



West Virginia
Conservation Agency

2016 Envirothon Winners Announced

For Immediate Release

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COWEN, W.Va. – A team of Doddridge County high school students took first place at the 20th annual Envirothon this weekend.

Each member of the Doddridge County Gold team receives a \$1,000 college scholarship and will go on to represent West Virginia in the National Conservation Foundation's 2016 North American Envirothon, which will be held July 24-29 in Ontario, Canada.

Also placing in this year's competition were Ravenswood FFA (2nd place), Jefferson County FFA (3rd place), Hampshire County (4th place) and Mineral County FFA (5th place).

"I'm so excited," said Teresa Hart, a member of Doddridge County Gold. "This is my senior year and the last time I was here was two years ago and we came in 12th, and now we have 1st place. We jumped so far and I'm so excited!"

The team worked hard over the past six months, team member James Heflin said. They met regularly to train, study and practice for their presentations.

"I would definitely encourage anyone to participate in Envirothon," he said. "It's a fun experience indoors and outdoors."

The win means that team adviser Craig Bode will have to honor a promise he made to his students.

"This is big news for our community," he said. "When the sports teams win the state title the firetrucks bring the teams through town. I told the kids if they win I will call and have the fire truck bring them into town. I guess I'm calling now!"

Each year, the West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD) hosts the state's Envirothon competition, a conservation education program and competition for students in grades nine through 12. Envirothon focuses on five subject areas: aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and a current environmental topic.

Students learn about West Virginia's diverse ecosystem and how they can help conserve and protect it for future generations. To date, Envirothon has awarded more than \$170,000 in college scholarships to West Virginia students.

"Envirothon is a competition for high school students with a focus on conservation education in an outdoors environment," said John Sencindiver, State Envirothon Committee chairman. "The main purpose is to teach participants how to address environmental issues outside of their classrooms and make a positive difference in conservation efforts. Students benefit in many ways and may develop an appreciation for what our natural resources provide to us all. They see the need for conservation firsthand and learn why it's so important to be good stewards for our environment."

Teams are made up of five students with one adult adviser or chaperone. Many have chosen a teacher. Teams can be created through school clubs, home school groups, classes, 4-H groups, Scout troops, etc. Once formed, teams must register for the upcoming West Virginia Envirothon, get their study materials and prepare for the competition. Teams are tested on their natural resource knowledge, skills and problem-solving abilities.

"The competition remains strong because people are interested in having an increased awareness of their surroundings and how to best care for our natural resources worldwide," Sencindiver said.

Twenty-four teams, consisting of about 150 students from Hampshire, Jefferson, Marshall, Calhoun, Mineral, Braxton, Jackson, Nicholas, Barbour, Cabell, Roane, Pleasants, Morgan, Webster, and Preston counties competed in this year's Envirothon.

Award amounts are as follows:

2nd place: \$750 per student

3rd place: \$500 per student

4th place: \$350 per student

5th place: \$250 per student

