

## **Two of Nebraska Envirothon's state champs describe what Envirothon means to them and what it was like to compete at the NCF Envirothon.**

### **Bridget Backer:**

Envirothon. A word that meets people's ears with tremendous curiosity. Each time I share about my involvement with Envirothon I am astonished at how intrigued my audience is. I have so enjoyed being involved with Envirothon at my school. I started as a sophomore. I was introduced to it by my brother whose team was very successful and made it to the North American Envirothon in Canada in 2016. I initially decided to join this group as a competitive opportunity to potentially beat out my brother. But, it soon became so much more to me. I have learned so much about how an ecosystem works and all the different parts that play a role in its greater functioning. I believe you appreciate the nature around you so much more when you understand all that is necessary for it to flourish.

My team was blessed with success this year and found ourselves competing at the national level in Maryland in July. Prior to that, our state competition had been in Gering, Nebraska. Although I dreaded the 8 hour drive, I was blown away at the beauty that lies within my home state. It was so incredible to see! Many kids do not know this, as I did, and exposing us to the many faces of our state allows us to better understand what makes us us. Going on to Maryland, never did I think that I could have such a fun week with fellow "nerds" from all over the US, Canada, and China. Not only did I make lasting friendships, but I was able to experience so many wonderful things. From learning about the importance of the Chesapeake Bay to cracking open some of its prized crabs, it was one of the best weeks of my summer. Envirothon has truly taught me so much and I am so grateful for its presence in my life. Envirothon proves how education can be hands on and fun all in one.

### **Abby Sharp:**

My experience at Envirothon was extremely fun and informative. Before Envirothon, I was never really interested in learning about the specific topics involved in it, nor was I even aware that they existed. Being around other people at the National competition opened my eyes to how many people do care about the environmental sciences, and how many more still need to care in order to make an impact. Through studying the different topics, specifically forestry, I learned more than I ever thought I would know about tools and methods used to maintain forests. I think Envirothon is important because it gives students the opportunity to open their eyes to environmental science and explore how they might be able to develop their knowledge in it and make a great impact.