



NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS ENVIROTHON

"Fostering Environmentally Conscious, Decision Making Young Adults"



THE ENVIROTHON CONCEPT

Young minds love a challenge. The idea of matching wits with their peers excites and inspires teenagers.

Established as a competitive, multi-disciplinary, problem-solving, natural resource event for high school students to challenge their environmental knowledge, the Envirothon program encourages students to actively pursue natural resource information. Thousands of high school students have dared to test their knowledge of the natural world and the environment. They become wiser and more concerned about the environment through the education they receive during this competition.

Team sponsors and coaches train and test students in five natural resource area: Forestry, Soils, Aquatics, Wildlife and a current environmental issue such as, Wetlands Management, Groundwater, Alternative Energy, etc.

HISTORY OF THE ENVIROTHON

The Envirothon began in Pennsylvania in 1979. By 1998, nearly forty states and provinces in the United States and Canada had initiated programs. Each state and province sends their top team to the Canon Envirothon international competition during the summer. Today, over forty states and eight provinces compete at the international level. Illinois joined the competition in 1995.



Conservation Districts in every state help sponsor the state competition. The international contest is primarily sponsored by Canon and is

ENVIROTHON OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Envirothon competition are twofold: To test the environmental knowledge and understanding of high school students about state resource issues and to cultivate within students, across the state, a desire to learn more about their natural world.



THE ENVIROTHON PROGRAM

Conservation districts' educational coordinators, district employees or Illinois Envirothon Committee members, identify teachers or advisors in both public and private high schools, in 4-H or other environmental clubs who want to work with the Envirothon program. The advisors may be science or social studies teachers, school administrators or club leaders who have an interest in youth and their impact on environmental issues and concerns.

Local natural resource professionals, such as foresters, soil scientists, wildlife experts, fisheries specialists and others provide technical assistance and resource materials to participating Envirothon teams. The team members continuously study their materials throughout the year in order to prepare for the state competition.

Illinois Conservation Districts' are broken up into 16 Land Use Councils. Each Land Use Council sets up local, area-level competitions and one team advances to the state level. The state level is usually held in early May of each year.





Students challenge their knowledge in a problem-solving competition that entails “hands on” involvement with natural resource information.

The state competition is held over a period of two days. As a team, they complete 5 written field station test, which cover the 5 study areas. In addition to the tests, the team must give an oral presentation where they form possible solutions to a realistic environmental problem dealing with the current issue.

The overall winner of the state competition advances to the Canon Envirothon, which is hosted by a different state or province each year. The Canon Envirothon is a five-day event where the team members not only partake in an intense competition, but they have the privilege of going on field trips, where they see local sites and points of interest. The team members are also provided with other environmental and social activities such as campfires, hikes, dances, ice cream socials and the very popular Trading Session.

SO, WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

Envirothon teams, throughout the school year, take an in-depth look at wildlife, aquatics, forestry, soils and current environmental issues. The spirit of competition, which motivates athletes, drives successful businesses and develops new ideas, also motivates young citizens. In competing in the Envirothon competition, not only do students learn about their state’s natural resources, problems and solutions, they also learn about team building, communication and conservation partnerships.

The payoff for natural resource professionals is a more aware and concerned citizenry in the future. The environment can only benefit from this educational effort. Although Envirothon competitors are restricted to students in grades 9 through 12, there is nothing in the by-laws that prevents school districts from establishing an environmental contest for all grade levels as training for senior high competitions.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

To obtain more information regarding the Envirothon, contact your local Soil & Water Conservation District office. You may also get information on The Canon National Envirothon at: www.envirothon.org

Conservation District personnel and Committee members welcome your involvement to help make environmental education and the Envirothon competition an integral part of your community.



Please feel free to contact any of the committee members listed to answer any of your questions on the Northeastern Illinois Envirothon.

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