



2015 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 40 communities across Massachusetts participate in the Mass Envirothon program each year.

The Competition. Each May, participating schools and organizations send teams of up to ten 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
- participate in service and learning activities
- share their community research and action projects at lunchtime roundtables
- explore the site and revisit test stations to learn more

Awards recognize 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 Envirothon, a program of the non-profit National Conservation Foundation ("NCF") in a competition held each summer that draws winning teams from states and provinces all across the continent.

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 2015 competition will be held at Quabbin Reservoir. In recent years the event has been held at Sholan Farms in Leominster, Borderland State Park in Easton, Great Brook Farm State Park in Carlisle, Otter River State Forest in Baldwinville, The Trustees of Reservations' Doyle Environmental Center in Leominster, Hopkinton State Park, and Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park in Uxbridge.

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. **Current Issue for 2015 is "Climate Crisis: Taking Action in Massachusetts Communities"**. Topics are developed to be relevant to all Massachusetts communities. In recent years topics have included Sustainable Local Agriculture, Sustainable Stormwater Management, Groundwater Protection, Outdoor Recreation and the Environment, Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy, Natural Resources in the Urban Environment, Invasive Species, and Wetland Protection.

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

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, businesses, and nongovernmental organizations. In 2014, the wider committee includes members from the Mass. Department of Conservation & Recreation, Mass. Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Mass. Department of Environmental Protection, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Alden Research Laboratory, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mass Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, and the 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 \$200 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.

Website. Information on the Massachusetts Envirothon, including opportunities to contribute and volunteer, can be found at the program’s website: <http://www.maenvirothon.org> .

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