



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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N.C. ENVIROTHON STATE CHAMPIONS PLACE EIGHTH IN NATIONAL COMPETITION

Teams from across the United States and Canada competed for scholarships and prizes in North America's largest high school environmental education competition

RALEIGH – A team of Johnston County high school students finished eighth out of 54 teams in last week's North American Canon Envirothon competition.

After winning the state championship, the five-student team traveled from West Johnston High School in Johnston County to Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Ariz. for North America's largest high school environmental education competition. The winners were announced at the end of the weeklong event with the North Carolina team placing eighth out of 54 teams. Stephanie Tolar, Frankie Johnson, Lewis Braswell, Erin Lineberger and Thomas Lineberger made up the team, named the Sequoias, along with teacher advisors Melody Lineberger and Heather Earp.

To learn everything they could about this year's theme, "Recreational Impacts on Natural Resources," the team used a yearlong environmental studies curriculum designed to enhance problem solving and critical thinking skills. They spent the last two spring breaks and most of this summer participating in hands-on learning experiences. To prepare for tests in a variety of subjects, the team took field trips to the coast, state parks and museums. They also studied current environmental issues and worked with environmental specialists from the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources on topics such as soils and land uses, aquatic ecology, wildlife and forest resources.

Earlier this year, the Sequoias placed first at the state level Envirothon competition, where they correctly answered 124 out of 125 questions. In the national competition, they won the Forest Resource Station category with a score of 96.5 out of a possible 100 points, earning a plaque and individual medals. Each Sequoia team member received a \$1,200 scholarship from Canon, and team advisors were presented with Canon cameras. Now, the team is touring California for the opportunity to see their namesake in person, the stately sequoia tree.

Nationally, the Envirothon is sponsored by Canon U.S.A., and locally by the N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation, the state's 96 local soil and water conservation districts and the N.C. Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The competition's Web site is www.envirothon.org.

The state Envirothon has experienced steady growth since it started in 1991. Two grants helped the program develop resource curriculum for teachers and students to use statewide, including home school groups. Funding, hard work and support from local sponsors raised the number of competing teams from five in 1991 to 329 this year.

North Carolina will host the 2009 Canon Envirothon at the University of North Carolina at Asheville next Aug. 2-8. "Biodiversity in a Changing World" will be the environmental issue studied. Bruce Miller, North Carolina Envirothon chairman, said: "Hosting the Canon Envirothon is an opportunity for us to share North Carolina's beauty while exposing students to issues that arise in a state which borders the ocean on one end, mountains on the other, and faces tremendous population growth."

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