



Canon Envirothon

North America's largest high school environmental education competition

Fall 2007

Volume Four, No. 2

Arizona

From Desert to Tundra and a Canyon In-between

Linda Dee Diamantides
Arizona Envirothon Committee

From desert to tundra and a Canyon in-between, Arizona has it all! The 2008 Canon Envirothon will be held July 28 - August 3 at the Northern Arizona University Campus located in Flagstaff, Arizona. The Arizona Committee has been diligently preparing for this prestigious competition for quite some time. And they promise to make your visit a memorable one.

There is so much to see in the Grand Canyon State! Sedona, just southwest of Flagstaff, boasts its magical red rock country. The Sonoran desert, further down, flourishes with amazing flora and fauna adapted to a hot (but it's a dry heat!), arid environment. Phoenix, now a booming metropolitan city, is the home of symphonies, theatre, sports events, southwest eateries, and so much more! Tucson, to the south, still serves as a melting pot of three (Native American, Mexican, and Western) cultures that come together in a most hospitable way.



The Grand Canyon, Arizona's Showcase Attraction

Flagstaff, too, has much to offer. For the usual suspects, Flagstaff offers an interesting array of attractions. The Museum of Northern Arizona is a 75-year old organization focused on the people and surroundings of the Colorado Plateau. The Arboretum is known as America's Mountain Garden. It offers several miles of trails through alpine meadows, cool pine forests, cultivated gardens and experimental greenhouses.

Flagstaff is also home to the Coconino Center for the Arts and the Arizona Historical Society. The Lowell Observatory is a registered national historic landmark with telescope viewing, exhibits and a science center.

If you're an outdoor enthusiast, Meteor Crater, for example, is located just 35 miles east of Flagstaff. It is the best preserved

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Clay Burns, Executive Director

Twenty Years On....

Welcome to the start of the next twenty years of “North America’s Largest Environmental Education Competition.” Bienvenue to another twenty years of engaging the youth of North America in learning about our natural resources and becoming active stewards of our ever changing environment. May we continue the mission of helping the youth of North America learn HOW to question, not WHAT to think.

One can only wonder if those first three conservation districts in Pennsylvania would have ever dreamed that the program they formed would grow and expand to fifty-plus states and provinces across North America. The growth has not always come easily however: countless hours of grass roots work by volunteers, conservation district boards and staff, teachers, and resource professionals have made the spectacular growth of the Envirothon program possible.

The future of the Envirothon program as it heads into its third decade will focus on developing strategies to ensure the continued

success of our mission for years to come:

- Long range planning with input from local programs.

- Strong committees working to strengthen the educational mission of Envirothon.

- Partnering with natural resource groups to help train students.

- Developing broad-based funding resources to assist state and province Envirothons through current and new grant opportunities.

- Redesigning our Web site and preparing and distributing other promotional materials.

Several of these topics were discussed during the Board’s fall planning meeting and will be reported to members through various media.

For this plan to become more than idle thoughts or ideas on paper will require each of us to renew our passion to provide the best opportunities for the students involved. We must communicate our ideas to one another, work together to achieve the desired outcomes, and move Envirothon to the forefront.

“There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.”

*Niccolo Machiavelli
The Prince (1532)*

As always, **keep the passion!**



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The Mission of the Canon Envirothon is to develop knowledgeable, skilled and dedicated citizens who are willing and prepared to work towards achieving and maintaining a natural balance between the quality of life and the quality of the environment.



*Shonny Nordlund, Board of Directors
2008 Chairperson*

New Board of Directors Reviews Long Range Plans

Greetings from Big Sky Country (or should I say the smoky skies from many fires).

I thought I'd start my first article to you with a little about myself. I was born and raised in Lewistown, Montana (population 6,500). I lived on a farm at Loring, MT (way up north on the Canadian line) for 12 years after getting married. I moved back to my hometown and worked for Norwest Bank (now Wells Fargo) for 8 years before becoming District Administrator for Fergus Conservation District 12 years ago. I assisted with the Montana Envirothon my first 2 years then was asked to coordinate the event, which I do in conjunction with my district job. My third job is babysitting my two grandsons on my day off (Friday). I have three children, Jada 28, (who, with husband Brandon, is responsible for the two grandsons), Tyler 27 and Lane 16. I very much enjoy working with all types of young people, from my grandsons to young adults.

