



BERKS COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Accept A Natural Challenge!

December 20, 2011

High School Science Teachers:

Each spring season, Berks County high school and middle school students compete in the *Berks County Envirothon*. The high school teams compete for the chance to go to the state-wide event where schools from all corners of Pennsylvania vie for the chance to move on to the international competition. There, the winning team must go up against the best from the United States and Canada for recognition and college scholarships.

Originally developed in 1979, the *Envirothon* has become the most popular high school environmental knowledge competition in North America. Although, only high schools go on to compete in state and international competitions, the Envirothon has become so popular that middle schools (and even elementary schools) are participating in informal Envirothon competitions. The Berks County Envirothon has existed long enough to witness 8th graders go on from college into successful environmental & agricultural careers. But college & environmentally related careers are not the only goals of the Envirothon. Teamwork, friendship, study skills, nature appreciation, and critical thinking are all part of the program. The benefits speak for themselves--the Envirothon works!

You are receiving this letter because it is our sincerest hope that you will consider participating in this year's or future Berks County Envirothons. The Berks County Conservation District is inviting you and your students to participate in the Annual Berks County Envirothon to be held at Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center on Tuesday, May 1, 2012. In addition, I think this is a good opportunity for us to set up a meeting. We can further discuss your interest in the Berks County Envirothon or other programs that the Berks County Conservation District can be of assistance with.

Last May, the Oley Valley Team won the High School County competition and then competed at the Pennsylvania Envirothon where they placed an esteemed 8th place in a field of sixty-six teams.

Please refer to the enclosed brochure and the "Every Schools Guide to the Envirothon" sheet. Registrations are due February 1, 2012 for new participating schools. There is no cost to participate. To register, call the District office at 610-372-4657 ext 127 or email me at Kathryn.Obrien@pa.nacdnet.net. If you would like to set up a meeting to discuss the Berks County Envirothon, please call me at the number above.

Thank you for your time and consideration, if you have any questions or would like to discuss the Envirothon, please contact me.

Cordially,

Kate O'Brien
Watershed Specialist/Environmental Educator
Berks County Conservation District



EVERY SCHOOLS GUIDE TO THE ENVIROTHON

WHAT IS THE ENVIROTHON?

The Envirothon is a fun, academic event. It is the only one in the nation that challenges students to think critically about the natural world and their role in it.

At the day-long Envirothon, students compete using their knowledge in the following topic areas:



Soils and Land Use



Aquatic Ecology



Forestry



Wildlife



Environmental Issues

Students may be asked to measure a tree or identify soil characteristics. Team answers are evaluated by practicing environmental professionals. The team that scores the greatest number of points wins the county competition and moves on to the Pennsylvania Envirothon. The best team in each state then competes with the winning teams from Canada for scholarships.

By participating in the Envirothon program, students develop study skills, an understanding of effective teamwork, resource management, and ecology. At the same time, they gain valuable exposure to a range of disciplines and potential career paths.

GETTING STARTED:

- 1. A teacher or advisor needs to put together a team of five students in grades 9th-12th. Team members do not have to be in the same grade.**
- 2. Contact the Berks County Conservation District to register your team with the following information:**
 - Your Name,
 - Your School/Organization
 - Number of teams
- 3. The Berks County Conservation District will give you a teacher/leader's guide and learning materials.**
- 4. Now it's all up to you and your team; you study the material at your own pace! You are always encouraged to ask questions or request assistance from the Berks County Conservation District.**
- 5. On the scheduled date of the Envirothon, your team will take the test at specific stations at Nolde State Forest under the guidance of the Berks County Conservation District and partnering agencies.**



If you are interested in starting a team at your school or have questions about the Envirothon, please contact Kate O'Brien at the Berks County Conservation District at 610-372-4657 ext: 127

