

New Jersey Envirothon

2011-2012 Annual Newsletter



Sponsored by the Conservation Partnership: New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts, New Jersey Dept of Agriculture/State Soil Conservation Committee, USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension, and New Jersey Dept of Environmental Protection

15th Edition

www.njenvirothon.org

January 2012

2012 Envirothon

The 2012 NJ Envirothon competition will be held on May 5, 2012 at Camp Sacajawea Girl Scout Camp, Farmingdale, NJ.

The Environmental Issue for the 2012 Envirothon is: **Nonpoint Source Pollution/ Low Impact Development.**

Information about the NJ Envirothon is available at your local Soil Conservation District office, online at: www.njenvirothon.org or by calling Rich Belcher, Envirothon Coordinator, at 609.292.5540.



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2011 New Jersey Envirothon Winners - MATES

By Graelyn Brashear* of the Lacey Patch (Issue: May 17, 2011)

For the second year running, students from Stafford's Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Sciences (MATES) will represent New Jersey at an environmental competition that draws students from across the continent. James Geddis of Jackson, Alex Hascha of Brick, Kelsey Lardiere of Manahawkin, Michelle Predi of Barnegat Light and Ryan Sullivan of Lacey led MATES to a second victory in as many years at the New Jersey Envirothon, an annual competition where students answer questions testing their knowledge in forestry, soils, aquatics, wildlife management and current environmental issues. Now they've got their eye on a top ranking at the Canon Envirothon, which takes place in New Brunswick, Canada later this summer.

The Canon Envirothon is the largest environmental education competition in North America. Hundreds of thousands of students from the U.S. and Canada participate each year in competitions in their respective states and provinces, with one winning team from each moving on to a national-level competition that pits students from all corners of the continent against each other in a battle of science skills and knowledge.

The MATES students worked all year to prep for the chance to hold onto their state title and get another shot at nationals, said advisor Adam Sprague, a teacher at the academy.

The breadth of knowledge the students have to master and retain to succeed is vast, Sprague said. The competition requires them to do everything from identifying trees by species and calculating the board feet they could supply to hopping down in a pit to classify layers of soil.

Even the returning champions needed to study up. "It's a matter of keeping them on

edge and challenging them to push themselves," Sprague said.

Two MATES teams traveled to Mahwah's Camp Glen Gray for the May 7 event, said Sprague, camping out and spending a full, tense day taking written and field tests and offering presentations on this year's current events topic, freshwater estuaries – a lucky draw for students from a marine sciences school.

In 2010, spurred by a very close second-place finish the year before, the school's older and more experienced team won the state competition by a big margin. This time around was another story. "We didn't win any sections like we usually do," said Lacey senior Ryan Sullivan, 17, a three-year Envirothon veteran. Normally, MATES' more experienced team swept a few categories, he said. This year, they were strong across the board, but didn't shine in any particular section of study.

As it turned out, the well-rounded approach was to their advantage, but there was some uncertainty before officials read out the scores and announced them the winners, said Sprague. "They were confident all year," he said. "That was the first time I saw doubt in their faces."

For the hard-earned win, each of the MATES team members received \$1,000 scholarships from the New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts, \$2,000 scholarships from Richard Stockton State College and \$1,000 scholarships from Applied and Health Sciences at Kean University, said Lynn Richmond, spokeswoman for the NJ Department of Agriculture, an event sponsor.

(Continued — See MATES on page 3)



Sponsor Spotlight on Wakefern Food Corporation

Wakefern Food Corporation and ShopRite stores share a long-standing commitment to protect the environment and conserve natural resources. For the past 30 years, ShopRite supermarkets have worked to implement policies, procedures and initiatives to reduce their environmental impact. Examples of “green” store improvements include the installation of solar panels at the ShopRites of Wharton and Garwood, NJ; extensive in-store recycling and composting efforts; and using super-efficient refrigeration systems and energy saving lighting systems in many ShopRite stores.