The CEC elected Al Poindexter and re-elected me at the summer meeting. With the bylaw changes accepted this summer, the Board of Directors (formerly the Canon Envirothon Executive Committee) now elects the officers. The following will serve as officers for the coming year: myself as chair, Jim Potton (Manitoba, Canada) vice chair, Lorelle Steach (Pennsylvania) secretary, Peggy Lemons (Missouri) treasurer. The three at large Directors are Craig Zinter (Maryland), Nelson Strong (Ohio) and Al Poindexter (Alaska). Board members serve as volunteers and each member puts in countless hours with monthly conference calls, e-mails, newsletter articles, and four face-to-face meetings a year to keep the program on top and growing.

Our dedicated staff – Executive Director Clay Burns (in Jackson, Mississippi) and Kay Asher and Trish Rowland (who run the Canon Envirothon office in League City, Texas) – is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program.

I would also like to thank Betty Holley (Alabama) for her dedication and hard work for Canon Envirothon during her 6+ years on the CEEC, most of it as Chairman. Thanks, Betty.

The Board of Directors traveled to Phoenix in October to meet with the Arizona host committee and view facilities; I know everyone is going to love Flagstaff! The board also spent many hours working on a long-range plan for Canon Envirothon, incorporating input received from CEC members and committees and advisors. With plans underway for the 2008 event, I would like to emphasize what a pleasure it is to work with

all of these exceptional young adults at the Canon Envirothon. We take very seriously input from CEC members, advisors and students as we all share the same vision to make this the BEST natural resources education event anywhere.

The Board of Directors is here to listen to any concerns, questions or praise that any one may have, so please feel free to contact us. We hope to see the CEC in Reno for the winter meeting, and the rest of you along the way.

Happy Trails....

REMINDERS AND INFORMATION

Winter Meeting - Feb 9-10, 2007
Reno, NV - Registration forms were mailed and are due by January 25, 2008. If you will not be attending, please be sure to proxy your vote!

Membership Dues- Invoices were mailed and are due no later than February 1, 2008.

Letter of Intent for 2008- This was mailed out and needs to be returned no later than December 31, 2007.

2007 Smiles DVD's- We have a limited supply of these available. If you would like to receive additional copies please contact Trish Rowlands in the League City Office.

Canon Envirothon Educational Materials- Great for fund raising!
Brochures are available to each state/province in quantities of 100 at no charge. Additional copies may be purchased or downloaded and printed directly from the website.
Tabletop and slide up displays are available and can be reserved for events, meeting, etc.
Informational DVD's are available also.

Persistence Pays for Saskatchewan With 2007 Rookie Award

Jennifer Nelson, CEC Saskatchewan



Winning Team: (left to right) Claire Cooke (teacher), Walter Murray Rocky Wang, Howard Meng, Elizabeth Miazga, Bobby Xiao, BJ Bodnar. Catherine Johnston (alternate teacher) not shown.

Preparing for an Envirothon is no small feat. Planning for a first ever Envirothon is even more demanding. Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin took a lead role in planning the 2007 Saskatchewan Envirothon.

The decision to have an Envirothon competition in Saskatchewan resulted from several years of lobbying by teachers, parents and industry partners. With the success of the competition in Manitoba and Alberta, it seemed odd that Saskatchewan would not develop its own Envirothon. With the help and assistance from Manitoba Envirothon and financial assistance from various partnering agencies, the first Saskatchewan competition was held in May 2007.



Members of the Saskatchewan committee scope out the site before the competition.

Seven teams competed in the day and a half long event. After the grueling test of environmental knowledge, we crowned our first champion: a team from Walter Murray Collegiate in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This team then proceeded to represent the province at the Canon Envirothon and was awarded the 2007 "Rookie" Award.

Our experience at the Canon Envirothon was very exciting. The students, advisors and I all had a blast. The people were great and the competition was very challenging. The students have had nothing but good words to say about the competition.

"The Envirothon has changed my perception of the environment.



Workshop training day

No longer is it just a place utilized by us for recreational and economic purposes. I have become aware of the dangers that threaten our environment." states Howard Meng, Saskatchewan team member, during the 2007 event.

We even have 3 of the team members who graduated in June, volunteering with the Saskatchewan Envirothon competition.

Attending the Canon Envirothon has helped me to understand how the Canon Envirothon works. We are now better situated to prepare our team for next year's competition in Flagstaff. We hope to see you there!

