

## **Project: Envirothon Collaboration**

**Project Leader: Will Snyder**

### **Project Overview**

The goal of this collaboration is to help young people to grow into caring, capable, scientifically literate, well-informed, engaged citizens who are prepared to contribute to their communities in the 21st century. The collaboration develops well-designed challenges for youth teams and provides adult coaches with background information and community connections that will help them be effective in their work with youth on community issues.

Mass Envirothon's collaboration with the UMass College of Natural Sciences also aims to encourage high school age young people to consider and explore routes to further experience and education that will allow them to participate responsibly and effectively in environmental protection and natural resource conservation, in their communities and in their careers.

### **Activity Summary 2015**

- Fall Envirothon team workshop at UMass (1)
- Judges training for Envirothon Current Issue (1)
- Mass Envirothon Spring Workshop (1)
- Mass Envirothon winter workshop(1)
- Massachusetts Envirothon Community Awards Information for Teams (1)
- Massachusetts Envirothon Current Issue Questions & Resources for Teams (1)
- Massachusetts Envirothon Final Competition (1)

### ***Total Educational contacts***

	Youth Contacts	Adult Contacts
In Person	1114	248
Indirect Contacts (Print, Web, etc...)		

## **Narrative Summary and Impact**

We maintained positive working relationships with our site sponsors – UMass Amherst, Worcester Technical High School, and Alden Laboratory – and held our workshops at the same three sites as in 2013-14. The same sites are tentatively planned for 2015-16.

For the May competition, our use of the fields near the Quabbin Visitor Center in Belchertown went extremely well, thanks in large part to a great working relationship with their staff (two of our MESC members are on staff there). Approximately 430 team members, coaches, judges, committee members, and other volunteers were present.

### **Other initiatives.**

**Massachusetts Envirothon Council (MEC) was formed** and met three times as a committee of the State Commission for Conservation of Soil, Water, and Related Resources. 14 members, representing leadership from environmental agencies, higher education, conservation districts, and community organizations, also included a parent and an Envirothon alumnus.

**The MEC began fundraising/partnership building efforts.** Most notably, a fundraising letter and menu of sponsorship/contribution options was piloted. The first annual fundraising goal of \$10,000 was reached days before the May competition with a \$5,000 gift from National Grid, building on a variety of individual and organizational contributions.

**A conference call/webinar for new coaches was developed and presented** in September, offering a slide show and the opportunity for new coaches to hear about the program directly from experienced coaches.

**An email newsletter to the wider Envirothon community was piloted in the spring.** We expect that this newsletter will help with fundraising efforts, reach parents directly, and keep the program in touch with alumni. Work also began on design of a new web site.

**Media outreach accelerated.** Coverage of the 2015 event was extensive, including highly visible coverage in Northampton and Worcester. More than 80 pages of coverage were collected through the end of June.

**Recruiting for diversity continued with help from the Worcester County Conservation District.** WCCD proposed, was awarded, and is managing an 18 month \$2000 grant from the NCF Envirothon for outreach and team recruitment in designated environmental justice communities.

**The Mass Envirothon Steering Committee stayed the course.** A core steering committee of eight, plus our part time coordinator, met in September, December, March, April, May, and June to plan and organize the 2015 program. We were assisted by twelve additional Advisory members who took specific responsibilities.

## **Collaborating Organizations**

- **Massachusetts Envirothon Committee**
- **Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts**
- **Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation**
- **Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection**
- **Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs**
- **Natural Resources Conservation Service – USDA**