Wakefern’s commitment starts in its stores and continues in its neighborhoods and communities. This is important for the earth and important to customers. For many years, Wakefern has donated money, materials and time to local environmental projects such as liter abatement, coastal clean-ups, tree plantings, and threatened and endangered wildlife preservation efforts.

The Wakefern — Envirothon partnership is a natural connection.

“Wakefern’s sponsorship helps the NJ Envirothon program to reach its goal: to encourage students to become better informed, active participants in natural resource management and problem solving,” explained Richard Belcher, NJ Envirothon Coordinator.

In addition to Wakefern’s financial support for the past six years, Suzanne Forbes, Environmental Affairs Administrator at Wakefern Food Corporation, is excited to volunteer her own time as a judge for the Team Presentation portion of the event this spring. She explained, “Wakefern has always taken great pride in protecting our environment and embracing sustainable business practices. The New Jersey Envirothon competition provides the next generation’s environmental leaders with valuable hands-on experience as they work together to solve local environmental issues.”



Support the New Jersey Envirothon!
The NJ Envirothon is made possible through generous donations from
businesses and organizations from across the state.
Visit the NJ Envirothon website for more information: www.njenvirothon.org



2012 Envirothon Set for Camp Sacajawea in Monmouth County

By Karen Rowe, Freehold Soil Conservation District

The 19th annual NJ Envirothon, a natural resources problem-solving competition for high school students, will be held on May 5, 2012 at Camp Sacajawea Girl Scout Camp in Farmingdale, Monmouth County.

Camp Sacajawea, which is owned by the Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore Council, is located on more than 140 wooded acres featuring a lakeside cabin nestled at the end of a private, stream-fed lake. A low-ropes challenge course, two interactive hiking trails (trees & fitness), archery, zip-line, climbing wall, swimming pool and boating facilities are available in season.

Envirothon teams can choose to arrive on Friday night and camp using their own tents or the provided yurts, cabins or tent platforms. All campsites have drinking water and facilities nearby.

Freehold Soil Conservation District is pleased to host the 2012 NJ Envirothon.



**You only have
one chance to
celebrate
100 years
Register Now!**

2011 NJ Envirothon Held at Camp Glen Gray

By Angelo Caruso, Bergen Soil Conservation District Manager



The 18th annual NJ Envirothon was held in the rustic wilderness known as Camp Glen Gray located in the Ramapo Mountains of Mahwah in Bergen County. The 750 acres of woods and four acres of lake were the perfect setting for 38 teams of high school students to experience this unique combination of camping and environmental competition.

As the host district, Bergen SCD had its hands full helping coordinate such an event in the often rough terrain. Tables, chairs, tents, food, refreshments, and camping gear had to be lugged up steep, rocky trails and across wooden footbridges.

Volunteers from the NJ Department of Agriculture State Soil Conservation Committee, NJ Soil Conservation Districts, NJ Search & Rescue Squad, NJ Department of Environmental Protection, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rutgers University, Bergen County Department of Parks and the Friends of Camp Glen Gray all worked together to make it happen.

Teams arriving on Friday were assigned camping areas and were warned not to keep food in their tents to avoid close encounters with black bears and other critters. Some teams chose to stay in one of the many cabins on site and dinner was served at the Old Dining Hall Lodge to all campers. A campfire, along with all the fixing for s'mores attracted many students. Some took the rare opportunity to view the night sky, without the distraction of city lights, through a telescope set up by Marc Rogoff, a NJDEP employee and amateur astronomer.

Opening ceremonies took place in the amphitheater overlooking Lake Vreeland. Students and advisors were welcomed by local, county and state dignitaries including Maura DeNicola, Bergen County Freeholder.

Throughout the day students worked their way through a series of timed stations that tested their practical environmental knowledge and their team presentation skills. By late afternoon teams assembled to await the final scores, with DJ entertainment and refreshments.

The winners of the 2011 event were: 1st — Marine Academy of Technology & Environmental Science Team #1 (pictured below), 2nd — Four Guys & A Princess (a first time participating team that received a standing ovation from their peers), and 3rd — Princeton High School Team #1.

