

Michigan Envirothon

2010 Annual Report



*Inspiring Environmental
Stewardship in Michigan
High School Students*





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Michigan Envirothon Teams Bring Awareness to Their Communities and Envirothon Supporters

Michigan Envirothon had a successful year in 2010 culminating with the state competition at the beautiful Leelanau Outdoor Center on Lake Michigan.

Regional competitions began in March with 30 schools from across the state participating. Seven teams came from high schools that competed for the first time in Michigan Envirothon with three of the new teams advancing to the state competition. The overall winning team came from Glen Lake High School. They went on to represent Michigan at the Canon North American Envirothon that was held at California State University in Fresno California.

The Glen Lake team was one of 22 teams that competed in the state competition. Finishing second in the competition was a team from Iron Mountain-Kingsford High School followed by a team from Wylie Groves High School in Birmingham. In addition to the outdoor competition each team also presented a community outreach project. The community outreach project is unique to Michigan Envirothon and as usual the variety and originality of the projects were impressive.

The winning Glen Lake High School team addressed raptor rehabilitation for their community outreach project. Their project included installing raptor houses throughout Leelanau County to aid the locally threatened Screech Owl and American



Michigan Envirothon teams at the 2010 State Competition held at Leelanau Outdoor Center on Lake Michigan

Kestrel. Other projects included a school energy audit and energy saving plan, a community butterfly garden, invasive species control, promotion of environmentally-friendly lawn care techniques and a conservation education program for children.

Each year Michigan Envirothon volunteers, both new and returning veterans, are impressed by the quality of students who participate in the competition. These students help to bring an awareness of environmental issues to their communities. A number of participants have also gone on to pursue careers in natural resources related fields. It is these students that inspire volunteers and donors to continue to support Michigan Envirothon.

Canon Diversity Grant Reaches Underserved Audience

During the 2009/2010 season, Michigan Envirothon received a \$2,000 Diversity Grant from Canon Envirothon to show teachers and students in underserved (minority) areas of the state (specifically Metro Detroit area) a bit of what they would experience while participating in Envirothon. Historically, Michigan Envirothon teams come from rural areas of the state. To attract new schools in the highly urbanized southeast Michigan region, several classroom visits were set up in the fall and winter of 2009 at schools in the area. Funds from the diversity grant were used to create hands-on activity kits for these visits in the six Michigan Envirothon subjects: agriculture, aquatic ecology, energy, forestry, soils/geology and wildlife. *(continued on page 9)*

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2010 Team Member Reflects on Envirothon Experience

Taylor Truckey is putting her valuable Envirothon experience to use as she enters her first year at Western Michigan University. Truckey competed on a Michigan Envirothon team representing the Branch Area Careers Center (BACC) in 2010. The leadership and presentation skills she developed, as well as her time spent learning about environmental issues will be helpful as she pursues a double major in political science and environmental studies in the honor's college at Western Michigan.

Truckey only competed in one year of the Michigan Envirothon before graduating, but it was enough to have a lasting impact on her. When reflecting on the 2010 State Competition, she recalls that it was a memorable bonding experience with her team and their adult chaperones and that "it was just a great time". Truckey notes that she gained a special appreciation for aquatic ecology during the State Competition because of the quality resource professionals like Stu Kogge from JFNew that provided training and guidance to her and her Envirothon team. "I definitely learned the most about aquatics. We had some really inspiring resource professionals that made it easy to learn." Truckey's Envirothon team chose water quality testing on the Coldwater Chain of Lakes in Branch County as their 2010 community outreach project.

When asked how she came to be involved in Envirothon, Truckey recalls "I heard about Envirothon from my ag class at the Branch Area Careers Center and my older brother actually participated [in Envirothon] too." As a student at Union City High School, she was able to participate in programs at the BACC. Branch Area Career Center has its own student-run farm with field crops, livestock, a greenhouse and aquaculture components. It also has an active Envirothon program headed by teacher Bill Earl. For over a decade, BACC has produced highly competitive

Envirothon teams. Many of the BACC students involved in Envirothon have gone on to pursue careers in natural resource management, such as Seth Earl, a soil conservationist with the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS); and Kelli Fulkerson, a student intern with the USDA-NRCS.

