



UPDATES

Pennsylvania Envirothon

Winter 2014

Susquehanna University and PPL Montour Preserve Host 2014 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 Harrisburg, the state capital. 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>.

PPL Montour Preserve is situated in a broad valley in the Appalachian foothills of north central Pennsylvania. Montour Environmental Preserve is surrounded by two long rolling ridges — Montour Ridge to the south and Muncy Hills to the north. PPL chose this low-lying valley, with its favorable environmental and economic conditions, as the site for the Montour power plant. The coal-fired power plant is

located three miles south of the preserve near Washingtonville. The preserve now offers a variety of educational and recreational opportunities, including hiking, nature observation and photography, birding, boating, and fishing, as well as hunting nearby.

The preserve is located in Montour County four miles northeast of Washingtonville, Pa., and is accessible from Route 54. For more information, visit <http://www.pplpreserves.com/preserves/montour>.

2014 Envirothon Resources Available

The 2014 Pennsylvania Envirothon resources are available. Teachers and students can review and download most of the information needed to prepare for the 2014 Envirothon competitions.

Visit: www.envirothonpa.org and click on

the category “**Station Training.**”

Or...

The 2014 Teacher Resource Packets and new study resources have been delivered to your county’s Envirothon Coordinator. If you have not yet received

them, please contact your county conservation district office or the Pennsylvania Envirothon office.



or



for 2014 State Envirothon!

The Envirothon is seeking volunteers to help with the 31st annual Pennsylvania State Envirothon event being held on May 20 and 21, 2014. All conservation district staff and directors, partners, sponsors, agencies, organizations, and friends, raise your hands to volunteer!

The two-day event is being held at Susquehanna University and PPL Montour Preserve.

Over 100 volunteers are needed to assist with the oral component and the 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.

Registration information will be available in early February. To receive information on how you can volunteer for the 2014

Pennsylvania Envirothon, please contact your county conservation district or the executive director, Lorelle Steach, at paenvirothon@pennswoods.net or the volunteer coordinator, Bill Kahler, at wkahler@pa.gov.

We hope to see all of you at the 2014 Pennsylvania State Envirothon competition.

Carmichaels Area High School Greenhouse Project

“One Way Students use Envirothon concepts in a practical way.”

Carmichaels Area High School recently completed construction of a 24x48 greenhouse as part of a Native Plant Restoration Project. Funding for the Greenhouse construction was provided through an Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) grant from the Community Foundation of Greene County and a Toyota Tapestry grant. Alpha Natural Resources, PA Bituminous Safety Association, a DEP Environmental Education grant, and a PLT GreenWorks grant are providing funding for equipment and supplies.

Additional funding through an EITC grant made possible by a contribution from CONSOL Energy Inc. will enable the school to install an automatic watering system. Funds will also be used for additional growing space benches, increased germination heating tubes, and tree tubes for protecting recently planted seedlings as well as equipment and supplies to maintain the future of the Greenhouse Project.

“Our Greenhouse Project has exceeded our expectations!” said Kevin Willis, teacher and Envirothon advisor at Carmichaels Area during the Carmichaels Area School District Greenhouse Open House. “We have had various experts in the field come to the greenhouse and share their expertise in raising native plant species. These experts have been impressed not only with our current projects, but also with our students’ involvement and eagerness to participate.”

Students are currently monitoring over 700 oak seedlings and 250 perennials. Other teachers and students are utilizing and becoming involved with activities at the Greenhouse facility.

The primary goal for this project is to propagate native plant species in the greenhouse to demonstrate the restoration of a local ecosystem with native vegetation. Along with this objective comes educating both the school and community about the importance of planting natives. Willis mentioned many experts who have been an invaluable resource for the initial year of projects, including: Fred Clark–Clark Nursery, Russ Gibbs–DCNR Forester, Barbara Wallace–Ohiopyle State Park Educator, Dr. Mary Joy Haywood–Carlow University, and Drs. Robert Whyte and Mark Tebbitt–California University of PA.



“This is a project that demonstrates how students use Envirothon concepts in a practical way,” exclaimed Envirothon Advisor, Kevin Willis. The project also provided an opportunity for the students to work alongside professionals in the fields of forestry, native species, and natural sciences.

This project will involve students in some phase of the following steps: researching the invasive species threat and planting the native species that will re-vegetate the area, designing an ecosystem restoration plan based on available research, propagating the native species in the greenhouse, implementation of the plan to re-vegetate the area with the propagated natives, and publishing the project to educate the public about the

aesthetic value, rich diversity, and environmental importance of these native plant species used in the project.

For more information contact: Kevin Willis, teacher at Carmichaels Area High School located in Greene County at 724-966-5045 or E-mail - kwillis@carmarea.org.

Envirothon students/teachers/advisors, if you have a story that you would like to share, please email it to the Pennsylvania Envirothon office at paenvirothon@pennswoods.net, and we will include it in our newsletter and post it to our website.

