



UPDATES

Pennsylvania Envirothon

Winter 2020

Where Are They Now?

Meghan Stewart, Envirothon Alumna

Envirothon: for some it ends after high school, for others, that is where it begins. Envirothon is more than an annual competition; it is a way of life. Interacting with the environment, using best management practices, and being informed about your own backyard -- this way of life began for me in 2007. My six-year Envirothon career taught me how to lead meetings, plan weekly lessons, and that I needed to pursue a career in conservation education. Since graduating high school in 2013, I earned my Bachelor's degree in Biology and Geology (the two majors I could pick with topics most similar to Envirothon). Wanting to share my passion for nature with as many people as possible, I found my Envirothon experience invaluable to obtaining a professional internship as a Wilderness Explorer at Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom. This gave me the opportunity to interact with thousands of international guests on a daily basis. I was challenged to give each "explorer" a conservation action they could complete upon returning home. Many times, my message included "Have you heard of Envirothon?"



I will never know how many of my visitors joined their local Envirothon programs or now volunteer with their county's conservation district, but I do know the effect a program like Envirothon can have on a student. Because of that effect, I am now in my last semester of earning my teaching certification in Pennsylvania. With a classroom of my own, I hope to start the Envirothon career for my future students. For some, their journey with the program may end when they graduate, but the experience will stay with them forever.

2020 Pennsylvania Envirothon

The 2020 Pennsylvania Envirothon competition will be held at Susquehanna University and Camp Mount Luther on May 19 and 20.



Susquehanna University (SU) is a nationally known liberal arts college. 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. SU will serve as the location for Tuesday's event registration, oral component competition, and team lodging. Check out [Susquehanna University](https://www.susquehanna.edu/) for more information.

Camp Mount Luther will host Wednesday's field station testing. Camp Mount Luther serves the church and the community as a location for outdoor ministry and education. Whether it is a summer camp program, an educational school learning experience, an adult retreat or conference, Mount Luther serves as a year-round setting for growth and learning about environmental concerns and conservation. The Camp is located in central Pennsylvania in Union County near Mifflinburg, which is a 40-minute drive from Susquehanna University.



The 2020 registration information will soon be posted to the Envirothon website - visit [Registration](#).

Volunteers Needed for 2020 State Competition!

The Envirothon Board of Directors invites all conservation districts, partners, sponsors, agencies, financial contributors, organizations, and friends to volunteer to help with its 37th annual Pennsylvania Envirothon State event being held May 19 and 20, 2020.



More than 100 volunteers are needed to assist with the oral presentation component and the station testing competition. Volunteers serve as oral component presentation judges, team buddies, timers, station judges, lunch deliverers, along with other tasks.

To receive information on how you can volunteer for the 2020 Pennsylvania Envirothon, visit the Pennsylvania Envirothon website's [Registration](#) page or contact your county conservation district or the Pennsylvania Envirothon Executive Director, [Lorelle Steach](#) at (814) 310-3271.

Oral Presentation Component—State Envirothon

The 2020 oral component scenario will be posted on the Pennsylvania Envirothon website on **Monday, May 11**, the week prior to the event. This will provide an opportunity to prepare for the oral presentation to those winning teams. Teams will be able to utilize existing resources, research new information, and obtain input and guidance from advisors to enhance their presentation.

The oral component presentation is mandatory for all teams participating in the state competition. The oral component score is combined with the testing station scores to decide the winning team.

Upon completing their county competition, winning teams will receive a registration packet that includes the *Oral Component Rules and Guidelines* and a schedule of presentation times. If your team cannot make its assigned time, please contact the Pennsylvania Envirothon Executive Director, [Lorelle Steach](#) or phone (814) 310-3271.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems for Conservation!

Tim Heyler from the Lycoming County Conservation District and Merlin Benner from Remote Intelligence, LLC will be presenting on using small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (commonly referred to as drones) for conservation purposes. Tim will explain the ways the District has utilized drone technology to improve the services they provide, and develop solutions to environmental issues in Lycoming County. Merlin will share his knowledge and experience with cutting edge drone technology and how drones can be used to provide services and solve environmental problems on a large scale.



Pennsylvania Envirothon Met with County Coordinators!

More than 80 county Envirothon coordinators and conservation district staff attended one of four regional meetings organized by the Pennsylvania Envirothon. For a few, this was their first exposure to Envirothon. The meetings are held each fall and provide an opportunity for Envirothon coordinators to network and to share new information, ideas, and activities. This is also a time to review next year's teacher resource information, including the new current issue topic.

In addition to Envirothon resources, coordinators also received several new teaching tools that can be added to their Envirothon study trunks, loaned to teachers, and used in their educational programs. This year's educational tools focused primarily on the Wildlife Station. Each Envirothon program was given three animal skulls, several laminated field guides, and a skull activity guide. Financial support for these trainings and tools was provided by The Hershey Company, UGI Utilities, EQT Foundation, and Shell.

The Sullivan County Conservation District, Jefferson County Conservation District, Hawk Mountain, and DCNR Forbes State Forest Office hosted the meetings. We want to thank everyone who contributed to these meetings. We look forward to another successful Envirothon season!

THANK YOU—Shell Oil Company!

Pennsylvania Envirothon received a generous grant from Shell Oil Company in the amount of \$50,000.

The grant from Shell Oil enables the Pennsylvania Envirothon to make available resources, teaching tools and equipment, and hands-on applications that relate to the Envirothon stations. The Envirothon Mission aligns with Shell's environmental grant focus on biodiversity initiatives that support programs to restore critical eco-systems, address water and air quality research, and preserve wetlands.

