



## Vermont Envirothon School Rules

### **Mission Statement:**

Encourage the next generation of conservationists from Vermont by delivering a high quality, statewide Vermont Envirothon program.

*VT Envirothon strives to:*

- *foster the development of critical thinking, cooperation, and decision-making skills --- AND --- inspire ingenuity and creativity when problem-solving*
- *connect youth to the environmental, economic, and social issues in their own communities*
- *connect youth to conservation professionals*
- *promote a life-long commitment to environmental stewardship*
- *inspire youth to pursue natural resource careers*

### **Governance:**

The VT Envirothon is governed by the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts with assistance and advice from a Steering Committee and the resource teams in the logistics and development of training and competition materials. The VT Envirothon is administered by a Program Coordinator.

### **Training**

- a. Training for the competition often occurs throughout the school year, though some schools only train in the spring.
- b. Some schools train after school, while others train via an environmental course.
- c. Training materials can be found on the VT Envirothon [website](#), via various training sessions and/or webinars organized by the VT Envirothon steering committee and program coordinator, and/or local conservation districts and/or nature and environmental education centers.
- d. The VT Envirothon aims to provide in-person or virtual training to teams each year.

### **Competition:**

- 1) The Annual VT Envirothon Competition consists of four field stations and an oral presentation.
  - a. The oral presentation requires teams to address a Vermont-based challenge developed from the annual Current Issue Topic as identified by the National Conservation Foundation-Envirothon.
  - b. The field stations test students' knowledge, problem solving, identification, and field method skills in the following subjects:
    - i. Aquatic Ecology
    - ii. Forestry

- iii. Soils and Land Use
- iv. Wildlife

## 2) Scoring at the VT Envirothon

- a. Each field station test has a maximum score of 100 points.
- b. The Current Issue Topic oral presentation challenge has a maximum score of 200 points.

## 3) Winning the state competition

- a. The team with the highest point total of field stations plus oral presentation will be the State Champion.
- b. The State Champion team is eligible to represent Vermont at the National Conservation Foundation-Envirothon (NCFE) International Competition.
- c. The State Champion team must follow NCFE rules:  
<https://Envirothon.org/thecompetition/rules-regulations/>
- d. If the first-place team cannot attend the National Conservation Foundation-Envirothon International Competition, the Vermont State Envirothon Steering Committee may certify a replacement team to compete at the international event based on the order of finish.
- e. Only five team members and up to two school advisors/chaperones will travel to the NCFE International Competition.
  - i. NCFE requires a male and female advisor/chaperone if there is a mixed gendered group.
  - ii. The NCFE team registration fee (paid by VT Envirothon/VACD) covers rooms, food and all activities for the week.
  - iii. The NCFE team registration fee does not cover travel, insurance or other incidentals.
  - iv. The Annual NCFE International Competition shall take place between July 15 and August 7 each year, with the specific dates for each competition to be selected by the Host.
  - v. Rules are subject to change if the event is held as a virtual competition.
- f. Tie-breaking rule
  - i. Station Ties: If two or more teams tie at a station, the tie will be broken using that station's pre-selected tie-breaker question(s).
  - ii. Overall Ties: If two or more teams tie for first overall, the tie will be broken by comparing their scores in the following stations, in order: **Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife**. The team with the higher score in the first station where the teams differ will be ranked higher overall.
  - iii. Station tie-breakers are used only to rank teams within a station and are not added together to break overall ties.

### Requirements for VT Envirothon team members:

- a) Must be in grades 9-12.
  - i) Note for the winning team: The NCFE Annual International Competition requires students to be enrolled in grades 9 - 12 and reach ages 14 – 19 by August 8 of the current competition year. If VT Envirothon participants don't meet the criteria, then an alternate must substitute at the NCFE International Competition.
- b) May be from:
  - i) A public/private high school
  - ii) A home-schooled group
  - iii) A 4-H or other youth club

- iv) A scout troop
- v) A group sponsored by Conservation Commissions, Nonprofits, Conservation Districts, colleges or universities, or other organizations or businesses.