Oral Component

The oral component presentation is mandatory for all teams participating in the state competition, and the score will be combined with the testing part of the event to decide the 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 2014 oral component scenario will be posted on the Pennsylvania Envirothon's website on Wednesday, May 14th, 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. Additionally, posting it on the web will also allow those nonparticipating teams a chance to see how the scenario is written, what is expected, and will provide an opportunity to "participate" on their own, helping them to prepare for future State Envirothon events and for their own personal growth.

A registration packet will be made available to all winning teams upon the completion of their county competition. In this packet students will receive a complete listing of *Oral Component Rules and Guidelines*, which can also be found on the Pennsylvania Envirothon's website at www.envirothonpa.org. In addition to the rules, a schedule of presentation times will also be included in the registration packet. For the 2014 event, teams have been randomly assigned a time to present. In past years, teams have been assigned according to its traveling distance from the event site.

Please mark May 14th on your calendar reminding you to check the Pennsylvania website to obtain a copy of the scenario.



PENNSYLVANIA ENVIROTHON

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Representatives Appointed to North American Envirothon Operating Committee

The North American Envirothon (NAE) is undergoing some operational changes. Some of the changes include the National Conservation Foundation overseeing the fiduciary responsibilities for the program, which will allow the newly appointed Operating Committee to focus on the educational components and competitions. This committee cooperatively will work together to provide direction and guidance to the 55 member states and provinces. Although the administrative structure is changing, the goals and mission of the program remain the same.

On behalf of The National Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees Chair, Steve Robinson, and NACD President's Association Representative, Irvil Kear, listed below are the names of the NAE Operating Committee for 2014. Along with this list it was also announced that **Peggy Lemons (MO)** was selected to the National Conservation Foundation Board as a Trustee to represent the North American Envirothon.

Far West Region—Shonny Nordlund (MT), Ron Hellstern (UT)

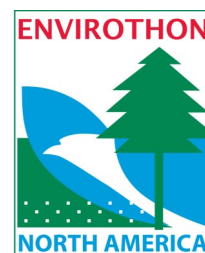
Far North Region (Canada)—Gary Provencher (SK), Patricia Pohrebniuk (MB), Carla Grant (ON)

Mid-West Region—Diane Olson (ND), Sid Lowrance (AR)

Southeast Region—Millie Langley (NC), Barry Burch (MD), Kerin Walsh (DE)

Northeast Region—Jeff Folger (CT), Lorelle Steach (PA), Sand Huey (NY)

To learn more about the North American Envirothon, please visit www.envirothon.org.



County Envirothon Scholarship Program

by Corey Richmond, Sullivan County Conservation District

Serving as Sullivan County's Envirothon Coordinator for many years, I always felt that instances of recognition were few and far between for students who chose to educate themselves on current natural resource issues and to compete in the Envirothon program. In 2012, I shared those thoughts with the conservation district board and I found that I was not alone in this matter. The board members were overwhelmingly aware that these students did this studying outside of their required school work and many have followed paths in environmental careers. As a result, the Sullivan County Conservation District Board formed a workgroup to develop a scholarship program to recognize the efforts that these participants achieved through their own interest in the Envirothon study areas. As we hold our county event with Lycoming County, we shared the idea and Lycoming County's Board also chose to create a scholarship program to recognize its students.

The 2012 County Envirothon high scoring teams for each county were not only recognized with plaques, but each team member was also awarded a \$500 scholarship. The unique part of the scholarships is that both counties based the criteria for awarding funds not on what they do in higher education, but instead what they had done in their years of Envirothon experience.

The program, while still very young, hopes to encourage more students to "accept the natural challenge" and include Envirothon education in their already busy high school studies. We look forward to seeing if this reward gets more students involved, but none the less, it serves as a way of commending those that have made it a goal to be more aware of natural resource concerns.

If your county is interested in starting a program like Sullivan and Lycoming counties, feel free to contact me at h2osp@sullcon.com. I will be happy to share our ideas.

Funding received through EITC program

Pennsylvania Envirothon received generous Educational Improvement Tax Credit (ETIC) contributions from the PPL Corporation and its affiliates and the Philadelphia Insurance Companies.

The EITC contributions will help provide environmental education resources and hands-on teaching tools to Pennsylvania's county conservation districts and Envirothon teachers. The Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) gives tax credits to eligible businesses contributing to an Educational Improvement Organization such as Pennsylvania Envirothon.



"With the Envirothon reaching out to more than 500 school districts and almost 15,000 students, donations made through the EITC program are important in helping us teach high school students about the proper management of natural resources with hands-on teaching techniques and through competitive events, in turn encouraging students to become involved in their school and local communities. We would like to thank PPL Corporation and its affiliates, and Philadelphia Insurance Companies for the financial support they provided to our program," said William Kahler, PA Envirothon Board Chairman.

For more information, contact Pennsylvania Envirothon Executive Director, Lorelle Steach, at 814-623-7900 ext. 111, E-mail: paenvirothon@pennswoods.net, or visit www.envirothonpa.org.

