



PENNSYLVANIA ENVIROTHON

extend a natural challenge!

What Is The Envirothon All About?

It's about you!

The future of the earth depends on the students of today...that's **you!** Soon, you will be making decisions like what detergent to buy, what kind of car to drive, and whether to use paper or plastic bags at the grocery store. All of these decisions will affect your environment. The Envirothon will teach you how to make the best choices about these, and many other issues.

It's about the environment!

The Envirothon deals with issues surrounding our valuable natural resources. It will expose you to the way professionals deal with real life problems: which wetlands should we save?; how much water pollution is acceptable?; what products can we generate from recycled materials?

It's about the spirit of teamwork!

The Envirothon stresses teamwork for success. Winning isn't the top priority; it's having fun and learning to work together to solve problems. You will learn to depend on each other and consider different viewpoints in making your decisions.

It's about the challenge of competition!

The thrill of competition can certainly motivate and excite almost anyone. You will be tested against the best teams in your county or state, or, with a lot of hard work, even the United States and parts of Canada...that's the thrill of the Envirothon experience!

Just the Facts!

- The goal of the Envirothon is to teach students more about what is happening in the environment and how your actions can affect that environment.
- The Envirothon doesn't just involve facts and figures. It also explores how you can get involved in your own community and make a difference.
- If you are enrolled in grades 9-12 in a public, private, vocational technical, or a home-school program, you are eligible to participate in the Envirothon.
- All you need to do is to put together a team of five students and contact your conservation district. The Envirothon staff will provide all resource materials in the subject areas of: Aquatics, Forestry, Soils & Land Use, Wildlife, and Current Environmental Issues.
- Possible Current Issues you may explore in the Envirothon include Biodiversity, Farmland Preservation, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Wetlands, or Hazardous Waste Disposal.
- Your team will begin with a local Envirothon against other area schools. If you win, you will go on to the state event and compete against students from across the state. The ultimate stop is a trip to the Canon (international) Envirothon which is hosted by a different state or Canadian province every year.
- The Envirothon is a product of Pennsylvania's Conservation Districts. They are assisted by agencies including the PA Fish & Boat Commission, the PA Game Commission, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, PA Department of Environmental Protection, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the PA Department of Education.

It's about your world...and your future!
Isn't it time for you to accept a natural challenge?

Two friends are walking down the old country road...

“Do you know what that is?” the girl asks as a bright bird flies by.

“Yeah”, he answers, “It’s a bird!”

“That’s not just a bird. It’s a scarlet tanager. You can identify it by its red body and black wings. Can you hear its song? That’s how you know it’s there even though you can’t see it.”

“Hey, that’s interesting! I didn’t know you knew things like that.”

“Sure! I even know the type of tree it landed in. It’s a white oak. You can tell the difference between the white oaks and the black oaks by the shapes of their leaves.

Come over here and let me show you something else.

Look in these holes the farmer has dug for his new fence posts. You can see how deep the topsoil is. See where the color changes from dark brown to a lighter brown?

Look a little deeper at those gray streaks running through the subsoil. That means this land is poorly drained.

That will limit what the farmer can do with his field.”

“I didn’t know that either. What other things do you know about this stuff?” he asks.

As the day went on, the two friends shared more interesting facts about the environment. They spent the afternoon turning over the rocks in a stream, comparing plant leaves and listening for bird calls. On the way home, the boy stops and turns to his friend.

“This was a lot of fun! How did you learn all of that stuff about the birds and plants and everything else?”

“I was on my high school’s Envirothon team.”

“You learned that on a Marathon team? What’s that?”

“Not a Marathon, an Envirothon team”, she corrected,

“The Envirothon is a new environmental program at our high school. We learned about things like how timbering can help a forest, how acid rain affects a stream and how to determine the type of soil around our homes. We learned about things in the news too, like why we should try to save wetlands, how to use pesticides safely and why plants and animals become endangered.”

“Wow, that sounds neat! I wonder if I could join an Envirothon team?” he asked her.

“Sure! Anyone from ninth through twelfth grade can join. Just ask your teacher if your school has a program. If there isn’t one, you can start your own.”

“Me? Start an Envirothon? I wouldn’t know where to begin.”

“It’s easy. Just ask your teacher to get in touch with your county’s conservation district and they can give you all the information you need. Sometimes, people with jobs in environmental education will visit our school and teach us how to use soil survey books and identify wildlife mounts, things like that. I didn’t even know there were jobs like that out there until I met some of them. The best part is that in the spring, you get to spend a school day at a local park and compete with kids from other schools. And if you’re really lucky, you get to go the State competition and maybe even the Canon Envirothon, with kids from all over the country and parts of Canada. All you have to do is be interested!”

“Thanks a lot! I’ll ask about it at school on Monday. See you tomorrow!”

To find out how *you* can get involved, contact the Pennsylvania Envirothon program at:

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Or contact your local conservation district.

The Envirothon is offered and operated on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap. This information sheet has been funded by the Pennsylvania Growing Greener Program.

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