



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Release: Immediate
Date: May 13, 2009

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FOURTEEN STUDENTS WIN CASH PRIZES IN STATE SOIL AND WATER COMPETITIONS

RALEIGH – Fourteen North Carolina elementary and middle school students have been named 1st and 2nd place winners in the state's 2009 soil and water poster, essay and public speaking contests.

Students designed posters, wrote essays or gave public speaking presentations based on a theme promoting soil and water conservation. Participants and entries that won at the local and then regional levels made it to the state competitions. Judges from the N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation, the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and area toastmaster clubs selected winners who best conveyed this year's theme "Soil and Water, Yours for Life."

In all, 10 winners in the poster and essay contests were selected from among 32 posters and eight essays submitted by students in North Carolina. The grade level, placement, name, soil and water conservation district and the name of the school each poster contest winner attends and the school's location are as follows:

3rd grade

1st - Garrett Buchanan, McDowell County, Eastfield Elementary School in Marion
2nd-Nathan Jones, Lenoir County, Bethel Christian Academy in Kinston

4th grade

1st - John Duncan, Hoke County, Upchurch Elementary School in Red Springs
2nd-Josie Presnell, Haywood County, Riverbend Elementary School in Clyde

5th grade

1st - Nate Estus, Watauga County, Valle Crucis Middle School in Banner Elk
2nd-Nicholas Doll, Albemarle County, Moyock Elementary School in Moyock

6th grade

1st - Victoria Howell, Wilson County, Springfield Middle School in Wilson
2nd-Trey Pete, Duplin County, North Duplin Elementary School in Mt. Olive

This year's essay contest winners, including placement, name, soil and water conservation district and school name and location are:

1st - Jaclyn Farris, Johnston County, Princeton School in Princeton
2nd-Johnathan Caicedo, Cumberland County, Pine Forest Middle School in Fayetteville

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Four North Carolina middle school students earned top honors for their presentations on soil and water conservation during the public speaking contest May 1.

Among the seventh grade competitors, Nikita Chintalapudi, who is home-schooled in the Moore County town of Pinehurst, earned first place, and Eli Flynt, who attends West Yadkin Elementary School in the Yadkin County town of Hamptonville, took second place honors.

In the eighth grade competition, Seth Bollenbecker, who goes to Mt. Pleasant Middle School in the Cabarrus County town of Concord, took top honors, and Megan Stewart, a student at Jacobs Fork Middle School in the Catawba County town of Newton, placed second.

Chintalapudi, Flynt, Bollenbecker and Stewart were among 14 students who traveled to Raleigh for the public speaking competition. The young orators spoke in front of an audience of more than 60 soil and water conservation district specialists as well as family and friends.

Among those in attendance at the speaking competition was Dee Freeman, the secretary for the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Freeman offered the group of public speakers a few words of encouragement and praised them for developing strong communication skills. Such skills are the foundation for leadership, Freeman told the group.

First place winners in all three contests received \$200. The second place winners received \$100. All other contestants received honorable mention certificates for advancing to the state competitions.

The N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation and the N.C. Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts organized the contests. The contests develop natural resource awareness and promote stewardship in the upcoming generation.

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