

THE WINNERS OF THE TAMPA BAY REGIONAL ENVIROTHON

The Tampa Bay Regional Envirothon is a problem-solving, natural resource education program for high school students. It is a field-oriented program in which students, working in teams of five, learn to use critical thinking skills, work as a team, and develops problem-solving and communications skills to answer written questions or conduct hands-on investigations about environmental issues.

The program focuses on the following five areas of study: Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Soils/Land Use, Wildlife, and Current Environmental Issue. The current environmental issue is different each year. These inter-related and broad study areas teach a holistic approach to natural resource conservation and can easily be incorporated into a teaching

curriculum for high school students in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties.

The regional envirothon was held on Friday, February 17, 2012 at the St. Petersburg College in Seminole, FL. The high school is represented by a five member team or teams and an advisor. The regional winners are as follows: 1st Place Canterbury School of Florida (Pinellas County); 2nd Place East Bay High School (Hillsborough County); and 3rd Place T.R. Robinson High School (Hillsborough County). Teams were also recognized by scoring high in each category – Aquatics – Alternate Team 4 – Moss, Forestry – Brandon Senior High School, Soils – Newsome High School, Wildlife – Plant City High School, Current Environmental Issue – Alonso High School and Oral Question – Canterbury School of Florida.



1st Place – Strawberry Crest High School
Jake Maxel, Kegan Casey, advisor Jordan Newsome, Kade Green and Alex Duke



1st Place- Canterbury School of Florida
Advisor Sean Murphy, Steven Winessett, Taylor Kreis, Lacy Adams, Emily Winessett, Simone Leeper, Scottie Smith (advisor).

Land Judging Contest

The Land Judging contest is a middle school and high school competition that challenges students to gain a better understanding of soil structure and land evaluation. Land Judging enables each participant to learn how to recognize the physical features of the soil, determine land capability for crop productions and evaluate management practices needed for proper stewardship. Soil, land and home-site evaluation, provide a setting for students to investigate the soils in their region, the environment that surrounds them and their effect on their daily lives.

The Annual Land Judging contest was held on Thursday, December 1, 2011 at Dennis Carlton site with students from Hillsborough County Public Schools – Randall Middle School, Newsome High School, Armwood High School, Spoto High School, and Strawberry Crest High School. Pam Walden, Agri-Business & Natural Resources with Hillsborough County Schools, coordinated the contest.

The food was prepared and provided by a dedicated and a long time veteran of the Land Judging Contest, Douglas Holmberg. The lunch and awards ceremony was held at the Hinton's Farm off of Sydney Dover Road. The winners of the 2011 contest are as follows: High School - 1st Place Strawberry Crest High School with a high score going to Kade Green; 2nd Place Newsome High School; and 3rd Place Armwood High School; Middle School – 1st Place Randall Middle School with the high score going to Nick Dosik.



2nd Place- East Bay High School
Taylor Eads, Rachel Garcia, Melissa Pegley, Rebecca Rouch, Joseph LaRoche, Antonella Aviles, and Emily Hind.



3rd Place- T.R. Robinson High School
Dauwd, Juliahna, Larry, Devin, Zack and Ariele



1st Place – Randall Middle School
Josh Meyers, Andrew Brown, Nikolai Doski and Alexandra Aponte.

Poster Contest

The Poster Contest gives the elementary students in Hillsborough County the opportunity to express their knowledge and understanding of conserving water and other natural resources through their talent and creativity in art. The 2012 Theme is "Soil to Spoon". It is important to understand where the food comes from that you eat each day. You see a wide variety of products in your local grocery store. But where does it all come from? What is the connection to the soil you walk on each day? This poster contest helps them gain a better understanding of the process the food takes. The winners are as follows: 1st Place Maria Pardo, Gibsonton Elementary School, 2nd Place Hunter Orchard, Gibsonton Elementary School, 3rd Place Madison Campbell, Gibsonton Elementary School. The winner's posters were displayed in the 2012 State Fair Ag Hall of Fame. The winner's posters will compete at the Annual AFCD Area Meeting. The winners will then go on to compete with other posters at the Annual AFCD State Meeting.

Hillsborough Soil & Water Conservation District

LAND JUDGING CONTEST

The Annual Land Judging contest was held on Thursday, December 1, at a site courtesy of Dennis Carlton, with students from Hillsborough County Public Schools – Randall Middle School, Newsome High School, Armwood High School, Spoto High School, and Strawberry Crest High School. The winners of the 2011 contest in high school competition were: **1st Place Strawberry Crest High School** with a high score going to Kade Green; **2nd Place Newsome High School**; and **3rd Place Armwood High School**. In Middle School competition results were as follows: **1st Place Randall Middle School** with the high score going to Nick Dosik.

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The Land Judging contest is a middle school and high school competition that challenges students to gain a better understanding of soil structure and land evaluation. Land Judging enables each participant to learn how to recognize the physical features of the soil, determine land capability for crop productions and evaluate management practices needed for proper stewardship, soil, land and home-site evaluation, provide a setting for students to investigate the soils in their region, the environment that surrounds them and their effect on their daily lives.

The Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) services all of Hillsborough County. Their office is located in downtown Plant City. The district includes five volunteer supervisors, three county employees, and two Federal Employees (USDA-NRCS). The district provides technical assistance and conservation planning to residents throughout Hillsborough County to conserve and protect water resources, keep agricultural land productive and improve wildlife habitat. The District has also developed and hosted the following annual educational programs and workshops to help residents of the county gain a better understanding of local environmental concerns and what can be done to protect and conserve the County's limited natural resources.

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holistic approach to natural resource conservation and can easily be incorporated into a teaching curriculum for high school students in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties. The regional envirothon was held on Friday, February 17, 2012 at the St. Petersburg College in Seminole FL. The high school is represented by a five member team or teams and an advisor. The regional winners are as follows: **1st Place Canterbury School of Florida** (Pinellas County); **2nd Place East Bay High School** (Hillsborough County); and **3rd Place T.R. Robinson High School** (Hillsborough County). Teams were also recognized by scoring high in each category – Aquatics – Alternate Team 4 – Moss, Forestry – Brandon Senior High School, Soils – Newsome High School, Wildlife – Plant City High School, Current Environmental Issue – Alonzo High School and Oral Question – Canterbury School of Florida.

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HILLSBOROUGH SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT CONTINUES SUPPORT OF TAMPA BAY REGIONAL "ENVIROTHON" Area High School Students Compete in "Environmental Olympics"

Canon

by Jim Frankowiak

For the past 25 years, conservation district associations, cooperating state, provincial and national resource agencies have partnered in an annual competition called Envirothon. The program, which began in Pennsylvania, provides hands-on environmental and natural resource management education to high school students and empowers them with competencies and motivation vital to achieving and maintaining a natural balance between the quality of life and the quality of the environment.

The program was initially funded by its partners. In 1997, Canon U.S.A., Inc., began supporting the Envirothon program and in 1999 became the title sponsor. The program currently operates under the name Canon Envirothon and "touches and positively influences the lives of more than 500,000 young people." That number continues to grow as the program expands both domestically and internationally.

The Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District has been partnering with the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service for the past 15 years to facilitate the Tampa Bay Regional Envirothon, a competitive event which gives participating students the opportunity to test their knowledge and skills in several environmental areas. "This is a chance for students to apply in the field what they have learned in the classroom," said Kim Ford of the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District. The regional competition took place at the St. Petersburg College Seminole Campus and involved 23 teams and 134 high school students from schools in both Hillsborough and Pinellas counties. Each team is comprised of five members and two alternates prepared by their teachers.

The teams were tested in five areas: soils and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and an environmental issue that changes each year. This year the special topic was non-point source pollution and low impact development.

In the Soils and Land Use category, professional soil scientists help students learn about soil structure, interpret maps, evaluate land forms and soil characteristics that affect agricultural and development issues. Students work alongside marine and freshwater biologists in the Aquatic Ecology category to assess the quality of delicate aquatic ecosystems. They also learn to identify aquatic organisms, manage watersheds and determine non-point source pollution.

In the Forestry portion of the competition, students develop an understanding of the practices for maintaining healthy forest ecosystems through the help of professional foresters. They also learn the basics of species identification, forest structure and

dynamics, as well as management approaches. Wildlife, one of the favorite areas of Envirothon participants, is an opportunity for students to learn firsthand from wildlife experts about animal populations, their dynamics and the importance of habitat conservation. This year's special topic, Non-point Source Pollution and Low Impact Development, focused on urban and suburban design to lessen the influence of non-point source pollution on open water bodies and aquifers.

This type of pollution can come from many different sources. Stormwater runoff carries pollutants into our streams, rivers, reservoirs and other bodies of water. These pollutants include: excess fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides from residential areas, oil, grease and toxic chemicals from urban runoff, sediment from improperly managed and constructed sites, crop and forest lands and eroding stream banks, as well as bacteria and nutrients from pet wastes and faulty septic systems.

The winning team this year was from Canterbury School of Florida in Pinellas County with second and third place going to Hillsborough County high schools East Bay and T.R. Robinson, respectively.

"The Canterbury team will now proceed to the state finals and, if successful, on to the national Canon Envirothon where over \$100,000 in scholarships and prizes are awarded," said Ford. In addition to the top three teams, the competition included teams from Alonzo, Armwood, Blake, Bloomingdale, Brandon, Durant, Gaither, Hillsborough, Jefferson, Lakewood, Newsome, Plant, Plant City, Richard C. Spoto, Riverview, Sickles, Steinbrenner, Strawberry Crest, Tampa Bay Technical and Wharton high schools.

"In addition to the district and NRCS, we are indebted to our volunteers and supporters, St. Petersburg College, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Tampa Bay Water, Florida Strawberry Festival, Inc., Hillsborough County, UF/IFAS, Hillsborough County and Pinellas County Schools, CF Industries and others," said Ford. He also expressed his thanks to the following category leaders:

- Soils and Land Use – Juan Vega, USDA
- Aquatic Ecology – Monica Rivera, PE
- Forestry – Rob Northrop, Extension Forester
- Wildlife – Jeanne Murphy
- Environmental Issues – Lynn Barber, Florida Friendly Landscaping

For additional information, visit: www.hillsboroughcounty.org/soilwater/envirothon.