The Envirothon experience left such an indelible mark on Truckey that she recently volunteered to serve on the Michigan Envirothon Board as Student Representative for the 2011 year. When asked about the reasons behind her staying involved in the Envirothon program as a volunteer, Truckey replied, "I think the Envirothon program is important to provide to high school students because it teaches them the basics of nature."

Thank You Michigan State University!

For the second straight year, Michigan State University awarded scholarships to Michigan Envirothon top teams at the Michigan Envirothon State Competition.

Each member of the winning team received a \$2,500 scholarship to MSU. Scholarships of \$1,500 and \$500, respectively, were also awarded to members of the second and third place teams.

The scholarships were first awarded at the 2009 State Competition that was held at MSU and were already being utilized for the 2009-2010 school year.

Michigan Envirothon is very appreciative of MSU for providing the scholarships again in 2010.





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Glen Lake High School Represents Michigan at Canon Envirothon

A team of students from Glen Lake High School took top honors at the Michigan Envirothon State Competition held May 13 and 14 at the Leelanau Outdoor Center in Maple City, Michigan. The team went on to represent Michigan at the North American Canon Envirothon held in California in August. The Glen Lake team finished first among 22 teams from across the state that competed against each other on their knowledge and skills of conservation topics. Finishing second in the competition was a team from Iron Mountain/Kingsford High School followed by a team from Wylie Groves High School in Birmingham.

During the State Competition, the teams were tested in an outdoors, hands-on setting, on seven conservation topics including, aquatic ecology, energy, forestry, soils/geology, agriculture, wildlife and groundwater protection. Each team also presented a community outreach project prior to the competition that addressed a natural resources concern in their community.

The team from Glen Lake High School, whose team name was "All Natural, Baby", addressed raptor rehabilitation for their Community Outreach Project. In particular they established raptor houses throughout Leelanau County to aid the locally threatened Screech Owl and American Kestrel. Glen

Lake's participation in the 2010 Canon Envirothon turned out to be one of Michigan's more memorable showings in its 16-year history in the competition. Multiple travel complications had delayed the team's arrival until the night before testing. Despite missing all of the pre-test training sessions provided

by the host site, the students from Glen Lake H.S. performed well, especially in the category of soils, where they placed 17th out of 54. The top five winners for 2010 included California, Delaware, Minnesota, Florida and Maryland, respectively.

Over 270 teenagers from 45 U.S. states and nine Canadian provinces competed in the Canon Envirothon, making it the largest competition of its kind. The students were housed and conducted their oral presentations at California State University-Fresno, and completed their field testing at

Reedley College. At stake was a share of \$125,000 in college scholarships and prizes.

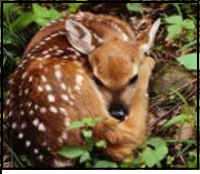
The experience gained from participating in the North American Canon Envirothon will be valuable as Glen Lake readies for another consecutive year of competition in 2011. Next year's North American Envirothon will be held in Sackville, New Brunswick with the current environmental issue of "Salt and Fresh Water Estuaries".



Thank You Leelanau Outdoor Center!

Michigan Envirothon is very appreciative of the hospitality provided by Leelanau Outdoor Center (LOC) for the 2010 State Competition. The food, facilities and scenic surroundings offered by LOC were outstanding! Thanks to the all the staff at LOC that helped make the 2010 State Competition a memorable event.

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2010 Community Outreach Projects

A major component of the Michigan Envirothon competition is the Community Outreach Projects. Each team completes a Community Outreach Project, where they identify an environmental issue in their local community and address that issue through hands-on training and community education. At the State Competition the teams give an oral presentation of their community outreach project to a panel of four expert judges.