Thank you Pennsylvania Envirothon Station Partners



Envirothon Alumni Story

by Jennifer Walker

I can easily say that without Envirothon, I would not be where I am today. My name is Jennifer Walker and I am currently a junior at Duke University. My major is Earth and Ocean Sciences with a minor in Biology. I participated in Envirothon all four years at Penncrest High School. My freshman year, I was part of Red Team, which participates at the county level. My sophomore, junior, and seniors years, I was part of Gold Team, which continues on to the state and national competitions. Gold Team won the county and Pennsylvania state competitions all three years and continued on to the Canon competition. In 2008, we placed 3rd in Flagstaff, Arizona; in 2009, we placed 1st in Asheville, North Carolina; in 2010, we placed 5th in Fresno, California and I placed 1st in my individual category of Current Issues. Because of Envirothon, connecting with nature and learning about how our Earth and oceans work will always be a major part of my life.

When I entered high school, I knew that I wanted to focus on the sciences for my career, but I had not considered environmental or earth sciences. While preparing each year for Envirothon competitions (studying in the local park with Danielle – my younger Red Team partner, taking practice tests with my fellow Gold Team members, spending hours perfecting practice oral presentations), I knew I had found my choice of study. The combination of written, oral, and hands-on tests at Envirothon competitions really put in perspective what I was learning in my sources. We were not just memorizing information. The intense preparation of an environmental project question, followed by a 20 minute presentation and a 10 minute question and answer session brought to life everything we were studying in forestry, aquatics, soils, wildlife, and current issues. I was simultaneously developing useful life skills and learning the foundation of what I would continue to study in college. After our team won the 1st place national title, I knew that I wanted to devote my career to studying our planet.

Envirothon was a huge part of my high school career; it quickly became the starting point for my future studies and defined my future career goals. I had always loved spending as much time as possible outdoors and learning about our planet. Envirothon, however, made me realize how much I want to protect the Earth and conduct my own research to further our understanding of how natural systems work and connect to each other, and how humans depend on these systems. I chose my major at Duke because I enjoyed participating in Envirothon so much. And not only did Envirothon affect my study choices, but it also forged long-lasting friendships with my teammates. Our team of five that won the Canon competition still meets for lunch every year when we're back home for holidays. And my Red Team partner and I are always in contact. Envirothon certainly had a huge impact on my life and I am very happy that it did!

Currently, I am aboard the Kilo Moana on a research cruise for a month-long Independent Study in the North Pacific studying the effects of global warming on phytoplankton. Back on campus, I am a research assistant, working in a marine geology/paleoceanography lab; an Earth and Environmental Science student athlete tutor; and a Technician Assistant at the Duke Lemur Center. After graduation, I'm planning on attending graduate school and continuing on with research in the earth and ocean sciences.

Get Outside, Envirothon!

By Celina Seftas, Huntingdon County Conservation District

We are always working to make the Envirothon program more hands-on, interactive, and more outdoorsy for our students. If you are looking for activities that will really help your Envirothon students at their competitions, check out Leafsnap, a new (and free!) app for your smartphone or tablet. Leafsnap is the first in a series of electronic field guides being developed by researchers from Columbia University, the University of Maryland, and the Smithsonian Institution. This mobile app uses visual recognition software to help identify tree species from photographs of their leaves. Leafsnap contains beautiful high-resolution images of leaves, flowers, fruit, petiole, seeds, and bark. Leafsnap currently includes the trees of the Northeast and will soon grow to include the trees of the entire continental United States.

You don't have to be an expert to take your students outside to learn about tree identification. Try focusing on maples one month and the oaks next, until the students (and you!) can identify the common trees in Pennsylvania. Partner this app with your Common Trees of Pennsylvania booklet from DCNR, and you will learn more about each of the trees you are identifying (maybe something that will be on the test!).

Check it out at <http://leafsnap.com/> or the app store.



Become a "Friend of the Envirothon"

Your gift helps support Pennsylvania Envirothon and its natural resource conservation education efforts, scholarship program, and education and training programs. With your help, Pennsylvania Envirothon will continue to promote a future of conservation and protection of the environment and our natural resources

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION FORM (All contributions are 501(c)(3) tax deductible.)

Thank you in advance for your generous donation. It will make a difference.

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Upcoming Events at a Glance

Mark your Calendars!

April / May, 2014

County Envirothon events held in 66 counties.

May 14, 2014

2014 Oral Component Scenario posted to PA Envirothon website.

May 20 & 21, 2014

31st annual Pennsylvania State Envirothon will be held at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove and PPL Montour Preserve, Danville.

July 20–25, 2014

27th annual North American Envirothon will be held at the University of Georgia, Athens.

Current Issue — Sustainable Agriculture/Buying Locally

July 27–August 2, 2015

28th annual North American Envirothon will be held at the Missouri State University, Springfield.

Current Issue — Urban Forestry

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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