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Carroll County Teens Take Top Honors at Maryland Envirothon *Harford, St. Mary's, Washington and Howard County Teams Round Out the Top Scores*

ANNAPOLIS, MD—June 19, 2009—A five-member team of high school students from Venturing Crew 202 of Carroll County is the winner of the 19th annual Maryland Envirothon. The Envirothon is an outdoor natural resources competition that challenges students to identify and categorize living resources, perform soil surveys and solve other complex natural resource issues. More than 100 challengers from 19 counties across Maryland and Baltimore City took part in this year's competition. The event was held June 16-18 at the Mount St. Mary's University in Frederick County.

"It is great to see such a sincere interest in the science side of the environment," said Secretary Buddy Hance. "With the strong leadership and scientific expertise of these students, the outlook for our natural resources and agricultural industry is indeed very bright."

As winners of the Maryland Envirothon, Venturing Crew 202 of Carroll County team members Eric Spioch, Ranson Leland Baldwin VII, Rebecca Baldwin, Eric Kazyak, Reed Portney, and Kelly Habicht will represent the state at the 2009 Canon Envirothon, which will be held at University of North Carolina at Asheville from August 2–August 8, 2009. The students will be accompanied by teachers/advisors Paul Kazyak and Deborah Portney. More than 50 teams from the United States and Canada are expected to compete at the national event. During the past five years, Maryland teams have consistently placed in the top 10 percent at national competitions.

The Maryland Envirothon is held once a year at an outdoor environmental education center. Students taking part in the competition study Maryland's natural resources for a year in hopes of winning. Working in teams of five with one to two alternates, students are trained and tested in four natural resource areas including soils, aquatics, forestry and wildlife plus an environmental issue that changes from year to year. This year's special environmental issue was Biodiversity in a Changing World.

Each team's knowledge is tested under the supervision of foresters, soil scientists and wildlife specialists. Teamwork, problem solving and presentation skills are evaluated as each team offers a panel of judges an oral presentation containing recommendations for solving an environmental challenge. The team with the highest cumulative total wins the competition and the opportunity to represent Maryland at the Canon Envirothon.

At this year's competition the Venturing Crew 202 of Carroll County team scored 456.50 points out of a possible 500. They were followed by teams from Harford County (445.50 points), St. Mary's County (435 points), Washington County (428), and Howard County (425.50) points.

Members of the top three teams were awarded scholarships ranging from \$200 to \$500 through the Chaney Foundation Scholarship program. In addition, winning team members received wildlife prints, Maryland Envirothon denim shirt and other prizes.

The Howard County team was the high scorer in the "soils" category of the competition with a score of 93 points out of a possible 100. The Mid-Atlantic Association of Professional Soil Scientists (MAPSS) presented each member of the team with a cash award of \$50. In addition, the team received a print and lanyards.

Established in 1991, the objectives of the Maryland Envirothon are twofold—to test students' environmental knowledge and understanding of state resource issues and to instill a desire to learn more about the natural world. Winning teams compete at the local, state and international levels. The first Envirothon competition was held in Pennsylvania in 1979. Since then more than 30 states, Canada and Australia have embraced the program and sent teams to the international competition.

The Maryland Envirothon is sponsored by the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts and the State Soil Conservation Committee. Contributors and supporters include the Maryland Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Environment, the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Maryland Fur Trappers, Garrett College, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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Winning Team Photo Caption: (Left to Right) Lee McDaniels – President Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Paul Kazyak – advisor, Deborah Portney- advisor, team members Rebecca Baldwin, Eric Spioch, Ranson Leland Baldwin, VII, Eric Kayzak, Reed Portney; and Ben Wilkenson, Chaney Foundation

High Score Soils Photo Caption: (Left to Right) Howard County's Team Grace Liu, Jen Medina-Gray, Isabel Enerson, Hannah Leiberg, and Naomi Wilcox along with Jim Brewer Mid-Atlantic Association of Professional Soil Scientists (MAPSS)

2009 Maryland Envirothon Participants photo