

Nebraska Envirothon News

October 2026

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

- 2026: Ag Academy
- 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

2027 Envirothon Competitions

NEW - TESTING CHANGE

Since 2026, we 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 2027

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 28, 2027

Calamus Outfitters in Burwell, Nebraska

The State Envirothon Committee will host the Nebraska State Envirothon at Calamus Outfitters in Burwell, Nebraska. Please mark your calendar and stay tuned for more details!

2027 Competition Locations & Contacts

Western Region

Feb. 3, 2027

Gordon City Hall, Gordon

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

Mid-Plains Region

March 2, 2027

NE College of Technical Agriculture, Curtis

Regional Contact: Colleen Stone, Middle Republican NRD, 308.362.4281, colleen.stone@ne.nacdnet.net

Metro Region

Feb. 25, 2027 | 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@papiionrd.org

Central Region

Jan. 21, 2027

Central Community College, Columbus

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

Southeast Region

Feb. 23, 2027

Southeast Community College, Beatrice

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

March 2, 2027

Nebraska Assoc. Resources Districts Office, Lincoln

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

Northeast Region

Feb. 23, 2027

Northeast Community College, Norfolk

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

Nebraska State Envirothon Competition

April 28, 2027

Calamus Outfitters, Burwell, Neb.

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

2027 Current Environmental Issue (Special Topic)

“Soil Health Management: Agricultural Principles and Stewardship”

Soil Health Principles emphasize the importance of treating soil as a living ecosystem and are the cornerstone for resilient agriculture and ensuring the long-term protection of our natural resources. Farmers from across Nebraska have integrated these principles with nutrient management and conservation strategies, working to be a model for regenerative agriculture. The agricultural sector plays a vital role in protecting our rivers and tributaries through the adoption of soil health practices.

Producers that plant cover crops help reduce soil erosion, improve soil organic matter, and capture residual nutrients before they leach into waterways. Producers also embrace conservation tillage and no-till farming. These practices protect soil structure, enhance microbial activity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Such efforts demonstrate how healthy soils not only sustain crop productivity but also serve as a powerful tool for water quality improvement and ecosystem restoration. Farmers and conservation professionals are using soil health principles to restore degraded soils and reduce pollution.

These efforts have directly improved the Nebraska's water quality through reduced nutrient runoff, increased infiltration, and better soil structure.

Soil Health Management: Agriculture Principles and Stewardship explores the biological, chemical, and physical principles of soil health and their importance to sustainable agriculture. Students will learn how soil functions as a living ecosystem, how management practices affect soil processes (nutrient cycling, water dynamics, agricultural sustainability), and how to evaluate and improve soil health on farms.

Find study resources for the 2027 special topic at www.envirothon.org.



2027 NCF-Envirothon: Maryland

The 2027 NCF-Envirothon will be hosted at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland, July 24-30, 2027.

As the international host, Maryland has selected the 2027 current environmental issue, “Soil Health Management: Agriculture Principles and Stewardship.”

Maryland's Cover Crop Program is recognized as one of the most successful in the United States. Each year, Maryland farmers plant more than 450,000 acres of cover crops, which helps reduce soil erosion, improve soil organic matter, and capture residual nutrients before they leach into waterways. In Maryland, these efforts have directly improved the Chesapeake Bay's water quality.



A Look Back at the 2026 Nebraska Envirothon

More than 60 teams competed in the regional contests during February and March, and 14 teams qualified to participate at the state competition.

Students gathered at Prairie Loft in Hastings for the 34th annual Nebraska State Envirothon April 29, 2026. Nebraska Agriculture Academy took home the championship along with \$1,500 and represented Nebraska at the National Conservation Foundation (NCF) Envirothon in Starkville, Mississippi, in July.

The 2026 oral presentation theme was "Nonpoint Source Pollution: It Begins at Home."

The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) Foundation awarded cash

prizes to the top three teams at the state competition:

- **First Place (\$1,500):** Nebraska Ag Academy
 - **Second Place (\$1,000):** Dawson County Envirothon Club
 - **Third Place (\$500):** Concordia Lutheran of Omaha
- Additional prizes were awarded to the top teams in each testing category:
- **Aquatics:** Omaha Central
 - **Forestry:** Dawson County
 - **Range:** Sidney
 - **Soils:** Omaha Central
 - **Wildlife:** Nebraska Ag Academy
 - **Oral Presentation:** Dawson County



Nebraska Agriculture Academy (homeschool students) were the 2026 Nebraska Envirothon Champions.



Above: Students work together on the Wildlife test.

Left: The Wildlife test often includes live animals like snakes. Students work to identify the snake.



Above: Students work together on the Forestry test.

Left: The Omaha Central team had an excellent showing at State Envirothon with high scores in Soils and Aquatics.

Ag Academy Competes in Starkville, Mississippi

After taking the top spot at the State Envirothon, the Nebraska Agriculture Academy went on to represent Nebraska at the NCF-Envirothon in July 2026, at Starkville, Mississippi.

The NCF-Envirothon included 42 teams from the U.S., Canada, and China.

The competition included a fun day trip to a water park.

Top prizes went to the following states:

- **First:** New York
- **Second:** North Carolina
- **Third:** North Dakota

The 2027 NCF-Envirothon will be hosted in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Right: Nebraska Agriculture Academy was named 2026 Nebraska Envirothon champions and went on to compete in Starkville, Mississippi in July 2026.



The Nebraska Agriculture Academy were first time competitors at the Nebraska Envirothon and therefore at the NCF-Envirothon. They enjoyed trading items from Nebraska and meeting students from all over North America.



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

