



MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON

2011 Fact Sheet

The Envirothon is North America's leading natural resource education program for high school students, emphasizing hands-on, team-oriented problem solving and community involvement that prepares young people for environmental careers and active citizenship.

The Massachusetts Envirothon

- focuses on conservation of forest, water, wildlife, and soil resources, and on community environmental issues, in the context of 21st century issues of land and water use, energy, climate, agriculture, and development
- offers opportunity for learning through competition and community service
- offers opportunities for professional development for educators who coach teams
- inspires teamwork and participation in community decisions and action
- encourages outdoor, experiential learning

Who participates? Over 500 young people and their teachers and coaches from more than 50 communities across Massachusetts participate in the Mass Envirothon program each year.

The Competition. Each May, participating schools and organizations send teams of five students to the state competition, held at a state park or other site of significant interest. At the Envirothon, teams

- visit ecostations where they test their knowledge and skills for management of natural resources
- make a presentation of their Current Issue findings to a panel of judges - including natural resource managers, local and state officials, scientists, and environmental advocates - who rate them on their knowledge, proposed solutions, and presentation skills
- share their community research and action projects at lunchtime roundtables
- explore the site and revisit test stations to learn more

An awards ceremony recognizes the top scoring teams in a number of categories, as well as teams that have met high standards for their community research. The winning team has the opportunity to represent Massachusetts at the Canon Envirothon, in a competition held each summer that draws winning teams from states and provinces all across North America.

Where is it held? The site for each year's Mass Envirothon is carefully chosen to feature Massachusetts ecosystems and issues, and to give teams a chance to encounter a variety of Massachusetts environments.

The 2011 competition will be held at Great Brook Farm State Park in Carlisle. In recent years the event has been held at Otter River State Forest in Baldwinville, The Trustees of Reservations' Doyle Environmental Center in Leominster, Hopkinton State Park, Blackstone River Heritage State Park in Uxbridge, and Wachusett Community College in Gardner.

The Current Issue. Each year features a new Current Issue topic for community research. Teams investigate the issue as it occurs in their own community and prepare a presentation on their findings and recommendations. **The Current Issue topic for 2011 is Wetland Protection.** Topics are developed to be relevant to all Massachusetts communities. In recent years topics have included Groundwater Protection, Outdoor Recreation and the Environment, Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy, Natural Resources in the Urban Environment, Invasive Species, and Stormwater Management.

Resources. The Massachusetts Envirothon provides a variety of resources for participating teams, including

- professional development and networking for Envirothon coaches and prospective coaches
- a manual featuring background and references on each of the natural resource areas represented in the competition
- a guide to resources for the Current Issue, including suggestions for how to get started on community research
- a series of workshops through the year, often held at institutions of higher education, that introduce teams and coaches to Envirothon topics and issues

Scholarship. The University of Massachusetts College of Natural Sciences offers a \$1,000 scholarship each year to an incoming student who has participated in the Massachusetts Envirothon.

Who plans the Envirothon? The Massachusetts Envirothon is planned each year by the Massachusetts Envirothon Steering Committee, a subcommittee of the Massachusetts State Commission for the Conservation of Soil, Water, and Related Resources. Members of the Steering Committee represent a variety of federal and state agencies and nongovernmental organizations. In 2011 the committee included members from the Mass Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, the Mass Department of Conservation & Recreation, Mass Wildlife, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Massachusetts Extension, Mass Association of Conservation Districts.

Who pays for the Envirothon? More than 90% of the Mass Envirothon “budget” comes from partnerships, volunteerism, and contributed resources. Only a small (though critical) 10% comes from cash donations, grants, and a \$150 team registration fee. The program relies on the support and good will and participation of a variety of local, state, and federal agencies, educational institutions, businesses, non-profit organizations, and individual volunteers.

Web Site. Information on the Massachusetts Envirothon, including opportunities to contribute and volunteer, can be found at the programs web site: <http://www.maenvirothon.org>.

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