



MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON

May 26, 2025

Andrew C. Baker, Principal
Lexington High School
251 Waltham Street
Lexington MA 02420

Dear Principal Baker,

Congratulations to the Lexington High School Envirothon Team for their hard work and success at the 2025 Massachusetts Envirothon! The team took first place at all stations and first place overall in the [competition](#)! was one of 3 teams across the state completing requirements for the Mass Envirothon [Community Engagement Award](#) for their work on the 2025 [Current Issue Forest Stewardship: Resilience for a Changing Climate](#).

2025 participating team members – all from Lexington – were:

Avery Iletto	grade 9	Tomer Elkayam	grade 12
Taya Slobodchikov	grade 9	Eileen Ho	grade 12
Teeas Patra	grade 9	Caroline Ehmann	grade 12
Amy Zhang	grade 9	Erin Suh	grade 12
Jocelyn Chen	grade 11	Kevin Ma	grade 12
Nalini Datta	grade 11	Veohm Patel	grade 12

The team was coached by Lexington teacher Steve Wilkins.

The Mass Envirothon Community Engagement Award recognizes teams who engage in thorough and wide-ranging community investigations in preparation for their Current Issue presentation AND THEN take this new knowledge and put it to work in an action project in their community. Their work exemplifies the integration of science and civic knowledge and skills and the building of community connections that are critical for addressing environmental issues in a democratic society. Teams often engage in the kind of student-led civic activity envisioned in the Massachusetts 2018 [Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement](#).

Qualifying for this award in 2025 required teams to become familiar with tree and forestland conservation initiatives that are occurring in their communities. They conducted in-person interviews, visited forested sites (large and small), and investigated and evaluated web resources and resource organizations. Documentation of each team's work – and reflection on what they found – was collected using the [Research and Action Checklist](#). In addition to documenting their efforts, Envirothon Community Award teams participate in a zoom interview that offers the chance for a wider public to learn about the teams' work and perspectives.

What they did: The Lexington Envirothon team undertook a variety of science and civic research activities to learn about forest lands and how to protect them. A visit to Ipswich Wildlife Sanctuary in Topsfield and Wenham provided them with appreciation for well-protected and -maintained ecosystems. A visit to Arlington Great Meadows, a favorite Lexington conservation area, showed them the disturbance

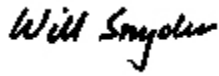
that invasive species can cause to ecosystem services. As one action project, the team volunteered for several hours of hard field work in the Meadows in both fall and spring, helping to eradicate invasives and plant native species in their place. In their interviews with local officials and activists, the team learned that land development is also a threat to forests as resources for climate resilience, and that there are several ways that undeveloped land can be protected. They met with citizen organizations, including Citizens for Lexington Conservation, and with the town's Conservation Commission, to learn more about options for putting more land in conservation through tools like conservation easements. The team saw an important role for themselves in educating the rising generation about land conservation.

Envirothon teams gain strong environmental knowledge and community connections through their research and action experiences. They develop teamwork, stewardship values, and skills for civic engagement. They show that they are capable of college level work and that they can make a real contribution to their communities. Their coaches deserve special commendation for the time and care they put into working with the teams.

Documentation of the Lexington team's work can be found at the [2025 Community Engagement Awards](#) webpage.

Thank you for your support of the Lexington team and their coach! More about the Envirothon can be found at <https://www.massenvirothon.org>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will Snyder". The script is cursive and fluid.

Will Snyder
Massachusetts Envirothon Steering Committee
wsnyder@umass.edu

cc: Julie L Hackett, Superintendent
Steven Wilkins, Envirothon coach
Holly Samuels, Krefta Landscaping, Inc.
Representative Michelle Ciccolo
Senator Cindy F. Friedman
The Lexington Observer
Rebecca Tepper, Massachusetts Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs
Stephanie Cooper, Undersecretary for Environment, Massachusetts EEA