

Lancaster Co. Tops 4th Envir-Olympics

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forestry and soils. The winner at the local competition is then eligible to compete at the PA State Envir-Olympics, held the third Saturday in June.

The objective of the State Steering Committee for the Envir-Olympics is to instill in the student's a desire to learn more about their natural environment through competitive events. It is felt that through these competitions, which reached 2,000 students in 1987, the students may become environmentally aware, action oriented adults.

The local competition actually originated in Schuylkill and then Fulton Counties. The conservation districts in these counties originated the idea because of a need for greater interest in environmental education.

The state Envir-Olympics had its beginning at Shavers Creek Environmental Center in 1984 when six teams competed. In 1985, it grew to 15 teams; and then to 28 in 1986. This year's competition marks the highest attendance, with 165 students.

Agencies involved in this competition again presented in their tests an array of mental exercises that stumped students and adults alike. The Pennsylvania Fish Commission tested students on aquatic insects, and fish and snake identification. Wildlife food, habitat, and species identification were subjects covered by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. The USDA's Soil Conservation Service presented questions from the Soil Survey Report on texture,

slope, and limitations of soil. Questions on tree identification, clearcutting, and tree measuring ability were given by the Bureau of Forestry. And since safe drinking water is a current environmental concern, a current issues station was presented by the Department of Environmental Resources with the use of the Chesapeake Bay Program Mobile Lab.

The growth of the State Envir-Olympics is a direct result of dedicated efforts of individuals, agencies, organizations and businesses. This year's event was made possible by donations and a wildlife art raffle. Sponsors of the 1987 state contest include: Gladfelter Pulpwood Co., Clearwater Conservancy, York County Isaak Walton League, Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Audubon Society, Fulton County Ducks Unlimited, Bruce Holbrook, W.H.Weyant, Edyth Bossert, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District Directors, and Pennsylvania wildlife artist, Ken Hunter.

Bill Metzler, a professional storyteller known as the "Itinerant Talesman" and a member of the state steering committee served as master of ceremonies for the days event. Bill stressed the hard work and dedication put into the event by so many people.

Also attending the competition and helping to distribute awards were Frank Malinzak, President of the State Association of Conservation District Directors, Inc.; Bill Forrey, Director of the PA Bureau of State Parks; and Dean

Steinhart, Dean of Environmental Education at Penn State.

Mr. Malinzak related to the students the importance of the competition. "The goals of this competition are like farming," he said. "It is to grow and to learn. You must go back and teach what is learned today."

Other awards were presented to teams with the highest scores on individual tests. Wildlife and environmental books were presented for school libraries and to individual team members. Also, every student received an official Envir-Olympics cap and certificate for participating in the all-day event.

Special entertainment was provided by Dr. James Hamilton, speech professor at Penn State Mont Alto campus. Mr. Hamilton displayed his storytelling ability by emphasizing the increasing problems of pollution from recreation. He also displayed a variety of instruments made from woodland and other natural materials.

An unexpected added attraction was the tranquilizing, tagging, and tooth extracting of a 160-pound female bear. The animal was captured by John Roller, district game protector, Snyder County, on the way to the competition. The step by step process was taught to the students by Tim Marks, DGP, Mifflin County.

The Envir-Olympics is definitely a growing program. Hopes are high for a regional and eventually a national competition.



Russell Kiefer of the soil Conservation Service displays a soil profile at the Envir-Olympics.

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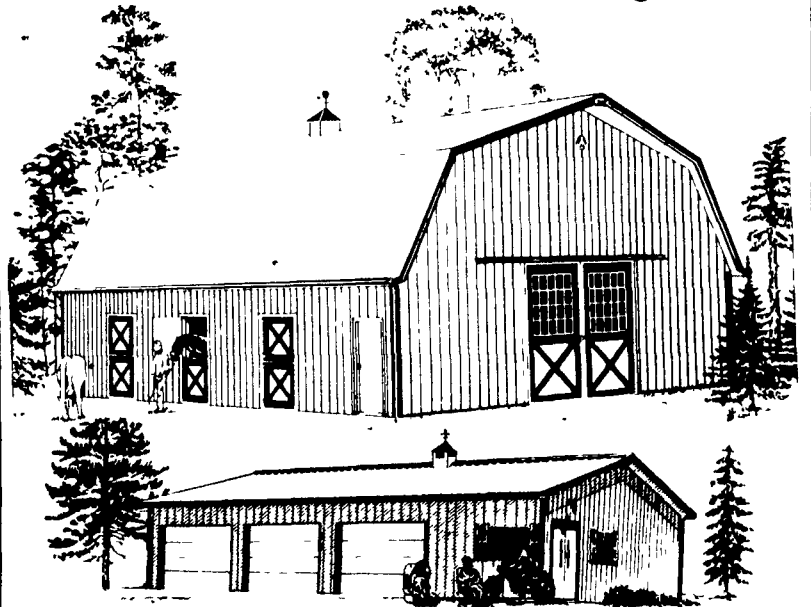
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