

# Nebraska Envirothon Policy Manual



*Revised Oct. 30, 2025*

## **SECTION I: DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM**

**1.1.** The Nebraska Envirothon is a registered trade name of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (the “Association”). Nebraska Envirothon is a competitive event for students in grades 9-12 conducted and promoted under the name Nebraska Envirothon and sponsored primarily by the Association. Other cooperating agencies and organizations who in the past and may in the future support the program include the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, individual Natural Resources Districts, US Forest Service, Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Forest Service, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nebraska Department of Water, Energy and Environment, University of Nebraska-Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Society for Range Management. The contest is designed to test student knowledge of natural resources in six categories: soil, forestry, wildlife, aquatics, range, and a Current Environmental Issue (Special Topic) selected annually on the basis of national interest (the “Program”).

**1.2.** The goals of the Program are as follows:

**1.2a.** To encourage students to think critically about natural resources and issues which affect natural resources.

**1.2b.** To aid in the development of an understanding of the difference between scientific fact and scientific theory.

**1.2c.** To encourage a rational, well-thought-out approach to natural resources management.

**1.2d.** To increase knowledge and awareness about natural resources and the principles of natural resources management in Nebraska.

**1.2e.** To aid students in the recognition of the basic laws of science.

## **SECTION II: PROGRAM ORGANIZATION**

**2.1.** The Information and Education (I&E) Committee of the Association has the overall responsibility for the development and administration of the Program and will appoint a Chairperson of the Program, who will report to the I&E Committee, will be responsible for the detail development and maintenance of the Program. The Steering Committee will select an Advisory Committee to provide them with advice and guidance on the Program. The Program will be developed following the guidelines, rules, and recommendations of the National Conservation Foundation (NCF) Envirothon Program.

## **SECTION III: STEERING COMMITTEE**

### **3.1. Purpose**

The Steering Committee shall develop and recommend to the Association Information and Education Committee the policies, budget and administrative structure of the Nebraska Envirothon program. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to:

**3.1a.** plan and organize the state Envirothon competition.

**3.1b.** provide guidance and advice to Natural Resources Districts regarding regional Nebraska Envirothon events.

**3.1c.** promote the growth of the Nebraska Envirothon program.

**3.1d.** promote the growth of the NCF-Envirothon program.

### **3.2. Membership**

The Chairperson will appoint the members of the Steering Committee, which members are to be approved by the I & E Committee. Members will include the Association Executive Director, Association Public Relations Director, Association Office Manager, one person from each of the regions where contests will be held, preferably the Regional Coordinator of that region, two to four members of the Advisory Committee plus others deemed appropriate.

### **3.3 Meetings**

The Steering Committee shall meet at least three times a year at such times and places that the Chair shall determine. In addition, any member may request the Chair to call a meeting.

### **3.4 Voting**

Any votes taken by the steering committee will be determined on a majority count. A quorum shall consist of one-half of the members of the Steering Committee being present.

## **SECTION IV: STATE ADVISORS**

The Steering Committee shall select State Advisors to assist and provide advice in the development of tests and other Envirothon material and interests. The State Advisors will work with and advise the Steering Committee.

### **4.1 Membership**

The State Advisors shall include as a minimum, representatives from the following organizations:

- 4.1a.** Natural Resources Districts (regional coordinators)
- 4.1b.** Nebraska Forest Service
- 4.1c.** Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- 4.1d.** USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- 4.1e.** Nebraska Department of Water, Energy and Environment
- 4.1f.** Society for Range Management
- 4.1g.** University of Nebraska-Institute of Agricultural and Natural Resources
- 4.1h.** Nebraska Department of Education

Each organization shall advise the NARD office as to who will be their representative as a State Advisor.

## **SECTION V: RECORDS AND FINANCE**

The Chairperson will coordinate with the Association's Executive Director, who shall be responsible for maintaining accurate and current financial records and reporting of funds dedicated for Envirothon purposes. The Nebraska Envirothon funds will be specific and separate but administered with the Association funds. A budget shall be developed by the Steering Committee and recommended to the I&E Committee. This budget will be specific and separate for the Nebraska Envirothon but will be administered with the Association budget and approved by the Association. The Steering Committee members shall be required to work within the approved budget.