Congratulations to all the teams for their outstanding sportsmanship and courtesy (there were no disqualifications and the camp was left in pristine condition)!

We wish to thank the County of Bergen and the Friends of Camp Glen Gray for their outstanding cooperation and the use of their facility. We also want to thank all the volunteers who worked so hard to make this event a success.

MATES (continued from page 1)

Now, said Sullivan, the focus is on making a strong showing at the national competition, which takes place July 24 to 29 at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, Canada.

At nationals last year, he said, “we were really like a small fish in a big pond. We didn’t know what we were getting into, and it showed in our test scores. Hopefully we’ll better prepare ourselves and improve this year.”

That means brushing up on the species and the ecology of Canada’s Maritimes, said Sullivan. But preparing for the competition is hardly a chore, he said. He and the others care a lot about the subjects they’re studying, and some plan to use their knowledge they’ve gained in future careers. Sullivan, who excels at aquatics, wants to go into hydrogeology in college.

And when the science-minded students are studying



and competing, they’re truly among their peers.

At the competition, said Sullivan, “there are familiar faces everywhere. They’re people that share the same interests; people who really care.”

Note: MATES placed 24th out of 54 at the Canon Envirothon.

**The Author is a previous New Jersey Envirothon Participant.*

2011 Envirothon Sponsors & Contributors!

The New Jersey Envirothon primary sponsor is the **NJ Conservation Partnership** including: the NJ Association of Conservation Districts, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's State Soil Conservation Committee, New Jersey's 15 Soil Conservation Districts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

The NJ Envirothon would also not be possible without the generous support of the contributors listed below.

Allegheny Society of American Foresters — NJ Division

Atlantic County Board of Agriculture

Atlantic County Utilities Authority

Bergen County Soil Conservation District

Borgata Heart and Soul Foundation

Burlington County Soil Conservation District

Canon USA

Cape-Atlantic Conservation District

Cape May County Board of Agriculture

Duffy, Dolcy & McManus, P.A.

Firman E. Bear Chapter, SWCS

Freehold Soil Conservation District

Gloucester County Soil Conservation District

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Kearny Federal Savings

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Morris County Soil Conservation District

NJ Association of Conservation Districts

NJ Conservation District Employees

Association (NJCDEA)

NJ Department of Agriculture

NJ Department of Environmental Protection

Ocean County Soil Conservation District

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Somerset-Union Soil Conservation District

Sussex County Soil Conservation District

Tuckahoe Turf Farms

United Water Company

USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service

Wakefern Food Corporation

*Thank
You!*

38 teams dedicated many hours during the school year to prepare for the annual Envirothon and they were tested in aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and the 2011 environmental issue of Salt & Fresh Water Estuaries.



2011 NJ Envirothon Teams

Biotechnology High School Team 1	Kinnelon High Team 2 & Sparta High	Moorestown Friends School Team 1
Biotechnology High School Team 2	Kittatinny Regional High School	Moorestown Friends School Team 2
Bridgewater-Raritan High School	Manalapan High School	New Providence High School
Cedar Creek High School Team 1	Marine Academy of Science and	Princeton High School Team 1
Cedar Creek High School Team 2	Technology	Princeton High School Team 2
Clearview Regional High School Team 1	Marine Academy of Technology and	Somerville High School
Clearview Regional High School Team 2	Environmental Science Team 1	Triton Regional High School Team 1
Delran High School	Marine Academy of Technology and	Triton Regional High School Team 2
Egg Harbor Twp. High School Team 1	Environmental Science Team 2	Watchung Hills Regional High School
Egg Harbor Twp. High School Team 2	McNair Academic High	Team 1
Four Guys & A Princess	Middle Township High School Team 1	Watchung Hills Regional High School
High Tech High School Team 1	Middle Township High School Team 2	Team 2
High Tech High School Team 2	Millville Senior High School Team 1	Wayne High School
Hillsborough High School	Millville Senior High School Team 2	
Kinnelon High School Team 1	Montville Township High School	