



ENVIROTHON UPDATE

High School: Thirty-four high school teams from five public schools, two private schools, and one home school, competed in the 25th Annual Lebanon County Envirothon at Middle Creek Wildlife Refuge. Students from various backgrounds who have a common interest in the environment competed in five areas of environmental science, including wildlife, forestry, soils and land use, aquatic ecology, and a current environmental issue. This year, the current issue was *Recreational Impacts on the Environment*.

The Envirothon program originated in Pennsylvania in the spring of 1979 at the high school level. Since then, it has been strengthening environmental awareness of high students in 48 states and eight Canadian Provinces. It has also grown locally. In 1979, only a handful of high schools competed in the first event and today, nearly 700 high schools are participating in all 67 counties across Pennsylvania. In Lebanon County, and many other counties, the program has expanded to the middle school and elementary level.

With pressing long-term issues as climate change, land use, alternative energy resources vs. food production, and waste management, our students are learning the importance of taking an active role in conservation and environmental stewardship. The 150+ students from Lebanon High, Northern Lebanon, Cedar Crest, ELCO, Palmyra, Lebanon Catholic, Lebanon Christian Academy, and Lebanon Area Homeschool Network (LAHN) are the ones who will be our future leaders and policy makers. The knowledge they've gained through the Envirothon experience will hopefully lead them to taking action, working in their local community, implementing conservation practices at home and school, sharing their knowledge and interest with others, and hopefully, one day, leading us to become a sustainable nation in the future.

The winners of the 25th Annual Lebanon County High School Envirothon are:

- ◆ 1st-3rd place—ELCO teams #1, #2, and #4
- ◆ 4th place-LAHN
- ◆ 5th place—ELCO #3
- ◆ 6th place—Northern Lebanon #4



Emily Beckhardt, Katie Weaver, Paige Shaver, Keith Stoudt, Adam Neiswinter and their advisor, Mrs. Lynn Aponick, will be traveling to Penn State University, Main Campus, on May 19th and 20th to compete against 67

other county winners at the 25th Annual Pennsylvania Envirothon. Good luck, ELCO Team #1! We wish you the best and hope to see you in Flagstaff, Arizona at the national Canon Envirothon!

Middle School Envirothon:

There were some new faces at the 10th Annual Lebanon County Middle School Envirothon this year. In addition to the 25 Lebanon County teams, there were two teams from Ephrata Middle School, creating our 1st joint Lebanon/Lancaster Middle School Envirothon. Currently, Lancaster County does not have a middle school Envirothon due to the lack of interest from schools, so Lebanon extended the invitation for Ephrata to join our event and experience what an Envirothon is all about.

Similar to the high school event, the students are tested in the same areas of study (wildlife, forestry, aquatic, soils and land use), excluding a current environmental issue.

On Thursday, May 8th, 130 students braved the rain, wind, and cooler temperatures as they worked together in teams of 3-5 students and scrutinized tracks, mounts, twigs, leaves, and soil textures, for proper identification. They used a soil survey and topographic map to determine if a site was suitable for constructing a home with a basement and a septic tank. They manipulated Biltmore sticks to measure a tree's diameter, height, and the total number of board feet in a tree. The Penn State Master Gardeners taught the teams about invasive plants and the characteristics which make a plant or animal "invasive".

The winners of the Lebanon/Lancaster Middle School Envirothon were:

Lebanon:

- ◆ 1st place—Lebanon Area Home School Network
- ◆ 2nd place-5th place—Palmyra Middle School
- ◆ 6th place—Northern Lebanon

Lancaster:

- ◆ 1st-2nd place—Ephrata Middle School



LAHN



Ephrata Middle School

All the participants of the environmental competition were awarded certificates and Hershey's candybars for their hard work.

Members of the **LAHN** team include Hannah Jay, Nate Hebbert, Shannon Stauffer, and Brooke Hinerman under the direction of advisor, Linda Barnum.

Members of **Ephrata** Middle School include Avery Brown, Keila Mankins, Emily Stewart, Jordan Dover, Ibsen Powers, and Jared Jaskolka, under the direction of Marcie W. Palko and Eric Martin.

QEWP GETS NEW LOOK

The Quittapahilla Educational Wetland Preserve is ready to be discovered and explored! The seven acre wetland site, now known as "the Quittapahilla Educational Wetland Preserve" provides a vital link to the health and welfare of the Lebanon community. In addition to providing a unique habitat for wildlife, the wetland protects our community from flooding, traps sediments and nutrients, and filters our local waters.

The wetland is already full of bustling animal and plant life! Muskrats, turtles, frogs, ducks, geese, herons, fish, and aquatic plants and insects can readily be seen at the wetlands.

Boardwalks, interpretive signs, picnic tables, bathrooms, and educational resources and equipment have now been installed and are available for use by local teachers and students, thanks to generous grant monies from the Chesapeake Bay Commission, the Department of Community and Economic Development, and the Department of Environmental Protection Environmental Education Grants Program. The facility is fully equipped to provide a natural, outdoor classroom where schools and community groups can experience, through hands-on learning, the value of wetlands and the creatures that inhabit it.

Most recently, a mural has been added to the façade of the pavilion, depicting a cross-section of a wetland and its flora and fauna. Local artists Elizabeth and Megan George of Wernersville—a mother/daughter team—designed and painted the mural at home in their art studio on 5x5 ft. sections of canvas. On Saturday, May 10th, the artists and a group of volunteers from the QEWP Committee helped glue the canvas to the pavilion's façade. Since this was Liz and Meg's first attempt, they contacted Michael Miller for advice and council. Michael Miller is the artist of many of the murals in Reading.

Now that the site is fully operational, we hope you will come out and explore the wetlands. As a teacher, you can help your students gain knowledge about watersheds, wetlands, and related content in preparation for Pennsylvania's Environment and Ecology Academic Standards. You and your students can conduct water quality tests and take soil samples; explore wetland habitats and observe the variety of plants and animals which live here; use the interpretive signs to learn more about wetlands and watersheds.

If you would like to bring your students out to the site,

you are encouraged to attend a one-day teacher workshop. This workshop will review the benefits of wetlands and the various activities that can be conducted on site. In addition, the workshop entitles you to full use of the facility (bathrooms, equipment, test kits, nets, pans, soil probes, etc.) at no cost. If you don't attend a workshop, you may use the site, but will be charged a facility fee and will need to bring your own educational materials.

A science integration workshop is scheduled for Saturday, June 7th, at QEWP. To register, call Leigh at 272-3908, ext. 112. We invite you to discover the many treasures hidden in 'your own backyard' at the Quittapahilla Educational Wetland Preserve.



SUMMER AG CAMP

The Lebanon County Conservation District will be conducting a summer Ag Camp August 4, 6, & 8 (Mon., Wed., & Fri.) for children ages 9-15. This 3-day program will highlight trees. Trees are a 'crop' and are grown and used for a variety of things—from houses and furniture, to musical instruments and medicines. We will tour a sawmill, meet a wood carver, explore a forest and learn about the many benefits of trees, and much more. Students will experience hands-on demonstrations on these various tours and will leave with a better understanding of what it takes to turn a tree into a man-made item.

Ag Camp will be conducted at the Lebanon Valley Ag Center, 2120 Cornwall Road, Lebanon, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with early dismissal of 1:30p.m. on Friday. Students are asked to bring their own camera & film for creating their personal photo journal. Cost is \$40 per person and includes tours, journals, and film development costs. Class size is limited to 40 and applicants are registered on a first-come, first-served basis. To obtain an application form, call 272-3908, ext. 4 or visit our website at www.lccd.org.



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