

Nebraska Envirothon News

October 2025

www.nrdnet.org

What is the Nebraska Envirothon?

The Nebraska Envirothon is a competition designed for high school students to test their knowledge about the environment. Teams of five compete at the regional level in six environmental study subjects -- soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, range and a special topic. For the state competition, an oral presentation is added to the testing on the special topic. The topic is selected by the National Conservation Foundation (NCF) Envirothon Committee.

A growing number of career

fields involve natural resources. This an opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience working on environmental issues, and get exposure to a variety of careers.

Envirothon allows students to take their classroom knowledge and apply it to real-world situations. Students are given the opportunity to interact with resource professionals in environmental careers. The competition is a great link between academics and the business world.



Previous State Champions

- 2025: Dawson County
- 2024: Concordia
- 2023: Dawson County
- 2022: Concordia
- 2021: Ord
- 2020: *Canceled*
- 2019: St. Paul
- 2018: Concordia
- 2017: Concordia
- 2016: Concordia
- 2015: Concordia
- 2014: Concordia
- 2013: Concordia
- 2012: West Holt
- 2011: Superior
- 2010: Superior
- 2009: Ord
- 2008: Wauneta-Palisade
- 2007: Wauneta-Palisade
- 2006: Wauneta-Palisade
- 2005: Norris
- 2004: Norris
- 2003: Superior
- 2002: Medicine Valley
- 2001: Cambridge
- 2000: Nelson
- 1999: Nelson
- 1998: Cambridge
- 1997: Cambridge
- 1996: North Platte
- 1995: Chappell
- 1994: Norris

2026 Envirothon Competitions

NEW - TESTING CHANGE

Starting in 2026, we will now offer six testing stations. Policy will be removed as a test; however, 3-5 policy questions will still be included within the other tests. Example: Wildlife test may include questions on Endangered Species Act, hunting regulations, etc.

Regional Testing

January, February & March 2026

Regional Envirothon testing will be in January, February or March (schedule on next page). Teams with five members will work together to take six tests. Each test is timed at 15 minutes. Schools can bring multiple teams to compete. The winning team from each region along with eight wildcards (14 teams total) are invited to compete at the Nebraska State Envirothon.

Nebraska State Envirothon

April 29, 2026

Prairie Loft in Hastings, Nebraska

The State Envirothon Committee will host the Nebraska State Envirothon at Prairie Loft in Hastings, Nebraska. Please mark your calendar and stay tuned for more details!

2026 Competition Locations & Contacts

Western Region

Feb. 4, 2026

Gordon City Hall, Gordon

Regional Contact: Kylene Armstrong, Upper Niobrara White NRD, 308.432.6187, armstrong@unwnrd.org

Mid-Plains Region

March 4, 2026

NE College of Technical Agriculture, Curtis

Regional Contact: Colleen Stone, Middle Republican NRD, 308.362.4281, cstone@mrnrd.org

Metro Region

Feb. 26, 2026 | 9 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Papio NRD Office, Chalco Hills Rec Area

Regional Contact: Kaylyn Kelley, Papio-Missouri River NRD, 402.315.1713, kkelley@papiornrd.org

Central Region

Jan. 22, 2026

Central Community College, Columbus

Regional Contact: Brody Vorderstrasse, Central Platte NRD, 308.385.6282, brody@cpnrd.org

Southeast Region

Feb. 24, 2026

Southeast Community College, Beatrice

Regional Contact: Megan Grimes, NARD, 402.471.7672, mgrimes@nrdnet.org

March 4, 2026

Nebraska Assoc. Resources Districts Office, Lincoln

Regional Contact: Megan Grimes, NARD, 402.471.7672, mgrimes@nrdnet.org

Northeast Region

Feb. 24, 2026

Northeast Community College, Norfolk

Regional Contact: Beth Walsh, Upper Elkhorn NRD, 402.336.3867, bwalsh@uenrd.org

Nebraska State Envirothon Competition

April 29, 2026

Prairie Loft, Hastings, Neb.

Megan Grimes, NARD, 402.471.7672 or mgrimes@nrdnet.org

2026 Current Environmental Issue (Special Topic)

“Nonpoint Source Pollution: It Begins at Home”

The landmark Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1972 established a foundational framework for regulating the discharge of both point and non-point source pollutants into the nation's waters, as well as setting surface water quality standards. Point source pollutants come from a single, identifiable origin, such as a discharge pipe from a factory. On the other hand, non-point source (NPS) pollution originates from a wide area without a specific source, like runoff from agricultural fields or urban streets during a rain event. This widespread nature complicates the task of pinpointing the exact source of the pollutants. The CWA primarily addressed point source pollution through regulations and permits, while NPS pollution remained in the realm of voluntary or local action in urban and rural areas. In the mid-1990s, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began to address some non-point source pollution through a series of new stormwater permits, however mitigating NPS pollution and improving water quality requires coordinated efforts from individual and community-based efforts.

