

MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON

319 LITTLETON ROAD · SUITE 205 · WESTFORD, MA 01886

2006-2007 FACT SHEET

The Massachusetts Envirothon is a natural resource program for high school students. Its purpose is to:

- Ø Cultivate a desire to learn more about our natural environment through competitive events
- Ø Develop a greater appreciation of our dependence on the natural environment
- Ø Provide students with experiences in environmental-oriented activities and problem solving
- Ø Provide a sense of personal stewardship of natural resources.

Over one third of the high schools in Massachusetts have participated in the Massachusetts Envirothon during the past five years.

The Massachusetts Envirothon is designed to stimulate an awareness of the interdependence of various natural resources within the environment. Participants develop a greater knowledge of:

- Ø The effect individual actions have on environmental problems, either positive or negative
- Ø Current environmental issues
- Ø Resource materials
- Ø Agencies and organizations available to assist students in environmentally related matters
- Ø Career opportunities in the environmental field.

Teams comprised of five students represent their respective school or organization in a statewide environmental competition testing their knowledge of the ecology and the natural environment including: water, soils, wildlife, forestry, agriculture, and a current environmental issue. The topic areas are combined at test site eco-stations, where students have the opportunity to look at the environment as a whole.

This year, the current issue topic in Massachusetts is **Conservation and Renewable Energy in Massachusetts Communities**. Some past current issue topics have been: acting locally for climate protection; protecting cultural landscapes; natural resources in the urban environment; strengthening local food systems; biodiversity; stormwater management; wetlands management; open space management; watershed management; pest management; acid rain; community waste disposal systems, and ground water. Each team's presentation is based upon a site in their own community. During the year, each team researches the current issues as it relates to their own community. They then select a project on which to work and prepare a presentation on their chosen current issue project. This is presented to a team of five judges representing environmental agencies from throughout the state, at the Massachusetts Envirothon event.

The date and site have not yet been set for the 2007 Massachusetts Envirothon. We are looking at the second week in May 2007 and hope to secure a site that provides resources related to the current issue for 2007. The location varies from year to year. In the past eleven years the event has been held at Buck Hill Conservation Land in Spencer; Great Brook Farm in Carlisle; The Quabbin Reservoir in Belchertown; Borderland State Park in Easton; Mt. Wachusett Community College in Gardner; Hampshire College in Amherst; Gore Place in Waltham; Massachusetts Electric Service Headquarters in Northborough; Heifer Project International in Rutland; Cochituate State Park in Natick; Essex County Agricultural High School in Danvers, and the Blackstone River & Canal State Park in Uxbridge.

An Orientation Workshop for Coaches will be held on Thursday, September 28th at the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's John Augustus Hall in West Boylston. An Orientation and Workshop for coaches and teams (up to 3 student team members) will be held on Thursday, November 16th at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. This program will offer multiple concurrent sessions on all topic areas and to offer sessions for both coaches and team members. In the spring, a number of workshops are available to students and their coaches. All workshops feature sample questions and detailed information on the current issue topic, as well as the other test areas and the eco-station format.

An Envirothon Manual is sent to all teachers/coaches who register for the Massachusetts Envirothon. The Manual contains all the information teams will need to know on the water, soils, wildlife, forestry, agriculture and ecology topic areas. In addition it contains resources and references for the current issue topic.

The Massachusetts Envirothon's noncompetitive Community Awards – for Community Action and Community Research – recognize teams who achieve high standards in their investigations related to the Envirothon Current Issue, and who take what they have learned and apply it in service to their communities. Teams are encouraged to participate and offer a roundtable discussion of their community project during lunch on the day of the Massachusetts Envirothon.

A \$1,000 scholarship to the University of Massachusetts' College of Natural Resources and the Environment are awarded each year to eligible applicants who have participated in the Massachusetts Envirothon program.

Prizes are awarded for the first, second, and third place winners and the top scoring team in presentation and at each eco-station. The team that wins the Massachusetts Envirothon is entitled to compete in the Canon (N. American) Envirothon, to be held in Geneva, New York from July 29 to August 3, 2007.

The Massachusetts Envirothon is planned and sponsored each year by the Massachusetts Envirothon Committee, a subcommittee of the Massachusetts State Commission for Soil, Water and Related Resources. In 2006-2007 members of the Committee come from Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources; Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation; Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection; MassWildlife; Executive Office of Environmental Affairs; Massachusetts Conservation Districts; Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts; Massachusetts Technology Collaborative; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and National Grid.

For more information, contact:

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