

Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)

There are 97 soil and water conservation districts making a difference in your community. No matter how big or small, each of the 102 counties has the services of a SWCD. From educating homeowners on practical utilization of water to helping rural landowners save soil and improve water quality; it takes everyone working together to protect our soil and water! Without these vital resources our communities cannot thrive!



We Need Your Help

SWCDs are an important link to deliver state and federal source programs and funds that directly benefit the local and state economy. The economic benefit the SWCDs provide is far greater than the amount of money that is appropriated for their use by the General Assembly.

Please support legislation that includes increased funding for the SWCDs.



THIS ISSUE

Illinois Envirothon Trains Young Leaders P. 1

We Need Your Help P. 1

Illinois Envirothon Trains Young Leaders (continued) P. 2

SWCDs Provide Many Kinds of Services and Assistance P. 2

Illinois Envirothon Trains Young Leaders

The 20th annual Illinois Envirothon was held April 30 through May 1st at the 4-H Memorial Campground at Allerton Park near Monticello, Illinois.

Fifteen teams representing high schools from all over the state and an additional seven teams representing FFA chapters converged on the site during the morning of April 30.

The teams spent the first day attending five different stations at which they were provided information on Forestry, Wildlife, Aquatics/Water Quality, Soils and a current topic which this year dealt with Sustainable Agriculture. After hearing the information at each station, each team was tested on their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter just presented.

The FFA teams then left to return to their respective schools. They use the State Envirothon as a training exercise for their national competition in environmental issues.

The school teams remained and competed the morning of May 1st with an oral presentation detailing a scenario using the Sustainable Agriculture topic. Teams were judged for their presentation skills, use of visual aids, knowledge of the subject and originality in addressing the scenario.

During the state competition the fifteen five-member teams rotated through five outdoor testing stations, where their knowledge was evaluated and scored through written examination. Additionally, the competition included an oral presentation component that challenged students to effectively apply and communicate a solution to a complex environmental issue. This year the Environmental issue was "Sustainable Agriculture: Achieving a balance between traditional agricultural with a local connection.

To earn a spot at the Illinois Envirothon each of the fifteen teams competed at a local event organized by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Land Use Councils (LUCs), in conjunction with partnership organizations and educators. These local events occur in late March to mid April and reach between 1,700 - 2,200 students. The highest scoring team from each of the 16 LUCs (each council is made up of 5-8 SWCDs) advances to the state competition.

The 2014 state winner was Midland High School, Varna, IL representing the Marshall-Putnam Soil and Water Conservation District.



Soil and Water Conservation Districts Provide Many Kinds of Services and Assistance.

- The 97 SWCDs are continually involved in implementing the most up-to-date conservation practices to maximize use of available resources while also protecting these essential environmental resources.
- SWCDs provide educational assistance to urban and rural decision makers so that they can make wise choices that will protect people and property in the future
- Through education and the various programs they administer, and the technical assistance they provide, SWCD's encourage the protection, conservation and wise use of our environmental resources to assure sustainability for future generations.



NOTE: SWCDs DO NOT have taxing authority and must rely on state source funding to employ staff to administer programs.

The Governor's 2015 budget provides level funding for the SWCDs. Your support in maintaining the Governor's recommended appropriation as a minimum is appreciated.

THANK YOU!

PROTECT & CONSERVE



Pictured is the Midland High School Envirothon Team being presented their first place award by Lonnie Wilson, Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, President.

teams who competed in the Illinois State Envirothon. These students are our future leaders in conserving, protecting and enhancing our important and highly valued natural resources!

Normally the state winner would advance to the national level, however, for 2014 there is no national level competition. The National Envirothon Program changed ownership at the end of 2013 and the new owner was not able to make all necessary arrangements for the national event to occur.

Realizing the disappointment created for the winning students by not being allowed to compete at a higher level, the AISWCD and representatives from nine other states have organized and will host a regional event at the Loyola University Retreat and Ecological Center near Woodstock, IL. The event is scheduled for August 3 -5, 2014.

The mission of the Envirothon program is to:

- enhance students' critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- encourage students and allow them to expand their knowledge concerning current environmental issues, and explain the impact individual actions can have on various environmental resources.
- help students become tomorrow's leaders, workers, and consumers who will make informed decisions regarding their actions and the potential impacts to our natural resources.
- give students valuable exposure to careers in environmental science and natural resource management.
- teach students to become environmentally aware, action-oriented adults.

We have no doubt that Midland High School will represent Illinois very well.

Second place in the state competition was awarded to Glenbrook South High School, Glenview, IL, representing the North Cook Soil and Water Conservation District.

To prepare for the state competition, Midland students combined classroom learning with hands-on field experiences focusing on five major topics - Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and the Current Environmental Issue.

Congratulations to Midland High School students and to all of the



Second place winner, Glenbrook South High School, receiving their award.