

New Jersey Envirothon

2008-2009 Annual Newsletter



Sponsored by the Conservation Partnership: New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts, New Jersey Dept of Agriculture/State Soil Conservation Committee, USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension, and New Jersey Dept of Environmental Protection

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www.njenvirothon.org

October 2008

2009 Envirothon

The 2009 NJ Envirothon competition will be held on May 9, 2009 at Montclair State University School of Conservation in Branchville, NJ.

The theme for the 2009 Envirothon Competition is: **Biodiversity in a Changing World.**

Information about the NJ Envirothon is available at your local Soil Conservation District office or online at: www.njenvirothon.org.

 ★ **2008 Envirothon Winners:** ★
 ★ **1st Place: Bridgewater-Raritan High School Team #1** ★
 ★ **2nd Place: Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science Team #1** ★
 ★ **3rd Place: High Tech High School Team #1** ★

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2008 Envirothon - Duke Farms

By Ernest Thurlow, District Manager, Somerset-Union Soil Conservation District

Mother Nature was once again a factor in the 2008 New Jersey Envirothon held May 9th and 10th at Duke Farms in Somerset County. While the planning for the event was all in place, set-up on Friday and the evening activities were affected by a storm which brought rain all day and most of the night on Friday. There was concern that the rain would continue into the competition on Saturday, and make soft and muddy grounds. The staff of volunteers moved into action and prepared to set-up the majority of the stations early Saturday; with the help of the staff of Duke Farms, the historic Carriage House was turned into a dry shelter for students arriving on Friday. The students who had planned to camp outside, “camped” inside the Carriage House, and the one large room was turned into a movie theater. Some teams were even brave enough to camp outside in the rain. Fortunately the rain stopped during the night and Saturday was a cloudy day with no additional rain.

The 2008 Envirothon, hosted by the Somerset-Union Soil Conservation District and Duke Farms, was one of the largest to date with a total of 45 high school teams competing in the event. Due to the number of teams, each testing station had the capability to test six teams during each session. Competition was strong among the teams, with some teams separated by tenths of a point. The first place team

was Bridgewater-Raritan High School, Team #1 of Bridgewater, New Jersey located in Somerset County. The winning team will go on to represent New Jersey at the North American Envirothon held at North Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona on July 30 to August 3, 2008.

As always, the New Jersey Envirothon was a volunteer effort from the Conservation Partnership. Many individuals from New Jersey Soil Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Soil Conservation Committee, Bureau of Forestry as well as the NJ Association of Conservation Districts participated in the event. The New Jersey Envirothon continues to be a growing and very successful program for high school students interested in natural resource conservation. The 2009 event is already in the planning stages and will be hosted by the Sussex County Soil Conservation District.



Visit the NJ Envirothon website: www.njenvirothon.org

Wildlife Station– New Jersey Envirothon

By Christina Christine, Education Coordinator, Gloucester Soil Conservation District

Many students competing in the Envirothon Competition either look forward to or fear the wildlife station test. The wildlife station is composed of two sections: a written test and a hands on test. On the day of the event, both tests at the wildlife station requires teams to identify reptiles, amphibians, mammals and birds found in New Jersey through the use of keys, pictures, calls, pelts, mounts, or tracks. Teams also need to be knowledgeable about habitat and ecosystem types and animals associated with them. A portion of the questions center around the current issue, or Envirothon theme, which changes from year to year. For the 2009 event, the current issue is: Biodiversity in a Changing World.



Wildlife station staff receive many positive comments from students each year. For many students, it is an opportunity to learn more about native wildlife and have a hands-on experience, touching and handling furs, skulls, and other wildlife material. For some students, the Wildlife Section allows them to look through binoculars for the very first time and identify a mounted bird or animal camouflaged in a tree or shrub.



Hopefully students acquire a better appreciation for nature after their Envirothon experience.

 * **Support New Jersey Envirothon! The NJ Envirothon is made possible through generous donations from businesses and organizations across NJ. Visit the NJ Envirothon website for more information: www.njenvirothon.org** *

Sussex Soil Conservation District will host the 2009 Envirothon Competition

2009 Envirothon Site: Montclair State University, School of Conservation

The 2009 New Jersey Envirothon Competition will be held on May 9, 2009 at Montclair State University, School of Conservation in Branchville, New Jersey. The New Jersey School of Conservation (NJSOC) is the oldest university-operated residential environmental education center in the nation. It is located 57 miles from the Montclair campus on a 240-acre tract located in Stokes State Forest in Sussex County. This site was used for the 2004 Envirothon Competition and proved to be an excellent location boasting beautiful scenic woods, a sparkling lake, great camping, clean cabins and an old-fashioned campfire. The Sussex Soil Conservation District is proud to be the host for the 2009 competition.



Have You Heard of the Envirothon?

By: Dr. Jennifer Frank, Team Advisor

Most people, including science teachers, have never heard of the Envirothon. I was one of those people just last year and would like to take the opportunity to share a little about this program and my wonderful experience accompanying the Bridgewater-Raritan Regional High School Envirothon team to Arizona to represent New Jersey at the world's largest high school environmental competition.

Envirothon teams are made up of five high school students. Students are tested as a team on their knowledge of wildlife, aquatics, soils, forestry, and a given current issue. Although some writing is involved, the test emphasizes hands on skills such as analyzing samples and identifying specimens. The team is also judged on an oral presentation that they present as a group on the current issue to a panel of judges. Students prepare all year for the state Envirothon held in the spring with the winning team moving on to the national competition in the summer.