Canon Envirothon Hall of Fame



2007

**Craig Hartsock
Jim Hotaling**

In recognition of leadership and dedication to the Canon Envirothon

Arizona

From Desert to Tundra and A Canyon In-between

(continued from front page)

and first proven meteorite impact site on our planet. Nearby Walnut Canyon is dotted with cliff dwellings and pueblos. Walnut Canyon provides dramatic geology, diverse vegetation and abundant wildlife. The Wupatki National Monument features rock walls of 800-year old pueblos. And we can't forget Sunset (volcanic) Crater, Coconino National Forest and the Arizona Snow Bowl.

But without a doubt, the high point of your visit will be nature's showcase attraction, the Grand Canyon. The Canyon is vast and magnificent! It lies one mile below the earth's crust with its gorge measuring 270 miles long and 10 miles wide. And at the bottom of this Canyon lies the mighty Colorado River. Its erosive power dates back millions of years making the Canyon one of the oldest natural wonders on earth!

The Canyon is a hiker's delight. Its switch-back trails take nature lovers down a 10-mile trek of scenic views at the turn of every precipice.

The Canyon is a geologist's dream. The geological record of the Canyon is astounding. Its exposed rocks serve as an open, detailed book into the earth's history.

The oceanographer is equally amazed. Here the Canyon offers a glimpse of an ancient time as fossils carved into stone are readily visible. These fossils once formed the bottom of a shallow sea some 250 million years ago.



A Grand View of the Canyon

One can see evidence of clams, pre-historic sharks, and the coral that helped create the colorful limestone deposits.

The river lover will stare in awe at the power of the Colorado. This mighty river started its work over 20 million years ago. Explorer John Wesley Powell and his crew rode this river and helped put the Canyon on the map. And still today, the erosive force of the water continues to cut the Canyon.

The wildlife enthusiast can learn about the Canyon's many wild residents including the Kaibab



*Arizona's Wildlife
Big Horn Sheep*

squirrel, bats, frogs and bighorn sheep, to name a few.

The historian will ponder the geological timescale and recall the ancient dwellers that called the Canyon their home.

And Envirothon students will increase their knowledge on the 2008 focus issue, "*Recreational Impacts on Natural Resources*," by seeing if and how 4 million visitors annually can impact this giant hole in the ground.

We invite you to Arizona, so you, too, can get a glimpse of our desert, our tundra, and our "Canyon" in-between!

One can never study nature too much and too hard.

- Vincent van Gogh

PEI Makes Changes With A Fall Approach to Envirothon

Ken Mayhew, CEC Prince Edward Island

With an area of 5,700 km² (2,200 mi²) and a population of 135,000 people, Prince Edward Island is Canada's smallest province. Located in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence a few hours drive northeast of Maine, the Island's economy is largely based on agriculture, fishing, and tourism.

P.E.I.'s participation in Envirothon began in 1999 when Nova Scotia extended an invitation to send teams to take part in their event. By 2001, it was evident that there was enough interest here to host our own ENVIROTHON, but we lacked a Forestry Association to run the event. The Provincial Forest program, a provincial government program which looks after P.E.I.'s public forests, offered to serve as host and thus, P.E.I.'s Provincial Forest ENVIROTHON was born.

Initially, our program was hosted in late April but even in the first year, this date presented problems. An unseasonably late spring made the field testing site virtually inaccessible so the competition had to be moved at the last minute. Given that we often experience significant weather swings from March through the end of May, the mid spring dates continued to present challenges for organizers. As well, spring was the start of the field season for most volunteers and the height of forest fire season, a major challenge for Provincial Forest staff.

Based on spring weather, staff work load and the demands on



Scaling

students as they finished their school year, we met with teachers and volunteers to see if a fall event might be possible. Volunteers felt that a late October event would still provide suitable weather at the end of their field season but a few teachers expressed reservations about their ability to recruit teams so early in the school year. However, it was also noted that student



Forestry site

retention in the busy spring season was also an issue, so it was agreed to give autumn a try.

PEI held its first fall competition for the 2004 Envirothon and given the excellent weather, easier work load for volunteers, and few recruitment problems, we have continued to hold it on the last weekend in October. As well, the extra time between our provincial competition and the Canon



Soils site

Envirothon allows students extra time to prepare and fund raise.

Today, more than half of our English high schools are involved and we are experiencing the pleasant challenge of trying to meet the increased demand for this great program.

DID YOU KNOW....

Every ton of recycled office paper saves 380 gallons of oil.

Homeowners use up to 10 times more toxic chemicals per acre than farmers.

