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Carroll County Teens Take Top Honors at Maryland Envirothon

ANNAPOLIS, MD—June 30, 2010—A five-member team of high school students from Venturing Crew 202 of Carroll County is the winner of the 20th annual Maryland Envirothon—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 24-25 at the William S. Schmidt Outdoor Education Center in Prince George’s 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 Ranson Leland Baldwin VII, Rebecca Baldwin, Eric Kazyak, Reed Portney, and Kelly Habicht will represent the state at the 2010 Canon Envirothon, which will be held at California State University at Fresno, California from August 1–August 6, 2010. The students will be accompanied by teachers/advisors Paul Kazyak and Claudia Lewis. 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 Protection of Groundwater through Urban, Agricultural and Environmental Planning.

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 452 points out of a possible 500. They were followed by teams from Montgomery County (437.50 points), Harford County (430 points), St. Mary's County (397.25), and Allegany County (383.75) points.

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

The Montgomery County team was the high scorer in the "soils" category of the competition with a score of 96 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 gift cards.

Established in 1990, 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, Garrett College, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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Winning Team Photo Caption: (Left to Right) Royden Powell – Assistant Secretary, Office of Resource Conservation, Maryland Department of Agriculture; Reed Portney; Eric Kayzak; Claudia Lewis - advisor, Kelly Habicht; Rebecca Baldwin; Ranson Leland Baldwin, VII; Frank Dawson, Assistant Secretary, Aquatic Resources, Maryland Department of Natural Resources; Paul Kazzyak – advisor

High Score Soils Photo Caption: (Left to Right) Yifan Li; Jason Albanese; Jennifer Wang; Peter Gu; Diana Jing; Lora Albanese - advisor; Amanda Moore, State Soil Scientist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA; Frank Dawson, Assistant Secretary, Aquatic Resources, Maryland Department of Natural Resources; Royden Powell – Assistant Secretary, Office of Resource Conservation, Maryland Department of Agriculture; Tran Pham – advisor

2010 Maryland Envirothon Participants photo