The following projects were successfully completed by the 22 teams that competed at the 2010 State Competition:

- A comprehensive school energy audit and greening effort to reduce energy usage and costs
- Two projects that promoted and demonstrated the use of rain barrels as a way to conserve water
- Three rain garden installations
- Installation and promotion of a community butterfly garden
- Two water quality monitoring/advocacy projects
- One overhaul of a community recycling program
- One sustainable woodlot management improvement & community demonstration project
- One raptor rehabilitation project
- Five invasive species management and control projects- including honeysuckle, coltsfoot, garlic mustard, phragmites and purple loosestrife
- One lakeshore management project that promoted proper riparian management practices.
- Implementation of stormdrain labeling throughout a community
- Development of an education to educate youth about natural resources
- Promotion of proper lawn care techniques and a campaign to stop needless lawn care pollution

Of the 30 high school teams that participated in this year's Envirothon Competition, the following team was awarded top honors for their community outreach projects:

Wylie Groves High School, Birmingham Public Schools– Ernest the Monkey & the Wylie Baboons

Joseph Giancarlo, Kelsey Kaline, Eric Hausman, Calley Murphy and Sarah Zamler.

Their team advisor is Cynthia Sherman.

The winning Team from Groves High School decided to give the residents of Beverly Hills, Michigan a cost effective and convenient way to help out the environment and conserve water—rain barrels. The team took it upon themselves to produce and install rain barrels in various public and private locations throughout the community. These barrels collected and stored rainwater from downspouts and utilized a custom hose attachment to water lawns and gardens at the locations where they were installed.

Several companies assisted in the production of these barrels, including JAX Car Wash, ACE Hardware, Home Depot, and Beverly Hills Parks and Recreation Board.

These companies, especially JAX Car Wash helped to keep the overhead cost of rain barrel production to a minimum. A supplemental fundraising project, involving the sale of aluminum water bottles, covered the remainder of the cost. Inside each of the water bottles sold in this fundraiser was an informative sheet reminding users to be aware of water conservation, take action, and always use refillable water bottles to cut down on waste. Results of the rain barrel efforts included the construction of 10 rain barrels for installation (free-of-charge) into private homes, as well as the construction of (*continued on page 6*)

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2011 Competitions

Michigan State Envirothon

Teams that compete in the regional competitions can qualify for the state competition. This year's state competition will be held at the Fort



Custer Training Center on May 12 and 13. Fort Custer is a training center for the Michigan National Guard and is located east of Kalamazoo in Augusta. The training center has an outstanding environmental program that has won several national awards.

Canon North American Envirothon



The winning team from the state competition qualifies to compete in the Canon North American Envirothon which includes teams from across the United States and Canada. The 2011 competition will be held at Mt. Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada from July 24 – 29.

Become a Michigan Envirothon Member

High school students are able to participate in Michigan Envirothon because of the efforts of volunteers as well as grants and donations from organizations and individuals. The Envirothon Membership program was created so that individuals could financially support Michigan Envirothon and become more involved with the competition year-round. Individuals who become Michigan Envirothon members receive a membership gift, an annual report and other updates about Michigan Envirothon, and are recognized on the organization's Web site and reports.

Most importantly, members know they are helping to inspire an appreciation for nature and conservation in the high school students who participate in Michigan Envirothon.

To become a member, visit the Michigan Envirothon Web site at www.michiganenvirothon.org. Membership is \$25 for one year.

2010 Community Outreach Projects *(continued from page 5)*

two rain barrels for installation in public locations to serve as a display and encourage homeowners to buy or make their own barrel. Awareness about these barrels was raised through ads in the local newspaper and informative flyers which were placed in brochure boxes at public locations and given to private homeowners for local distribution. If these awareness efforts weren't enough, the "Wylie" team also developed their own website, located at www.beverlybarrels.com, where people could obtain information about building and purchasing barrels, as well as water conservation.

In all, Ernest the Monkey & the Wylie Baboons installed 12 rain barrels at various locations throughout their community and delivered five public presentations to tell about their benefits. The team estimates that their project reached over 2,000 students and 100 adults and cost about \$200.

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A Word From the Coordinator...

My year as Program Coordinator for the Michigan Envirothon turned out to be an exciting, tremendous learning experience. It was great to see the over 150 student competitors from across the state display their knowledge of environmental issues and environmental solutions. I realized the powerful role Envirothon can have in a high schooler's academic career and development as an environmental steward. I was reminded that sometimes our youth can be the best teachers.

