



History of the Envirothon

The **Envirothon** is a multi-disciplinary, environmental problem-solving program culminating in a series of annual competitions. Teams of five high school students (grades 9-12) train and compete in the areas of soils, aquatics, wildlife, forestry and current environmental issues at regional, state and national levels.

The Envirothon program originated in Pennsylvania in 1979 as a hands-on, outdoor competition to test high school students' knowledge of natural resources and environmental issues. The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts sponsored it.

In 1988, the original name, Enviro-Olympics was changed to Envirothon. That year, Pennsylvania hosted the first National Envirothon, which consisted of teams from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Ohio. The first Ohio Envirothon was held the following year. Six teams participated, with students from East Knox High School capturing first place and representing Ohio in the 1989 National Envirothon.

In 1990, the Envirothon grew dramatically in Ohio, with more than sixty teams participating in four Area Envirothons. Ohio hosted the National Envirothon that year near Zanesville with Maine, Maryland, and New York joining the competition.

By 1993, the Envirothon was well established in Ohio and on its way to becoming a truly national program. More than three hundred students participated in five Area Envirothons in Ohio. The 1993 National Envirothon was held at Niagara Falls, New York and attracted teams from nineteen states and one Canadian province. The program has grown every year since the 1988 competition in Pennsylvania when just three states competed to the thirty-two states and three Canadian provinces participating in the 1996 national competition held in Nebraska. Manitoba hosted the 2006 National Envirothon.

In Ohio, the Envirothon continues to grow as more and more high school students take the opportunity to display their knowledge of the environment. Ohio's Soil and Water Conservation Districts sponsor five Area Envirothons each year and welcome new high school students to join in this exciting and rewarding educational experience.