



\*\*\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\*\*\*

**March 24, 2006**

*—In conjunction with Library of Congress Center for the Book  
and in celebration of National Poetry Month and Earth Day—*

## ***11<sup>th</sup> Annual River of Words Youth Poetry & Art Contest Winners Announced***

**Atlanta, Georgia** -- The Department of Natural Resources, Water Protection Branch Outreach is pleased to announce that 13 Georgia students have been honored through the National River of Words program as National Finalists and one has won a Grand Prize in the annual River of Words Youth Poetry and Art Contest. This year over 80,000 entries were received from around the world.

River of Words is a non-profit organization that conducts the annual international contest for young people in conjunction with The Library of Congress Center for the Book. ROW was founded by U.S Poet Laureate, Robert Hass (1995-97) and writer Pamela Michael, who felt it necessary to connect students to their watershed and imaginations through art and poetry. It is designed to nurture respect and understanding of the natural world. Students in grades kindergarten through 12 are first encouraged to do a watershed study and learn their "ecological address". They hone their observational skills and learn language and systems associated with the area they are studying. Next, the students express through poetry and art their own place in this space.

Entries from Georgia will be judged again for the State River of Words Awards. They will be honored in a ceremony held in May. The winning Georgia state and national entries are reproduced in a printed journal and displayed in 2 traveling exhibits. One exhibit is managed by the GA Center for the Book and sent to libraries throughout the state. The second exhibit is available for free checkout to educators, festivals, conferences, nature centers, and other interested parties.

### ***Art Grand Prize:***

Category II (Grades 3-6) Kieran McElvaney, 9, Alpharetta, Georgia  
Kieran McElvaney is one of eight National Grand Prize Winners to be honored April 22 at a public ceremony at The Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

***Poetry National Finalists:***

Ann Fowler, age 16, Buford, Georgia

Ting Gou, age 16, Lawrenceville, Georgia

DeZaun Olive, age 16, Buford, Georgia

Cherishma Patel, age 13, Cumming, Georgia

Taylor Volkman, age 17, Suwanee, Georgia

***Art National Finalists:***

Andrew Christie, age 8, Grayson, Georgia

Alex Jones, age 17, Atlanta, Georgia

Jennie Lee, age 14, Fayetteville, Georgia

Vincent Owens, age 17, Lithonia, Georgia

Zach Pitcher, age 10, Martinez, Georgia

Julie Swerdlow, age 17, Atlanta, Georgia

Mary Van Wert, age 14, Peachtree City, Georgia

Maia Wells, age 17, Decatur, Georgia