

History of Envirothon

The Envirothon is a good example of an ongoing partnership with conservation district associations and cooperating state, provincial, and federal natural resource agencies. The program boasts a successful history of providing hands-on environmental and natural resource management education to high school students, empowering young people with the competencies and motivation vital to achieving and maintaining a natural balance between the quality of life and the quality of the environment.

In 1979, the Pennsylvania Soil and Water Conservation Districts created an "Environmental Olympics" as a way to encourage high school students to become interested in natural resource conservation and environmental issues and careers. The Environmental Olympics, later shortened to Enviro-Olympics, quickly gained popularity as a hands-on outdoor competition designed to challenge and test students knowledge of soils/land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife and current environmental issues.

The program grew rapidly and involved 40 conservation district teams at the 1987 Pennsylvania State Enviro-Olympics, providing greater visibility and stimulating interest from neighboring states.

In 1988 the program became known as the Envirothon. Teams from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Massachusetts competed in the first "National Envirothon." The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts hosted the event. Subsequently, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Maine hosted the annual "National Envirothon," and in 1992 the first Canadian team (from Nova Scotia) participated in the competition, hosted by Maryland's Envirothon Committee.

Historically, Envirothon funding came from local conservation districts, state conservation committees, state, federal and provincial conservation organizations, and provincial forestry associations. In 1997 Canon U.S.A., Inc. began supporting the Envirothon program and in 1999 became the title sponsor. The program currently operates under the name Canon Envirothon.

The Canon Envirothon is governed by the Canon Envirothon Committee (CEC) which consists of one representative from each member state/province. An Executive Director and the elected officers (known as the Canon Envirothon Board of Directors) provide program administration and day-to-day guidance.

Canon Envirothon is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization established to coordinate the delivery of an environmental education program for high school students throughout North America. The Canon Envirothon office is in League City, Texas. The program was incorporated in Ohio in 1992 for the purpose of introducing an education-based environmental competition.

Each year the Envirothon touches and positively influences the lives of over 500,000 young people across the country. That number will continue to grow as additional states become involved. More and more inquiries are made of the host state each year. Inquiries have come from around the world including States, Provinces, Mexican States, Turkey, Japan, and Australia. The Envirothon is truly becoming International in scope. Thanks to dedicated volunteers, staff of cooperating agencies, teachers and advisors, enthusiastic students, and valuable support and sponsorship from organizations like Canon U.S.A., Monsanto Chemical Company, the American Clean Water Foundation, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Association of Conservation Districts, the Soil and Water Conservation Society, and many others, the Envirothon has proven to be an exciting and useful tool for incorporating environmental education into high school classrooms.

The Canon Envirothon is sponsored by Canon U.S.A., Inc., and local conservation districts, in partnership with U.S. Forest Service, and The National Association of Conservation Districts.

The Envirothon Program is offered and operated on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.