## **SECTION VI: GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE STATE AND REGIONAL COMPETITIONS**

The following are general rules and regulations for State and Regional competitions:

- 6.1** Nebraska students in grades 9 through 12 are eligible to compete or equivalent home school ranking
- 6.2** The highest scoring team(s) from each of the six regional competitions will be invited to the state contest. In addition, the next eight highest scoring teams, from across the entire state, will be offered wild card invitations to the state contest until teams have accepted. In the event of a tie on the wildcard invitations, the steering committee has the authority to expand the wildcard invitations as necessary. However, in no case may a school send more than two teams to the state competition.
- 6.3** Each team will consist of five members from the school or organization. Teams with four or three members, may compete; however, such teams will lose points during the oral presentation phase of the state competition. A sixth student may be listed as an alternate on any team but may only participate in the event one of the regular members cannot compete.
- 6.4** Each team must compete at the regional level before it is eligible to compete at the state competition.

- 6.5** Each team must have an adult school advisor who accompanies the team to each competition who shall be responsible for the conduct of his or her team during the competition.
- 6.6** Adult school advisors are prohibited from assisting a team during the actual competition.
- 6.7** The use of snuff, tobacco, drugs, alcohol and cell phones or other personal electronic devices are prohibited during the entire competition. All rules for the host facility must also be adhered to.
- 6.8** Unless otherwise provided, arrangements for transportation and meals are the responsibility of each team.
- 6.9** Each team eligible to participate in the state competition is required to submit a registration form along with a registration fee to be set by the Steering Committee on or before April 15. Information on grants for financial assistance to cover registration fees may be available by contacting the Association.
- 6.10.** The Steering Committee will be responsible for conducting the actual competition and will appoint a regional coordinator for each competition.
- 6.11.** No preparatory or study materials are permitted at the location where the tests are actually given. Any materials needed to take the tests will be provided by the sponsors at the actual location where the tests are given.
- 6.12.** All decisions of the Judges are final on all events and may not be appealed.
- 6.13.** In the event of a tie, both (all) teams tied for first place will advance to the state competition.
- 6.14.** Team placement will be determined by the highest cumulative point score.
- 6.15.** Rules and regulations of Nebraska Envirothon may be changed from year to year by the Steering Committee without prior notice to the participants of the competition.

## **SECTION VII: SPECIAL RULES FOR REGIONAL COMPETITIONS**

In addition to general rules governing competitions, the following rules shall govern regional competitions.

**7.1** Six tests will be given during the regional competitions. The highest cumulative point score of all six tests will determine the winner. Each regional competition coordinator will furnish the same six tests and testing material for their regional competition.

**7.2** The six test subjects include but are not limited to forestry, wildlife, aquatics, soils, range, and a Current Environmental Issue (Special Topic) selected by the Steering Committee based on the special issue selected by the NCF-Envirothon.

**7.3** Tests shall consist primarily of multiple choice, true/false and hands-on subject questions.

**7.4** Test forms will be available at each test station for the use of each team.

**7.5** Participants are required to mark only the answer sheet provided to them. Each team will be furnished with one score sheet at each test station to record team answers. Individual team members' answers are not permitted.

**7.6** Participants will have 15 minutes at each test station to complete the test at such station.

**7.7** Each regional coordinator will be provided with a test key for scoring tests.

**7.8** Prior to a regional competition, each regional coordinator will be provided with the materials required to administer the tests.

**7.9** At the close of each regional competition, regional coordinators will forward team scores to the Association office.

**7.10.** If a region has more than one regional competition scheduled during the year, then individual team scores from each competition within the region will be compared against all other team scores within the region to determine the regional champion.

**7.11.** Teams must compete in their assigned regions. If a team would like to participate at a different regional contest, they would need to write a letter to the steering committee expressing why they would like to change regions. With written notification they are eligible to compete in a different region and not be penalized. The team will need to compete in that region each year until they write another letter signifying a change.

#### **SECTION VIII: SPECIAL RULES FOR STATE COMPETITIONS,**

In addition to the general rules governing competitions, the following rules shall govern state competitions:

**8.1** Registration forms and fees are due in the Association's office on or before April 15.

**8.2** Participants will compete at six different test stations, one for each subject area. Five of the test stations will give written tests consisting of multiple choice, true/false and hands on interpretation questions.

**8.3** The sixth station will require each team to address a question concerning a special issue each year based on the special issue determined by the NCF-Envirothon. The oral presentation will:

**8.3a.** be a minimum of 8 minutes and no more than 10 minutes in length.

Points will be deducted for presentations under 8 minutes.