Students learn an amazing amount of information and skills while preparing for the competition. Many students are involved all four years of high school. Bridgewater-Raritan's team was self motivated and met regularly at the homes of team members. They even went as far as digging a soil pit in a student's backyard to practice for the soils test! From the trip to Arizona, I learned there are varying levels of teacher involvement that range from Envirothon classes that students can register for to students just checking in regularly with their advisor or group of advisors. Advisors include biology, chemistry, and even physics teachers! Teams represent clubs such as 4-H and FFA as well as both public and private schools.

I hope my brief introduction to the Envirothon will encourage you to get your students involved. As teachers we talk a lot about differentiation and relevant testing, this program has it all being valuable for both teachers and students. For me it was a nice reminder of what students are capable of doing and not to underestimate their potential when provided with a challenge. Whether the team was urban or rural or from a high school or club, as a team they could win. Students learn information, standard methods in science, and life skills. Perhaps more importantly, this opportunity may be the adventure of accomplishing something as a team. It is definitely worth mentioning here that winning teams at both the state and national level win scholarships and gifts. Our team members won scholarships for winning the New Jersey competition and won Canon digital cameras as the fourteenth place winner in Arizona.

"The Envirothon was a great experience for us. It was the first time anyone on our team had ever competed, but we found the set-up and rules easy to follow. We learned a great deal about topics we might not have chosen to study, such as aquatics and soils. The team presentation taught us to look at all aspects of an issue, its practicality, and its environmental repercussions. It also helped us learn to trust teammates, when we did not know the answers. The Envirothon taught us about both teamwork and the environment.

By Monica Chelius and Alison Barton, Moorestown Friends School

2008 New Jersey Envirothon Winning Team - Bridgewater-Raritan Regional High School

Bridgewater-Raritan High School Team #1 made their first win at the 2008 New Jersey Envirothon competition and represented NJ at the Canon Envirothon, a national competition that was held in Flagstaff, Arizona. At the national competition, the NJ team placed 14th out of 54 teams from the United States and Canada. Congratulations!



Thanks to the Sponsors of the 2008 Envirothon

The New Jersey Envirothon is sponsored by the Conservation Partnership: New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, State Soil Conservation Committee, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension, and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The New Jersey Envirothon competition would not be possible without the generous support from these sponsors and the sponsors listed below. Thank you!

Allegheny Society of American Foresters-NJ	Hudson, Essex & Passaic SCD	Ocean County Soil Conservation District
American Water	Hunterdon County Soil Conservation District	Passaic County Board of Agriculture
Atlantic Co Federation of Sportsmen's Club	Kearny Federal Savings	ShopRite
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Gloucester County Federal Savings Bank	Association (N.J.S.C.D.E.A.)	
Gloucester County Soil Conservation District	NJ Natural Gas Company (NJR)	



New Jersey's 15 Soil Conservation Districts are special purpose subdivisions of the State. They are empowered to conserve and manage soil and water resources in the State. The Districts are part of a cooperative network of State, local, and federal agencies authorized by the New Jersey Soil Conservation Act. Technical assistance from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and other USDA agencies is available through the Districts. NJ's Soil Conservation Districts provide technical and other assistance to the agricultural community, provide and interpret soil survey information, regulate erosion laden storm water from construction sites and sponsor a wide variety of educational programs. Districts promote the wise use and stewardship of NJ's land and water.

2008 NJ Envirothon Participants

Congratulations to the students and advisors who represented their schools at the 2008 NJ Envirothon. Forty-five teams from thirty schools throughout NJ spent the day at Duke Farms in Hillsborough to compete in the 2008 NJ Envirothon. The teams committed and dedicated many hours during the school year to prepare for this event.

Academy for Health and Medical Sciences Team #1	Kinnelon High School Team #2	New Providence High School
Academy for Health and Medical Sciences Team #2	Kittatiny Regional High School Team #1	Princeton High School Team #1
Biotechnology High School	Madison High School	Princeton High School Team #2
Bridgewater-Raritan High School Team #1	Marine Academy of Science and Technology Team #1	Scotch Plains Fanwood High School
Bridgewater-Raritan High School Team #2	Marine Academy of Science and Technology Team #2	Somerville High School Environmental Club
Clearview Regional High School Team #1	Marine Academy of Technology & Environmental Science Team #1	Sparta High School Team #1
Clearview Regional High School Team #2	Marine Academy of Technology & Environmental Science Team #2	Sparta High School Team #2
Cranford High School	Metuchen High School	Summit High School Team #1
Egg Harbor Twp. High School Team #1	Middletown High School South	Summit High School Team #2
Egg Harbor Twp. High School Team #2	Millville Senior High School Team #1	Triton Regional High School
Franklin High School Team #1	Millville Senior High School Team #2	Vernon High School Team #1
Franklin High School Team #2	Moorestown Friends School Team #1	Vernon High School Team #2
High Tech High School Team #1	Moorestown Friends School Team #2	Watchung Hills Regional High School
High Tech High School Team #2	Montgomery High School	Wayne High School
Jonathan Dayton High School		West Morris Mendham High School
Kinnelon High School Team #1		