

# MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON

## FACT SHEET

### What is the Envirothon?

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. Envirothon competitions are held in 49 U.S. states, three U.S. territories, the District of Columbia and 10 Canadian provinces.



### 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 the Bay State participate in the Massachusetts 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 natural resource management knowledge and skills
- present their Current Issue findings to a panel of judges - including natural resource managers; local, state and federal officials; scientists; and environmental advocates - who rate the teams on their knowledge, proposed solutions, and presentation skills
- share their stories of ecosystem exploration and community action at the EnviroTrek Lunch
- explore the site and meet the natural resource professionals who write the tests

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 North American Envirothon, in a competition held each summer that draws winning teams from states and provinces all across the continent.

### Where is the competition held?

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

In recent years the event has been held at the Quabbin Reservoir in Belchertown, Sholan Farms in Leominster, Borderland State Park in North 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.



## Massachusetts Envirothon: The Next Generation.

For nearly three decades, the Massachusetts Envirothon has been engaging young people in hands-on exploration and investigation of the important environmental issues affecting themselves, their families and their communities.

We are looking to the future and the role the Envirothon should play as we face the continuing challenge of protecting our environment and safeguarding our natural resources. We are engaging Envirothon participants and supporters in the development of a vision that will sustain this important program through these challenging times.

The Envirothon is successful because of the enthusiasm of its teams and coaches and the generous support -- in time, resources, and funding -- provided by schools, parents, environmental agencies, businesses, organizations, and individuals. We hope to build upon this enthusiasm to guarantee a sustainable and effective program far into the future.

**If you would like to contribute to this effort** please contact Joe Smith, Chairman of the Massachusetts State Commission for Conservation of Soil, Water, and Related Resources at [woodsman54@verizon.net](mailto:woodsman54@verizon.net).



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## 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.

Topics are developed to be relevant to all Massachusetts communities. In recent years topics have included Climate Crisis: Taking Action in Massachusetts Communities; Sustainable Local Agriculture; Trees, Forests, and Sustainability; 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 for teams

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 and nongovernmental organizations.

The wider committee includes members from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts.

## Who pays for the Envirothon?

More than 90 percent of the Massachusetts Envirothon budget comes from partnerships, volunteerism, and contributed resources. A critical 10 percent 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.

## For more information

For more information on the Massachusetts Envirothon, including opportunities to participate, contribute and volunteer, visit the website at [www.maenvirothon.org](http://www.maenvirothon.org).

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