**8.3b.** require participation of all team members. Each team member contributes up to two points for participating orally in the presentation.

**8.3c.** require teams to present a natural resource remediation strategy for an actual or hypothetical natural resources issue.

**8.3d.** following the presentation there will be a question-and-answer period for the judges.

**8.3e.** be presented using a digital presentation. Advisors and students will sign a statement that the presentation was produced solely by the team registered to

compete in the current State competition. The digital presentation may include video footage and special effects, but no audio recordings. No limit on number of slides, but the presentation must stay within the designated time limit of 10 minutes. The students are judged on how they solve the oral presentation scenario, not their visual displays. Students can use note cards. Teams will be provided with a laptop, projector and projection screen. It is recommended that teams have alternative access to their presentation in the event the flash drive isn't compatible with equipment provided. Teams will submit their presentation on a flash drive, four printed copies of the presentation, and the signed statement to the registration table upon their arrival at the event.

**8.3f.** If the school does not use Microsoft PowerPoint, it is recommended that students create the presentation in the software they are comfortable with (Google Slides, etc.), but they **MUST** save the final version as a PDF. This means the presentation won't have animation, but it will be universally accepted.

**8.4** All judges will be selected by the Steering Committee. Judges' criteria will mirror the NCF-Envirothon criteria.

**8.5** All test questions shall be based on scientific facts or observation and may require participants to identify specific information, deduce problems or otherwise demonstrate the abilities and expertise required by a professional in each field of study.

**8.6** Test forms will be available at each test station for the use of each team.

**8.7** Participants are required to mark only the answer sheet provided to them. Each team will be furnished with one score sheet at each test station to record team answers. Individual team members' answers are not permitted.

**8.8** A state championship plaque will be awarded to the team that has the highest cumulative point score, and each member of such team will receive a medallion. Teams placing second and third place overall will receive plaques, and each team member will receive a

medallion. Each team that has the highest score on individual subjects of the competition will also receive a plaque.

**8.9** In the event of a tie, in overall cumulative scores, the tie will go to the team with the higher placing special topics score. Additionally, if the special topic scores are also a tie then the scores from the other areas starting with aquatics and working in alphabetical order through the testing areas (aquatics, forestry, etc..) until the tie is broken.

**8.10** A school-sponsored chaperon must accompany teams to the state contest and be present during the contest or provide contact information in case of emergency.

**8.10.a.** During the contest teachers, advisors or chaperons are not allowed to have contact with participants during testing sessions.

## **SECTION IX: THE NCF-ENVIROTHON COMPETITION**

The winning team of the Nebraska Envirothon will represent Nebraska at the NCF-Envirothon. In the event the winning team cannot attend, the Nebraska runner-up will attend the competition.

### **9.1 Funding for NCF Envirothon Competition**

**9.1a.** The Association will pay the registration fee from the NARD Foundation account. The team is responsible for arranging transportation to the national competition and for expenses. The Association will provide information and advice.

**9.1b.** Membership dues for the NCF-Envirothon will be paid by the Association from the Information and Education account.

**9.1c.** Delegates to the NCF-Envirothon State/Provincial Representative committee shall be the Public Relations Director for the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts.

### **9.2. Team Participation in the NCF Envirothon Competition**

Members representing the Nebraska team must have competed in the current year's state/regional Envirothon competition to compete at the annual NCF-Envirothon competition.

**9.2a.** Each team will consist of five students from the same school, home-schooled group, or local organization. All teams must be sponsored and certified by the Nebraska Envirothon Representative. All registration forms listing the names and other information of team members, advisors, and guests must be submitted by the date set by the NCF-Envirothon and host state/province and provided as directed to NCF-Envirothon. All students, advisors, and guests must be registered to participate in the annual NCF-Envirothon competition.

**9.2b.** No alternates, except for legal substitutions approved by the NCF-Envirothon Operating Committee, may participate in any annual NCF-Envirothon competition.

**9.2c. Substitutions:**

- i. Emergency substitutions can be made from the list of alternates approved by the respective Nebraska Envirothon Representative.
- ii. Any team having to make two or more substitutions to the original state competing team will not be allowed to participate at the NCF-Envirothon and the alternate team will be asked to represent Nebraska at the NCF-Envirothon. The competing team needs to inform the Nebraska Envirothon Representative of any changes or substitutions prior to June 1 and prior to registering the team for the NCF-Envirothon competition.

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