

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ENVIROTHON

The Envirothon is a natural resources competition for high school students. The Envirothon began in 1979 in Pennsylvania, and is currently the largest event of its type in North America. More than 41 states and eight Canadian Provinces participate in this educational event each year. Five member teams study provided reference material and participate in hands-on training in soils, aquatics, wildlife, forestry, and a fifth environmental issue that changes from year to year. The winning team earns the right to compete at the next level, be it the state or national event.

The Envirothon provides a fun and exciting way for high school students to learn about natural resources, make informed decisions about the environment, and earn scholarship money for college. The event is a problem-solving competition that challenges students to work as a team to answer questions and conduct hands-on projects focusing on natural resource issues. The goal is to increase students' environmental knowledge and understanding while motivating young people to care for the environment by practicing stewardship in their homes, schools and communities.

The Envirothon combines classroom learning with active field experience in the following five disciplines:

Wildlife - students learn firsthand from wildlife managers about animal populations and dynamics in Maryland and the importance of preserving wildlife habitat.



Forestry - foresters teach students how to identify tree species and determine a tree's height and age. Students also learn management techniques to assure healthy and productive forestry resources.

Soils - students work alongside soil scientists to learn soil profiling and mapping techniques used to determine soil characteristics important for agricultural and other land use consideration. Students also learn how land-use changes impact soils and peoples lives.



Aquatics - fragile underwater ecosystems are explored in detail with marine and freshwater biologists. Students also learn how to make connections between water quality, stream health and wetlands.

The fifth area of interest, the environmental issue - the topic changes from year to year and is chosen by the host of the National event that year. Previous topics have included: What is a Watershed?; Natural Resource Management in the Urban Environment; and Preserving the Cultural Landscape.



The Soil Conservation District coordinates and co-hosts the County level competition at the William S. Schmidt Outdoor Environmental Education Center in Brandywine, Maryland. The event is held each year in the Spring. Two training sessions are held; one in the Fall and one in early Spring. For further information contact Debbie Sandlin in our office at 301-574-5162 x3.