Every day 50 to 100 species of plants and animals become extinct due to habitat loss and other human influences.

New Jersey Envirothon Builds Community Awareness and Develops Successful Students

Rich Belcher, CEC, NEw Jersey

In 1994, fifteen students convened in Mercer County for the first New Jersey Envirothon. The Mercer County Soil Conservation District hosted that competition with the help of a few conservation partners. Thirteen years later, more than 220 student and advisor participants from 26 schools assembled 37 teams to compete in the 2007 Envirothon. More than 90 conservation professionals representing the planning sponsors help to plan and staff the day-long event, traditionally held in New Jersey the Saturday before Mother's Day.

The NJ Association of Conservation Districts (NJACD) coordinates the Envirothon in New Jersey, and the non-profit organization manages the business end of the Envirothon for the partnership. All of our 15 Soil Conservation Districts (SCDs) now participate in the event along with the NJ Department of Agriculture/ State Soil Conservation Committee, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Services, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

New Jersey's teams started participating in the Canon Envirothon in 1999 and have

enjoyed a high degree of success there. In the nine years New Jersey has participated, eight New Jersey teams have placed in the top ten.

In addition to a wide range of natural resources, New Jersey offers highly urbanized areas to more rural settings. A very popular part of the New Jersey Envirothon experience is that the teams have the option of camping out at the event site each year on the Friday night before the actual competition; an experience enjoyed by all.

Over the past several years, with significant success in the area of fundraising and community awareness, first place team members have been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to be used at a college of their choice. In addition, two New Jersey colleges offered scholarships to be used at their institutions to first place teams members. Montclair State University (MSU) made a \$1,000 scholarship available to first place team members, and Richard Stockton State College offered a \$2,500 scholarship to these students.

A group of NJ Conservation District representatives visiting the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) office in Washington, DC were

introduced to a young woman from New Jersey who was interning there. When she learned about their sponsorship of the Envirothon in New Jersey, she enthusiastically recounted her experience in the NJ competition and thanked them for supporting the program. She had participated in the 1998 NJ Envirothon as a high school student. She supplied an article for the NJ Envirothon newsletter in April 2004, stating "I was more than happy to write a couple paragraphs about the Envirothon. It was one of the best experiences of my high school career. It served to initiate me into the world of environmental science. This was certainly a huge influence on me as I went on to major in Environmental Studies."

The devotion of conservation professionals who are eager to see the next generation seriously pursue the wise use and conservation of our resources is a big part of why the Envirothon continues to succeed in New Jersey year after year. By creating opportunities to strengthen partnerships, assist educators, develop future conservation professionals and responsible citizens, and building awareness in our communities about natural resource management, the Envirothon is proving to be very beneficial for New Jersey and for our future.

"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value."

Theodore Roosevelt

The Envirothon Experience Prepares Student for Future Career



Melisa Pferdehirt
Sophomore at Rice University
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Major
Envirothon Alumni - Texas State
Competition 3 years
Canon Envirothon 2 years (2005-2006)

Spending hours memorizing the behavior and plumage of all the state's birds, working under the Texas sun to finish all the questions in the allotted time period, charging through the forests in Manitoba so as not to

lose time in transit; these are all memories that I have from Envirothon. Among them are giving my first presentation to a big crowd at Canon Envirothon, making lasting friendships with students from different schools across the continent, and truly bonding with my team.

All of these memories and more are why Envirothon had such a profound impact on me. So much so that when I came to Rice University in Houston, Texas, somewhat undecided on what my major was going to be, I was instantly drawn to the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology classes. After only weeks of class, I knew that was what I wanted to do.

I am now in my second year of college and completely love my choice of major. It is undeniable that Envirothon was the main factor in helping me decide what

to pursue, and it has also helped me a lot along the way.

In my first field work assignment ever, I spent three hours a week watching a pond and identifying all the birds that came to it. Luckily, Envirothon had already trained me for this. When I had to take a public speaking class, the extemporaneous speaking assignment was a complete breeze after the timed oral presentations of Envirothon.

I know without a doubt that Envirothon was the most important experience I had in high school in terms of preparing me for college and a future beyond that. My hope is that one day I'll be able to give back what was given to me and help the next group of Envirothon scholars learn the life lessons I did from this incredibly valuable, and incredibly fun, event.

A "very special thanks" to those states and provinces whose shared stories made this edition of our newsletter possible.

If you have success stories from your participants or exciting news about your program, please share it with us!

Submit your information, photos and/or articles to:

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