

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 2016

- 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 held our workshops at the same three sites as in 2014-15. The same sites are tentatively planned for 2016-17, since we have maintained positive working relationships with our workshop site sponsors – UMass Amherst, Worcester Technical High School, and Alden Laboratory.

Mass Envirothon officially organized four face-to face events in the 2015-2016 year, three workshops for teams and coaches and one final competition. Workshop agendas with session descriptions are available online.

For the May competition, our use of the recreation area below the dam at Hopkinton State Park went very well. We were particularly grateful to DCR for providing the big tents for registration, lunch, and the opening and closing programs. Thanks also to the USDA APHIS Asian Longhorn Beetle program and Student Conservation Association staff for leading activities for participants in the breaks in the competition. Present at the event were 247 team members, 49 coaches, 52 judges and Current Issue volunteers, 21 Steering Committee and Council members, and 97 other volunteers, for a total of 466 participating in the event.

New Initiatives and Other News.

Massachusetts' 2015 winning team from Newton North High School met with EEA Secretary Matt Beaton in August upon their return (and national fourth place finish) from Missouri.

Massachusetts Envirothon Council (MEC) and the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts continued fundraising/partnership-building efforts. Most significant among these contributions was generous support from the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. A complete list of partners, sponsors, and contributors is in the program for the May 12 Envirothon competition.

Recruiting for diversity continued with the help of the Worcester County Conservation District. WCCD is managing an 18 month \$2,000 grant from the NCF Envirothon for outreach and team recruitment in designated environmental justice communities.

The Mass Envirothon Steering Committee advisory membership grew. 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 2016 program. We added four additional Advisory members who took specific responsibilities, bringing our full advisory committee to 16 members.

Long-time Springfield Central High School coach Naomi Volain was one of ten finalists for the Varkey Foundation's Global Teacher Prize. With some of her prize, she made a donation to the Massachusetts Envirothon program to be used to provide more hands-on experience for teams and coaches.

A group of newly retired coaches volunteered to advise and provide assistance to the program on key curriculum and recruiting initiatives. One of these coaches was a co-presenter on an Envirothon workshop at the 2016 Mass Environmental Education Society conference in March.

A "Mini Envirothon" competition was part of the spring workshop at Alden Laboratory in Holden. Teams circulated to stations – including a soil pit – and took tests and learned the answers. The experience was especially valuable for new teams that had not experienced the competition before. The Alden site is perfect for this event, and teams and coaches showed much enthusiasm for the opportunity.

Mass Envirothon began moving to online registration and online evaluation surveys. This will save coordinator time for more outreach. However, our paper forms provided an important backup this year.

A new Mass Envirothon website with an updated look (<http://www.massenvirothon.org>) was launched.

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**