

# PA Environment Digest

## An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

Edited By: David E. Hess, Crisci Associates

Winner 2009 [PAEE Business Partner](#) Of The Year Award

---

Harrisburg, Pa

July 23, 2012

**Click On Link Below To Print Entire Digest**

<http://goo.gl/6vIRZ>

### **International Envirothon Draws Students To Pennsylvania**

Teams of high school students from 45 states and 9 Canadian provinces are expected to participate in the weeklong [2012 Canon Envirothon](#) opening July 22 at Susquehanna University.

This year's competition marks the 25th Anniversary of the Envirothon, which originate with Pennsylvania's county conservation districts.

Bill Kahler, who has been involved with the program since its inception, is impressed with how the Envirothon has grown, and how it has positively impacted participants.

"From being involved with the Envirothon since the beginning, it is very satisfying and fulfilling to see the program not only grow but to see where the participants have gone in their careers and how it has positively affected them." Kahler currently serves as Chairman of the PA Envirothon Board of Directors.

"We are delighted that Pennsylvania again is hosting this gathering of our bright, young environmental leaders of tomorrow," said DCNR Secretary Richard J. Allan. "Our state parks and forestlands have served as natural classrooms for these students since this national competition began here in 1988."

R.B. Winter State Park, near Forest Hill, Union County, will host student competitors on the opening day of the event, which runs through Friday, July 27. Participating in what is designated an "Education Day," students from each of the states and Canadian provinces will be exploring the natural wonders of the park's Halfway Lake and its 695 acres.

"This state park event gives our DCNR staff a chance to shine before an audience of more than 300 students and educators," Allan said. "Foresters, park managers, environmental educators and geologists all will be on hand to give our very special visitors an introduction to the rich natural world around them."

"We are honored to have been selected by Canon Envirothon to host the 25th anniversary competition. Because it started in Pennsylvania, the pride of the Envirothon is demonstrated by the overwhelming support of both public and private partnerships," said Lorelle Steach, 2012 Canon Envirothon co-chair and Pennsylvania Envirothon program coordinator. "We have nearly

200 volunteers from more than 10 county, state, and federal natural resource/ environmental organizations, all coming together to share their expertise and test knowledge of students across from North America."

Every year across North America, about 500,000 teenagers enrolled in high school grades 9-12 compete in provincial and state level competitions (a one or two day competition event) for the chance to go to the Canon Envirothon.

These 5-member teams are led by volunteer advisors and teachers who train the teens in hands-on environmental problem-solving after school or during weekends. In addition to bragging rights, teams that make it to the Canon Envirothon vie to win over \$125,000 in scholarships, prizes, and awards.

Discussion topics will include: old-growth forests; surrounding geologic features; backpacking and backcountry hiking; invasive species; fly fishing and the Pennsylvania success story of the wild elk.

This is the third national Envirothon hosted by Pennsylvania; others were in 1988, when the competition began, and in 1997. Throughout the 25 years, competing Pennsylvania high school teams won national honors 11 times.

This year, MMI Preparatory School, Luzerne County, was the [winner of the PA Envirothon](#) and will be seeking the 2012 title.

Pennsylvania has won the North American event in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2009. (No pressure here!)

#### **Envirothon Impact**

A shining example of a positively impacted Envirothon participant stands out in Eric Jordan, a former Envirothon Student from Pennsylvania, and a member of a team from York County who went on to not only participate in, but win the National Envirothon in 1991.

Mr. Jordan now works as an Erosion and Sedimentation Control Technician for his native York County's Conservation District.

Jordan states: "I clearly remember winning the Pennsylvania State Envirothon (third time is a charm) and how excited I was. At the same time, I was also a very shy kid and was absolutely terrified of the thought of participating in the National Envirothon competition - away from home and in front of lots of people. But with a passion for conservation and with the support of my coach, teammates, family, and the York County Conservation District, I found myself on a bumpy airplane ride bound for Presque Isle, Maine. Winning the national championship was the highlight of my high school career, and without question, gave me the confidence to pursue a college degree in natural resources (B.S. Wildlife & Fisheries Science, PSU 1995). The Envirothon also influenced my decision to stay in my native York County working for the Conservation District for the last 13 years."

#### **Canon U.S.A. Support**

Since 1997, Canon U.S.A. has been the title sponsor of what is the culmination of a series of competitions that began during the students' prior school year, involving more than 500,000 teen-agers throughout North America. In written tests, hands-on learning, and oral presentations starting on the local level, winning five-member teams from schools and organizations competed for the distinction of representing their state, province or territory at the upcoming national competition.

Participating teams complete training and testing in five natural resource categories: soils and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and current environmental issues. The Envirothon works in partnership with local conservation districts, forestry associations,

educators, and cooperating natural resource agencies to organize and conduct competitions on the local, regional, state, and/or provincial level.

In addition, as part of their oral testing addressing the topic "Non-Point Pollution and Low-Impact Development," students will be focusing on Greene and Guilford townships, Franklin County, as part of a case study overseen by a committee that includes Bureau of State Parks' environmental educators.

National competition is organized by the National Association of Conservation Districts in the United States; U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service; and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service.

### **PA Envirothon**

At the state level, [the PA Envirothon](#) is sponsored by Pennsylvania's 66 conservation districts, the State Conservation Commission, and the PA Association of Conservation Districts. Technical expertise is provided by: DCNR, Department of Environmental Protection, Game Commission, Fish & Boat Commission, and the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Other important sponsors include: EXCO Resources (PA), The Hershey Company, American Honda Foundation, PPL Corporation, Air Products Foundation, Bayer HealthCare, Canon Envirothon, PA Trappers Association, PA Outdoor Writers Association, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, State Conservation Commission and the PA Growing Greener Program.

The Hershey Company, Dwight Lewis Lumber, Lewis Lumber Products and Cargill provide additional support.

For more details, visit the [2012 Canon Envirothon](#) website.