

THE COMPETITION

The Briefing:

Before the competition begins, teams are briefed on general ideas of each topic tested. This is a quick overview that allows students to ask resource professionals final questions before the competition begins. Students will have the opportunity to get basic instruction on how to use testing equipment and how to read instruments properly.

Ecostation Testing:

There are two major components to the Envirothon competition – testing and oral presentation. The testing portion of the competition occurs in rotating ‘Ecostations’. There are several of these stations, where students receive one written test per team. At each station, a series of questions are asked. The questions may require the students to perform a test using instruments, observe something, or may be a question based on knowledge of what they have gained from studying. Questions may be in various formats: true/false, multiple choice, short answer, fill in the blank, etc. Each question is worth one or more points.

While each Ecostation has a theme (i.e. Aquatic Ecology Ecostation); the questions asked at each station are not exclusive to the theme. The Aquatic Ecology Ecostation may have some specific questions that ask the students to perform tests on water samples using instruments provided. The remainder of the test may ask questions on all Envirothon topics.

Oral Presentation:

The oral presentation is meant to be a way for students to bring all the information they have learned to develop a management scenario. The scenario will encompass all or some of the topics (aquatic ecology, soils and land use, forestry, wildlife, agriculture, energy, waste management and the current issue theme for the year.) The students work as a team to understand the scenario and provide management ideas to satisfy all the stakeholders involved. This is a huge task because it means that the students must “wear the hat” of wildlife managers, soil scientists, foresters, aquatic ecologists, and many more professionals to understand the entire scenario.

Each team is given a private space/room to discuss their ideas. They have two hours to develop a 10 minute presentation that will be provided to a panel of three judges. The judges will then have 10 minutes to ask each team questions about their presentation. The materials each team gets to create their presentations generally includes 6 sheets of flip-chart paper or 3 sheets of poster board, markers, pencils, scissors, a ruler, tape and a glue stick. The presentations are meant to be knowledge-based, not technologically impressive. No computers or electronic devices are allowed. Coaches are not allowed contact with their teams during this time.

The judges consist of natural resource professionals, city managers, and others who make important decisions when it comes to managing natural resources in communities throughout Arizona.

Scoring and Placement:

Scores from the Ecostation testing and the Oral Presentation are combined, and the 3 highest scoring teams continue on in the competition to present their oral presentation to a different panel of judges and the entire Envirothon assembly. These teams’ scores are recalculated with the final presentation, and the event winner is determined.

Awards:

The top three teams are awarded with various prizes. These include gift certificates ranging from \$50 – \$100, plaques, medals, and other merchandise. The first place team is also offered an expense-paid opportunity to represent Arizona at the North American Envirothon, North America’s largest natural resource competition for high school students.

