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## **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.

Through the collaboration, UMass facilitates access to applied science and youth development expertise across the Commonwealth as well as on the UMass campus. The Mass Envirothon network includes local officials and citizens serving on municipal boards, scientists and policy staff in state environmental agencies, and environmental advocates in nongovernmental organizations, all of whom are interested in helping to prepare youth who will be active citizens in Massachusetts communities in decades to come.

### **Activity Summary**

- 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***

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

## **Narrative Summary and Impact**

The Massachusetts Envirothon program continued to provide a rich, positive youth development experience in natural resource and environmental affairs, and also in teamwork, presentation skills, and community research, according to surveys of teams and coaches at the end of the year. Coaches indicated that they had a strong learning experience, as well.

Program participation represents significant geographic diversity, including rural, suburban, and urban teams from across Massachusetts. This diversity was again enhanced by a recruiting effort in Environmental Justice communities made possible by a grant from the North American Envirothon.

The number of teams involved in the program appears to be growing again. The number of teams that are more deeply involved, as indicated by their earning the Envirothon Community Research and Community Action awards, are at the highest level ever.

The Mass Envirothon steering committee has fewer members able to take a role in guiding the program as a whole. However, the committee continues to be able to recruit needed natural resource, education, and publicity specialists to organize specific pieces of the program. Volunteers for the competition day in May are plentiful.

This year, with a Current Issue focus on Sustainable Local Agriculture, UMass Amherst's College of Natural Sciences and the Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment played a robust role, sponsoring the fall 2013 workshop for teams and providing judges and resource people for the spring competition.

## **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**