2022 Indiana Envirothon Back in Person!

Darci Zolman¹, & Teena Ligman²

Abstract

After two years of virtual contests, Indiana Envirothon students, coaches, and the Board were thrilled to be back in person in 2022. The Indiana State Envirothon contest was held on April 27th at Conner Prairie, with 15 teams from across Indiana earning a berth by placing as top teams in their respective regional competitions.

Keywords: Envirothon, Environmental education

Envirothon is a competitive learning event for high school-aged students. The contest judges the student’s knowledge of environmental resources and their ability to apply that knowledge in creating a solution to a current issue. This year’s environmental issue was “Waste to Resources” which asks participants to develop innovative ways to manage wastes by turning them into resources through restoration, repurposing, and recycling for the benefit of the natural environment and future generations.

The Indiana competition day was full of activity, as the high school teams participated in written and field tests on topics of soil and land use, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and this year’s current issue. The teams also toured the Woods on Wheels and Soil Health trailers and gave oral presentations on their local solution to the “Waste to Resources” issue scenario received in advance.

Figure 1. Salem High School team, 2022 Indiana State Envirothon First Place Overall
Zion Dunaway, Wyatt Rainbolt, Jenna Gilbert, Sarah Heightchew, and Jacob Rose

Full listing of authors and contacts can be found at the end of article.
Awards were given for the top three teams on the written/field tests, oral presentations, and a combined overall score. Taking the top honors were:

**Written Test:**
- **First Place** - Warsaw High School;
- **Second** - Indiana Academy
- **Third** - LaPorte High School

**Orals:**
- **First** - Salem High School;
- **Second** - Mitchell High School;
- **Third** - Warsaw High School

**Overall:**
- **First** - Salem High School;
- **Second** - Warsaw High School
- **Third** - Mitchell High School

Seth Purlee, the coach for the Salem High School team said, “[Envirothon] allows students to use the knowledge they have gained throughout their time in agriculture classes, science classes, science club, FFA, and numerous other activities they are involved in each year. It gives the students a practical application of the issues our community faces.”

Harrison Phipps, Warsaw High School team member, said, “I would say that reading each source and taking thorough notes to review several times leading up to the competition was what helped me the most. And then as far as what I got out of it, I would say that having the special topic - it was interesting to learn more about waste management and specifically recycling because it’s something I do on a daily basis, but I honestly didn’t have much of an understanding of all that goes into the process. I also enjoyed the collaboration aspect of the competition because I feel like in a lot of ways high school can lack opportunities for frequent collaboration with peers on long-term projects.”

Emily Gough, Warsaw High School team coach, loved that “the students really flourish on their own with minimal guidance from me. They really take charge of their own learning process, and it is a joy for me to see these hardworking students who are passionate about the environment.

Mitchell High School coach Robyn Embry agreed, adding, “I love Envirothon because it is such a good reinforcement of what I teach in my AP Environmental Science class. Students have a chance to hear personally from experts who work in the fields they’ve been learning about and then to demonstrate their learning at the state competition through an authentic project that connect to their community. That’s the kind of learning that sticks with young people beyond high school.”

Salem High School will represent Indiana at the week-long National Conservation Foundation – Envirothon in July at the Miami University in Ohio. There, they will compete with teams from the United States and Canada.

For more information, go to the Indiana Envirothon website at indianaenvirothon.org.

*The NCF-Envirothon is a program of the National Conservation Foundation. The primary sponsor for the Indiana Envirothon is the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.*

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