In addition, funding is used to offset the state competition registration fee, increase the conservation district mini-grants, and send Pennsylvania's representative team to the NCF-Envirothon international competition.



THANK YOU - PSECU!

Pennsylvania Envirothon is excited to partner with PSECU as its "Digital-First Sponsor of PA Envirothon." PSECU's sponsorship for \$40,000 will help us develop a digital strategy, which includes the planning and development of a new Envirothon mobile application. Also, PSECU will sponsor the Oral Presentation Component Day as well as be an integral part of PA Envirothon as we transition to digital oral presentations in 2021. The Envirothon-PSECU partnership continues to evolve. Watch for more details!



THANK YOU – UGI Utilities!

Pennsylvania Envirothon recently received a generous contribution from UGI Utilities through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program. UGI generously contributed \$7,000. For UGI, environmental responsibility is a core part of its business: "from greening its facilities and operations to exploring new greener technologies." UGI is "committed to helping its customers conserve resources by providing energy saving tips and forging partnerships for accomplishing environmentally-friendly projects."



The EITC contributions assist in providing conservation districts and teachers with educational resources and hands-on teaching tools that address environmental education standards. The Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program gives tax credits to eligible businesses contributing to an Educational Improvement Organization such as the Pennsylvania Envirothon.

THANK YOU – EQT Foundation!

EQT awarded \$12,010 to the Pennsylvania Envirothon. This funding will enable natural resource enthusiasts in our high schools to improve their skills (mathematical, analytical, critical thinking and awareness) through the utilization of a newly developed Envirothon app. Whether investigating the interactions of organisms or observing the dynamics of a forest ecosystem, students can focus on solving local and/or statewide natural issues. The Envirothon app will aid student understanding of how natural resource professionals might work to determine best management practices, assess water quality, or evaluate energy uses. In addition county Envirothon programs will receive a copy of the *Know Soil, Know Life* book to supplement the Soils and Land Use Station's educational resources. *Know Soil, Know Life* takes readers through a traditional sequence of soil science topics, including soil chemistry, biology, and classification. This book will help students better understand the Envirothon learning objectives, which focus on: soils knowledge; maps, surveys, and landforms; land use; and decision making and protection of soils. Envirothon assistance grants will also be provided to Greene and Washington County Conservation Districts. EQT owns or leases approximately 580,000 net acres in Pennsylvania. Most of the acreage is located in the southwestern region of the state, with the majority located in Greene and Washington Counties.



The EQT Foundation believes in meaningful engagement with the communities it calls home, and it takes great pride in the role as both a responsible and responsive corporate citizen.

Wildlife Kits - PA Game Commission

The Pennsylvania Game Commission is partnering with county conservation districts and providing them with Wildlife Kits. The kits can be used for Envirothon related programs, educational outreach programs, and loaned to local partners and groups. These kits include learning tools designed to interest students in local wildlife while building disciplines such as art, math, science, social studies, and language arts. Each kit contains hands-on activities, a binder containing information about all of the tools, which include: furs, skulls, scat, and replica tracks.



Conservation districts that are willing to host a kit are required to annually log the number of adults and students that took part in the outreach program, and to inventory its contents when the kit is returned to the office in order to maintain a complete kit.

Robert and Tammy Shannon Environmental Resource Management Scholarship - Penn State University

Robert and Tammy Shannon volunteer and support the Envirothon in several ways. They also teach and advise many former Envirothon students, who major in Penn State's Environmental Resource Management (ERM) program. If you are enrolled in the ERM program at Penn State University and once participated in the Envirothon program, you will want to apply for the Robert and Tammy Shannon Environmental Resource Management scholarship.

Consideration for this scholarship shall be given to full-time undergraduate students who are majoring or planning to major in Environmental Resource Management, or successor academic degree program in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering in the College of Agricultural Sciences, and who have a demonstrated financial need to meet their necessary college expenses. From the identified pool of eligible recipients, and to the extent possible, preference shall be given to eligible students in the following order: First preference shall be given to students who are past participants in the Pennsylvania Envirothon Program, or successor programs and who are enrolled in the Environmental Science option or the Water Science option. Second preference shall be given to students who are enrolled in the Environmental Science option or the Water Science option who have achieved a grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a scale of 4.0) and are at least in the 4th semester standing. If no students meet the state preferences in a given year or if there are sufficient funds to award additional scholarships beyond the eligible recipients who meet the stated preferences, available funds will be awarded to any student based on the General Eligibility Criteria, regardless of preference.

Environment and Ecology and Science Technology Standards Review/Stakeholder Meetings

In September 2019, the [State Board of Education](#) directed the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to begin the process of updating [Pennsylvania's Science Standards](#) to align them with current research and best practices, including a review of Next Generation Science Standards.

The State Board of Education's current regulations include two sets of science standards – Science and Technology, and Environment and Ecology (*which also include the academic standards for Agriculture*) – that serve as the basis for curriculum development and instruction in schools. Both sets of standards took effect on January 5, 2002.

PDE will examine the State's current standards, outline the various components that must be addressed when changing regulations, and develop a proposed timeline for making the changes – with the overall goal being to provide the best framework possible to prepare all students to be productive citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PDE's examination of the current standards includes input from the public. A series of stakeholder engagement sessions will be held across the state – the public is invited to attend and provide input. The stakeholder session dates, times, and locations are listed below. [Register to attend a stakeholder session.](#)