Many individuals do not realize how their actions contribute to non-point source pollution, either directly through their consumption and disposal habits or indirectly through the products and services they purchase. It is essential for individuals to acknowledge their role in this issue and understand how to help provide solutions. Tackling non-point source pollution starts at the individual level - change begins at home.

Students will learn about NPS pollution and identify its origins in both urban and rural settings. They will learn how to conduct their own NPS survey in their community and watershed. Additionally, they will learn about NPS mitigation strategies, which encompass actions at both the individual level - such as conservation, recycling, and responsible consumption - and the community level, including watershed planning, best management practices, nature-based solutions, water quality testing, and litter prevention initiatives.

Find study resources for the 2026 special topic at www.envirothon.org.

2026 NCF-Envirothon: Mississippi

The 2026 NCF-Envirothon will be hosted at Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mississippi, July 19-25, 2026.

As the international host, Mississippi has selected the 2026 current environmental issue, “Non-point Source Pollution: It Begins at Home.”

The state of Mississippi has abundant surface water resources that are designated for uses that include navigation, recreation, fish and wildlife use, shellfish harvesting, and public water supply. Key waterways include the Mississippi, Pearl, Pascagoula, and Tombigbee Rivers. These waters have historical significance and will continue to play a vital role in the future, but pollution poses a major threat to water quality and public health.



A Look Back at the 2025 Nebraska Envirothon

Seventy teams competed in the regional contests during February and March, and 14 teams qualified to participate at the state competition.

Students gathered at Chalco Hills Recreation Area in Omaha for the 33rd annual Nebraska State Envirothon April 30, 2025. Dawson County Envirothon Club took home the championship along with \$1,500 and represented Nebraska at the National Conservation Foundation (NCF) Envirothon in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, in July.

The 2025 oral presentation theme was "Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change."

The Nebraska Association

of Resources Districts (NARD) Foundation awarded cash prizes to the top three teams at the state competition:

- **First Place (\$1,500):**

Dawson County Envirothon Club

- **Second Place (\$1,000):**

Concordia High School

- **Third Place (\$500):**

Tri-County High School

Additional prizes were awarded to the top teams in each testing category:

- **Aquatics:** Dawson County

• **Forestry:** Tri-County

• **Policy:** Dawson County

• **Range:** Dawson County

• **Soils:** Dawson County

• **Wildlife:** Dawson County & St. Paul

- **Oral Presentation:**

Dawson County



Dawson County Envirothon Club students work to measure a tree at the Forestry station during the State Envirothon.



Middle Right: Lutheran High Northeast team gives their oral presentation to a panel of judges.

Right: Beatrice students work together at the Range station during State Envirothon.

Left: Omaha Central students pose for a photo between testing stations.



Above: The Concordia team enjoys the view of Wehrspann Lake.



Right: The Milford team works together at the Forestry Station.

Dawson County Competes in Calgary, Alberta, Canada

After taking the top spot at the State Envirothon, the Dawson County Envirothon Club went on to represent Nebraska at the NCF-Envirothon in July 2025, at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

The NCF-Envirothon included 50 teams from the U.S., Canada, and China.

The competition included a fun day trip to

Banff National Park.

Top prizes went to the following states:

- **First:** Massachusetts
- **Second:** Maryland
- **Third:** New York

The 2026 NCF-Envirothon will be hosted in Starkville, Mississippi.

Right: Dawson County Envirothon Club was named 2025 Nebraska Envirothon champions and went on to compete in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, in July 2025.



The Dawson County Envirothon Club had a great oral presentation and placed 8th in the category. Overall the team placed 25th out of 50 teams competing.



Competing in the Nebraska Envirothon

Teams may compete at ANY regional contest in Nebraska they choose, but are only allowed to compete at one regional contest per year. The score will be counted in the region that the school/club is geographically located in.

Envirothon teams are composed of FIVE students per team. A school may bring multiple teams to a regional competition.

Nebraska allows for six regional winners and eight wild card winners to compete in the State Envirothon. See page five of the Nebraska Envirothon Guide Book for more information.

All teams competing at the Nebraska State Envirothon competition will be required to create a slide deck and present to judges on the special topic. No audio is allowed in the presentation.

Awards are given to the winning team of each testing station. A championship award is given to the team with the highest overall score. The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) sponsors the winning Nebraska team at the NCF-Envirothon competition in July.

The Nebraska Envirothon Guide Book and study materials are available on the Nebraska Envirothon website. For more information visit: www.nrdnet.org/nebraska-envirothon

Nebraska Envirothon Regions