### **Requirements for a team:**

- 1) A team consists of five members.
  - a. Alternate team members can assist with the preparation for the competition and/or can substitute for a regular member who is unable to take part in the entire competition.
  - b. ***Substitutions by alternate(s) must be reported to the VT Envirothon Program Coordinator prior to the start of the Annual Competition.***
- 2) Each team will rotate through the four field stations and present their solution to the Current Issue Topic to a panel of judges as assigned on competition day.
- 3) Up to three teams per school/group may participate but no more than two teams may compete for state ranking in the Annual Competition. The alternate team is encouraged to compete as experiential learners, however.
  - a. Alternate teams use the event as a learning experience and their scores will not be included in the main competition.
  - b. Schools may move students from their alternate team to fill spaces on competing teams if shifting is required on competition day.
  - c. A school may petition to the program coordinator if they would like to have a fourth participating team.
  - d. The VT Envirothon Coordinator may authorize four-member teams to participate in the VT Envirothon, but those teams will not be eligible to compete in the National Conservation Foundation Envirothon International Competition.

### **Opportunities for the Alternates at the Competition:**

- 1) Alternate team members who are not needed by their own school/group to complete competitive team(s) at the competition will compete as an alternate team that represents their school.
- 2) Alternate teams will participate in the tests but, due to time constraints at field stations, they may not be graded until after the competition.
- 3) Alternate teams are encouraged to present their solution to the Current Issue Topic.
- 4) If there are insufficient judging panels to allow them to make presentations, alternate teams will be chosen to present based on the order that they registered i.e., those who registered first will be selected first.

### **Registration and expenses:**

- 1) In order for a team to participate in the VT Envirothon, the competition registration form, fee, and team information and tee form must be received by the Coordinator by the deadlines.
  - a. The VT Envirothon never wants fees to hold a school back from competing.
    - i. We welcome maximum participation! We understand that new schools may not have budgeted the fees and/or other issues may arise.
    - ii. Please contact the program coordinator if fees are an issue for your school.
- 3) VT Envirothon may refuse to accept teams who register late.

4) Transportation, meals and other expenses to and from VT Envirothon events will be the responsibility of each school/group.

#### **Advisors:**

1) Each school/group will have **at least** one advisor.

a. Advisors can be teachers or other adults approved by the school/group.

b. The same advisor **may** serve all teams from one school/group.

2) An advisor or school-designated adult chaperone must accompany teams to VT Envirothon events and will be responsible for the safety, well-being, behavior, and proper conduct of their students.

3) Advisors must accompany their teams to the Competition, however they must stand back from all test components and avoid distractions.

a. Photographs of their students are allowed.

b. Advisors may not view or photograph any part of the test. This includes organisms to ID, tools, models, etc.

c. Advisors may not have contact or communication with their team about the competition until the competition day is complete.

d. Taking videos at field stations is not allowed.

e. Lunch may be eaten with students, but no parts of the test may be discussed until the day is complete.

f. ***Violation of these rules may disqualify a team.***

4) Advisors who have concerns with rule violations should express their concerns with the program coordinator.

#### **Behavior:**

1) Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with typical high school rules (i.e., no tobacco, alcohol or any other controlled substances are permitted or used).

2) Students are expected to be honest, law abiding, and courteous, and to respect the rights and property of others.

3) ***Students must not use cell phones or other personal electronic gear/devices during the testing unless it is a requirement of the station.***

4) Students may not carry or use any reference materials that are not provided at and by test station leaders.

5) Students may not discuss any part of the test between teams or advisors until the competition day is complete.

6) Each team that has paid the full registration fee will receive five T-shirts which should be worn during the Competition.

a. Coaches and volunteers will also receive tee shirts.

7) Team members, advisors, cooperators, volunteers, and participants may be asked to complete program evaluations at the end of the competition to help VT Envirothon improve the program.

8) Allowing people to observe or record the oral presentations will be at the discretion of the VT Envirothon Coordinator and the panel of judges and may be terminated if it causes distractions.

9) Video/ audio recording at the field stations is not allowed. However, it may be done on training days.

#### **Awards:**

• Awards will be given to the top team at each station and to the top three teams overall.