-but-lovable ambassador for Lake Allatoona, conserving water in her home and community. Nearly 750 students from 20 Cobb County elementary schools participated. This year's winners include:

Gannon Brody, 4th grade, Due West Elementary

Lexi Crawford, 5th grade, Varner Elementary

Sarah Ferroggiaro, 4th grade, Mt. Bethel Elementary

Jessica Huff, 5th grade, Pitner Elementary

Sahian Jardon, 5th grade, Green Acres Elementary

Sydney Marcuzzi, 5th grade, Shallowford Falls Elementary

Carolina Meireles, 5th grade, Kemp Elementary

Madison Nicholas, 4th grade, East Valley Elementary

Jael Ramirez, 5th grade, Russell Elementary

Daniel Rodriguez, 5th grade, Dowell Elementary

Keely White, 5th grade, Shallowford Falls Elementary

Stephanie Yao, 5th grade, Mountain View Elementary

“The Allatoona Ally Artist Challenge saw a tremendous increase in participation this year,” says Becky Mixon, program director of waterSmart. “The creativity and dedication to water conservation shown by Cobb’s young artists is a testament to our teachers, parents and leaders.”

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Stephanie Yao, the winner of this year's contest, reminded citizens to collect water from rain to use during times of drought. Her drawing received the highest score from judges and will be showcased on the front cover of the coloring book.

A panel of judges consisting of prominent community members carefully selected the top illustrations to be printed in the coloring book. waterSmart's 2012 judges included:

- Chris Holcomb – Weekend Meteorologist, 11 Alive
- Donna Lowry – Education Reporter, 11 Alive
- Chris Purvis – Army Corps of Engineers Park Ranger, Lake Allatoona
- Walter Reeves – Georgia Gardener, Host of "The Lawn and Garden Show" on 750 WSB-AM
- Angela Seckington – Promotions Manager, Radio Disney

Each winning artist will be featured in the coloring book and will receive a poster-sized version of his or her drawing.

"The artists were able to come up with some very clever conservation techniques," says Kathy Nguyen, senior project manager at Cobb County Water System. "We look forward to sharing their designs and ingenuity with the community."

The coloring book will be distributed throughout the community and electronically at www.watersmart.net.

About waterSmart

The waterSmartSM program was initiated by the CCMWA in 2000 to educate their service area residents of all ages about the importance of indoor and outdoor water conservation and to help encourage sustainable, year-round conservation, regardless of climate conditions. The CCMWA is in its eleventh year of providing the waterSmart program to the community. For more information on water conservation and waterSmart, visit www.waterSmart.net.

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