For example, the student teams from this year's competitions taught me, as well as their school, their community, and anyone else willing to listen, what it meant to be real leaders in environmental stewardship. Through their community outreach projects, the 2010 Envirothon teams taught us about managing invasive exotic plant species such as Coltsfoot, Purple Loosestrife and giant *phragmites*. They educated us on the critical elements of butterfly, raptor and reptile habitat in Michigan. They demonstrated skills such as biological monitoring in freshwater streams and selective timber harvesting practices. They showed us how a school can cut costs and lower their carbon footprint by making simple energy efficient conversions, how a school can treat polluted storm water on-site with rain gardens, and how a school can turn a community on to water conservation through the use and promotion of rain barrels.

The May 13-14, 2010 Michigan Envirothon State Competition culminated with twenty-three teams from five geographic regions, converged on the grounds of the Leelanau Outdoor Center. More than 40 volunteers from around the state came together to help pull off this amazing event. For the second year in a row, our state competition winners were awarded scholarships by Michigan State University. The scholarships ranged from \$500 - \$2,500 for the first 3 placed overall winners. Thank you, MSU!

On behalf of the hard working Michigan Envirothon board and committee members, I would like to extend my gratitude for your support of the Michigan Envirothon program in 2010. What an inspiration it is to see our young people grow in their understanding and appreciation of the natural world around them. This unique experience, and the resulting impact to communities around Michigan, would not be possible if not for you. So, thank you for all you do to keep Envirothon alive in Michigan and available to the next round of resource professionals-in-training.

I would be remiss if I didn't also acknowledge the tremendous amount of hard work and long hours the Michigan Envirothon volunteers devote to the program all year long. Your generous contributions of time, resources, hard work and innovative ideas are invaluable to the program's success. Thank you for your vision and dedication. You have been wonderful mentors and have instilled in me a life-long passion for Envirothon.

Congratulations to all the winners from 2010. We are now looking forward to our 2011 events, which will build toward the state finale at the new Environmental Training Center on the grounds of Ft. Custer. See you there!

Sincerely,

Benjamin Wickerham

2010-2011 Michigan Envirothon Coordinator

Inspiring Environmental Stewardship in Michigan High School Students



Senior-most Envirothon Board Member Contributes 16 Years of Service to ME

Roger Howell has been a dedicated volunteer for Michigan Envirothon since 1994. At age 79, he is still as active as ever, recently finishing his 16th year of volunteer service to Michigan Envirothon.

Mr. Howell, a retired public relations specialist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, began his volunteer efforts at the inception of the program in 1994, providing strong support and guidance as the program began to grow. Today, he is a highly valued volunteer member of the Michigan Envirothon leadership team. He continues to assist with fund raising efforts and is actively building new corporate partnerships.

Mr. Howell was an integral part of the 2010 state competition, graciously sacrificing three full days to travel to northern Michigan and volunteer his services at the event. He can always be counted on to recruit a work force of family and friends including his lovely wife Dixie, to help at Envirothon events. He pays all expenses for such ventures out of his own pocket without ever asking for, or accepting any compensation. This year, Mr. Howell shared his lifelong passion for the environment with the over 120 students at the state competition event. He also put his public relations skills to use by helping to



photo-document each day of the event.

Mr. Howell attends over eight monthly Michigan Envirothon meetings and averages over 170 volunteer hours each year. Over the course of his 16 years, it is estimated that Mr. Howell has inspired over 1,600 students by passing on his love for the outdoors and for education. Many of

today's Michigan natural resource professionals participated in Envirothon and can attest to his influence in their early years as students. In fact, one the program's leading team advisors is Roger's son-in-law, to whom Roger has mentored and passed his passion for environmental education. This act alone has introduced over 80 students to the program that would have otherwise not known about it.

Over the years, Mr. Howell's commitment to the program has provided consistency and strength as the program has evolved and grown. He sets high program goals and helps to foster growth and innovation. His committed participation in the program both at the local and state levels is exemplary and is closely aligned with his commitment to the next generation of natural resource professionals.

2010 Michigan Envirothon Members

- Brian Buehler
- Svenja Drebes
- Ginger Bardenhagen
- Lori Phalen
- Marj Longcore
- Chuck Olson
- Suzanne Ebright
- Sharon K. Corrión
- Ernie Delemeester
- Bindu Bhakta
- Carmen Faso
- Stu Kogge
- Melissa Higbee
- Theresa Krist
- Marilyn Shy
- Cecilia Govrik

Thank You For Your Support!

