



# UPDATES

Pennsylvania Envirothon

Winter 2011

## Susquehanna University and Shikellamy State Park host 2011 Pennsylvania Envirothon

Susquehanna University is a national liberal arts college committed to excellence in educating undergraduate students for productive, creative, and reflective lives of achievement, leadership, and service in a diverse and interconnected world. Nearly 2,300 undergraduates come from 36 states and 13 countries.

The university is located in Selinsgrove, Pa., a town of about 5,000 situated on the banks of the Susquehanna River, 50 miles north of the state capital,

Harrisburg. The campus is about 90 minutes from the Pocono Mountain recreational areas, and about a three-hour drive from Baltimore, New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. For more information on Susquehanna University, visit <http://www.susqu.edu>.

Shikellamy State Park is in Union and Northumberland counties. The 78-acre Shikellamy Overlook section is on the western shore of the Susquehanna River and overlooks the confluence of

the West and North Branches of the Susquehanna River. The 54-acre Shikellamy Marina section is in Northumberland County, between the Borough of Northumberland and the City of Sunbury on the southern tip of Packer's Island, at the confluence of the West Branch and North Branch of the Susquehanna River. For more information on Shikellamy State Park, visit <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/shikellamy.aspx>.

## 2011 Envirothon Resources Available

The Pennsylvania Envirothon Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the 2011 Envirothon resources are available. Teachers and students can review and download most of the information needed to prepare for the 2011 Envirothon competitions.

Visit: [www.envirothonpa.org](http://www.envirothonpa.org) and click on the sidebar category "Resources."

Or...

The 2011 Teacher Resource Packets and new study resources have been delivered to your county's Envirothon



Coordinator. If you have not received them, please contact your county conservation district office or the Pennsylvania Envirothon office.

## Volunteers needed for 2011 State Envirothon!

The Envirothon Board of Directors invites all conservation districts, partners, sponsors, agencies, financial contributors, organizations, and friends to volunteer to help with the twenty-eighth annual Pennsylvania State Envirothon event being held on May 24 and 25, 2011. The two-day event will be held at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, and Shikellamy State Park, Shamokin Dam.

Over 100 volunteers are needed to assist with the oral component and the testing station competition. Volunteers serve as oral component presentation judges, prep room and presentation room monitors, station judges, score runners, lunch deliverers, registration escorts, photographers, and other miscellaneous duties.

To receive information on how you can volunteer for the 2011 Pennsylvania

Envirothon, please contact your county conservation district or the program coordinator, Lorelle Steach, by e-mail: [paenvirothon@pennswoods.net](mailto:paenvirothon@pennswoods.net) or the volunteer coordinator, Bill Kahler, e-mail: [wkahler@state.pa.us](mailto:wkahler@state.pa.us).

We hope to see all of you at the 2011 State Envirothon competition.

## Where are they now? An Envirothon Alumna Story

by Michelle Henry

Knee deep in water, desperately digging in the mud to find the right species of frog one minute, and then trying to figure out the soil texture in the palm of my hand the next. No, I am not running from the aquatics station to the soil pit at an Envirothon competition; I am only cooking dinner, grilled frog and vegetables, in rural Thailand. Sent to Khao Yai, Thailand on a Henry Luce Scholarship for the year, I never dreamed my Envirothon skills would become my saving grace while living in this eco-village. As my co-workers and I trek through the forest searching for mushrooms and leaves to serve as salad with our frog, I am reminded of the “tree ID” drills to which I was subjected during Envirothon training and find myself, surprisingly, thankful. I never would be able to remember the non-poisonous trees had I not learned about leaf structure and bark characteristics!

I originally came to Thailand to discover the potential for renewable energy expansion in the rural sector; while the eco-village where I work does teach classes on solar and bioenergy, I have learned more about organic farming and living off the foods of the forest more than anything else. All my notions about how my Environmental Science degree would give me the technical abilities to help develop renewable energy in rural Thailand were quickly squandered once I was on the ground. I had to go back to basics, Envirothon basics. My four years of high school Envirothon participation are inevitably what got me into this mess of renewable energy dreaming in college, and now I was going to have to recall all of those seemingly random skills I learned once upon a time to help me survive in Thailand. I am not sure when the pressure was higher: at the Envirothon national competition in Missouri or picking the non-life-threatening mushrooms in Thailand. Probably Envirothon nationals.

I recognize, of course, that I am a suburban Philly girl, born and raised, and someone from elsewhere in the United States may easily navigate the Thai landscape without much trouble or reflection on their high school environmental science training. However, this suburbanite is eternally grateful for the long days and nights spent studying tomes of information on soil quality, riparian buffers, and best management practices. It has come in handy at innumerable unexpected times, from the college classroom to sitting on the other side of the table as a Virginia Envirothon judge to backwaters of Thailand. I also recognize that I stand on the shoulders of giants, my teachers and especially my Envirothon coaches, Mark Samilenko and Chrissa Kuntz. Where would I be if Envirothon had never planted the seed for my love of environment? Probably a movie star or an accountant. But I am glad that instead I get to impress Thai people with the ability to determine the soil texture of their field with a pinch of soil and a little spit.

*Michelle Henry, Envirothon Alumnus, is a 2006 graduate of Penncrest High School, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, and a 2010 graduate of the University of Virginia. She competed in Canon Envirothon events held in West Virginia—2004, Missouri—2005, and Manitoba—2006.*

## Teaching Tips for the Soil/Land Use Station

We experience soil every day of our lives. Soil is a critical component of Earth's ecosystem. It holds water and nutrients for plants, many of which are eaten by animals—humans, too! Soil is important to farmers, as the properties of a particular kind of soil determine what crops will grow best in it. In addition, much of our building materials are dependent upon different kinds of soil.

Soil can change the chemistry of groundwater, and the type of soil in a

region will determine whether groundwater will collect in an area for use by its inhabitants or if it will run off downstream, eroding the landscape. Soil helps regulate the Earth's temperature and its atmosphere, and soil affects the types of gases released into the atmosphere as well.

Soil is very important to many areas of our lives.

The U.S.D.A. Natural Resource

Conservation Service has a number of resources that can be helpful

when teaching students about soil, land use management, orders of taxonomy, water movement, state soils, careers, web soil survey, and much, much more.

Visit the NRCS Soil Education website at <http://soils.usda.gov/education/>.



## Celebrating 25 Years of Envirothon

Twenty-five years after it got its start in Pennsylvania as the “Enviro-Olympics,” North America’s largest high school natural resource education competition now known as the Canon Envirothon, will be held once again in the Keystone State. Plans are underway to welcome more than 260 teenagers from 45 states, 8 Canadian provinces and one Canadian territory to Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, July 22-28, 2012.

In celebrating 25 years of Envirothon, the planning committee would like to recognize and involve Envirothon alumni and others who were instrumental in creating and making the Envirothon a high quality educational competition.

We know many have become decision makers in governments, researchers in the natural resource and environmental fields, leaders in protecting and conserving land and water resources.

We are looking for alumni to share how their Envirothon experience benefitted them, influenced their career choices, and enhanced their problem solving abilities.

If you are a former Envirothon participant or know of a former Envirothon participant at any level, please share the need to reconnect with the Envirothon.

We would like to invite Envirothon Alumni to be a part of a specially planned event to “Celebrate 25 years of Envirothon” during the 2012 Canon Envirothon event.

Take a minute today to contact the Pennsylvania Envirothon by e-mail: [paenvirothon@pennswoods.net](mailto:paenvirothon@pennswoods.net) or 2012 Canon Envirothon by e-mail at [canon2012@lccd.org](mailto:canon2012@lccd.org).



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## Become a Friend of the Pennsylvania Envirothon

**Pennsylvania Youth**  
**Accept the Natural Challenge**

Become a “Friend of the Envirothon”  
Your support can make a difference

You can show you care about our natural resources and conservation education by helping the Pennsylvania Envirothon educate high school students about protecting, managing, and wisely using our natural resources.

Please show your concern by pledging your support for the Pennsylvania Envirothon by becoming a “Friend of the Envirothon.” By becoming a partner, you will receive our UPDATES newsletter to keep you up-to-date on the Envirothon program. Diamond and Gold sponsors will be recognized in all print media, on our t-shirts, and on a sponsor board. Silver and Bronze sponsors will be recognized in all print media.

You can also visit our website at [www.envirothonpa.org](http://www.envirothonpa.org). All contributions are 501 (c) (3) tax deductible and should be made payable to Pennsylvania Envirothon, Inc. N.P.

Please select your pledge amount and complete and mail this form along with payment to: Pennsylvania Envirothon, Inc. N.P. 702 West Pitt Street, Suite 3, Bedford, PA 15522.

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## Reminder: Oral Component Reinstated to 2011 State Competition

The oral component has been reinstated into the 2011 Pennsylvania Envirothon competition.

The oral component presentation is mandatory for all teams, and the score will be combined with the testing part of the event to decide the overall winning team. The oral component will be one-sixth of the overall score. In the case of a tie, the Current Issue test score will determine the placement for the final scores in the Envirothon.

The oral component scenario will be posted on the Pennsylvania Envirothon's website on Wednesday, May 18th, the week prior to the event. This will provide those winning teams an opportunity to prepare for the oral presentation. Teams will be able to utilize existing resources, research new information, and obtain input and guidance from advisors to enhance their presentation. In addition, posting it on the web will also allow those nonparticipating teams a chance to see how the scenario is written, what is expected, and provide an opportunity to "participate" on their own, in preparation for future State Envirothon events or for their own personal growth.

A complete listing of *Oral Component Rules and Guidelines* can be found on the Pennsylvania Envirothon's website at [www.envirothonpa.org](http://www.envirothonpa.org). This information will also be included in the registration packet provided to all teams closer to the event. Please be sure to mark May 18th on your calendar to remind yourself to check the Pennsylvania website to obtain a copy of the scenario.



**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**  
Do your part to conserve our natural resources. View the UPDATES newsletter on-line by visiting our web site:  
[www.envirothonpa.org](http://www.envirothonpa.org).

## Upcoming Events at a Glance

### April / May, 2011

County Envirothon events are held in all 67 counties.

### May 24 & 25, 2011

Twenty-eighth annual Pennsylvania State Envirothon will be held at the Susquehanna University and Shikellamy State Park.

### July 24–29, 2011

Twenty-fourth annual Canon Envirothon will be held at the Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick.

### July 22–28, 2012

Twenty-fifth annual Canon Envirothon will be held at the Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania.

### 2013

Twenty-sixth annual Canon Envirothon will be held in Montana.



**Mark your Calendars!**

## Pennsylvania Envirothon Mission

The Envirothon is an environmental education program made available to Pennsylvania Conservation Districts in partnership with related state and federal agencies and other organizations. The Envirothon program is designed to test high school students' knowledge of Pennsylvania's natural resources and environmental sciences. The program emphasizes the importance of environmental sensitivity while stressing a need to achieve a social, ecological, and economic balance. The Pennsylvania Envirothon provides future generations with the ability to be better equipped to address the complex natural resource concerns facing today's world as well as the challenges of tomorrow.



### For more information:

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