Inspiring Environmental Stewardship in Michigan High School Students



2010 Regional Competitions

In preparation for the Michigan Envirothon, teams competed in five regional competitions during March and April. The top teams in each regional completion moved on to the State Competition. Students work with resource professionals throughout the year to improve their skills and knowledge of the subject areas.

★ Region 1

- Iron Mountain/Kingsford High School
- Iron Sault Area High School

★ Region 2

- Central Lake High School
- Glen Lake High School (five teams)

★ Region 4

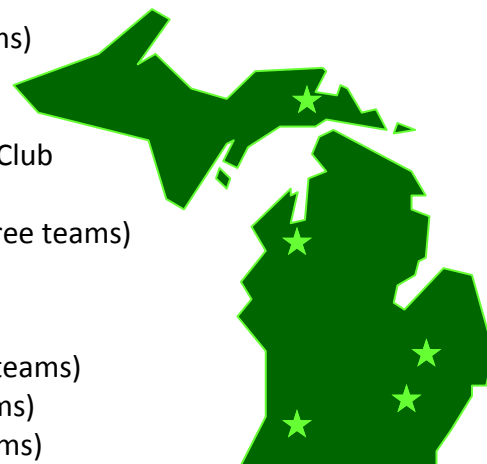
- Branch Area Careers Center (two teams)
- Niles High School (two teams)

★ Region 5

- Beecher High School
- Caro High School (two teams)
- Lakeview High School
- New Lothrop High School
- South Lake Environmental Club of South Lake High School
- Lake Orion High School (three teams)

★ Region 6

- Wylie Groves High School
- Hillsdale High School (two teams)
- OSTC - Southeast (two teams)
- OSTC - Southwest (two teams)
- Webberville High School (two teams)



Canon Diversity Grant Reaches Underserved Audience *(continued from page 2)*

The activity kits helped students learn about environmental science in an exciting non-formal educational setting that portrayed the unique learning environment that Envirothon offers. With the assembled classroom activity kits, the Michigan Envirothon coordinator travelled to classrooms and held “mini envirothons” and/or nature quizzes that utilized the purchased equipment and engaged the students.

As a result of these efforts, Michigan Envirothon saw a 100% increase of team participation from Region 6 (southeast Michigan). In 2010, 14 teams participated in Envirothon from this region; six of these teams confirmed that they had received classroom presentations or talked to someone who had. Moreover, teams from southeast Michigan comprised 47% of the 30 team field in 2010. The end result of the Canon Diversity Grant was a successful outreach project that dramatically increased the diversity and numbers of schools involved in the Michigan Envirothon.

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Michigan Envirothon 2010 Sponsors

- Canon U.S.A. Inc./Canon Envirothon
- Charles Olson, Jr
- Consumers Energy and Consumers Energy Foundation
- DTE Energy Foundation
- JFNew
- Michigan Conservation Districts
- Michigan Department of Agriculture
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment
- Michigan Farm Bureau
- Michigan State University
- North Central Region - Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Michigan Chapter Soil & Water Conservation Society

Michigan Envirothon Board and Committee Members

- Andrea Berry, Shiawassee Conservation District
- Becky Jo Farrington, Michigan Energy Options
- Benjamin Wickerham, Michigan Envirothon Coordinator
- Brian Buehler, USDA-NRCS
- Carrie Vollmer-Sanders, The Nature Conservancy
- Christy Roman, Antrim Conservation District
- Chuck Olson, Michigan Tech, University of Michigan (Professor Emeritus)
- Donna Kanan, Shiawassee Conservation District
- Ginger Bardenhagen, Michigan Department of Agriculture
- John Mitchell, Fort Custer Training Center
- Kay Lancour, Consumers Energy
- Kelli Fulkerson, MSU Student
- Lori Phalen, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts
- Marjorie Longcore, Consumers Energy
- Melissa Eldridge, Ionia Conservation District
- Melissa Higbee, Shiawassee Conservation District
- Roger Howell, USDA-NRCS (retired)
- Stu Kogge, JFNew
- Taylor Truckey, WMU Student
- Teresa Sherwood, Michigan Department of Agriculture
- Tom Occhipinti, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment



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