

## **Missouri Envirothon Committee Meeting**

Conference Room  
Cole County USDA Service Center  
May 22, 2003

Present: Bill Bohnert, Jackson SWCD; Kathryn Braden, Taney SWCD; David Dix, MASWCD Treasurer; Rose Marie Hopkins, DNR Soil and Water Conservation Program; Tina Hovendick, Benton SWCD; Carol Hubbard, Shelby County SWCD; Peggy Lemons, Cole County SWCD and MASWCD Executive Secretary; Lena Sharp, Monroe SWCD; Judy Stinson, DNR Soil and Water Conservation Program; DeDe Vest, NRCS; and Linda Young, Cooper SWCD.

**Call to Order.** Peggy Lemons called the meeting to order at 10:30.

**Approval of the Minutes.** Kathryn Braden moved to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report.** Carol Hubbard presented the treasurer's report by distributing the proposed budget, the reports for the savings and checking accounts, and the status on district contributions for 2005. On the proposed budget, Carol has received most of the money except for the DNR check. On the expenses side, most entries are fairly accurate except there were no porta-potties ordered so that reduces expenses by \$110. Kathryn Braden moved to accept the treasurer's report and file it for audit. Motion carried.

**Review of the Regional Competitions.** Peggy explained that there was discussion at the last meeting regarding the regional competitions but that this meeting is normally the time when the review of the regionals is done. She reviewed the list she presented a month ago again explaining items that Judy Stinson, Rose Marie Hopkins, and Peggy had observed could be improved upon. The list includes:

- Recycle bins

- Handicap accessible for crutches and wheelchairs

- Vegetarian meals and recognition of religious holidays (Good Friday)

- Keep teams at the stations; stay until time to move, even at the oral station

- Test writers need to grade the tests so the intent of the questions is fully understood

- Spellcheck the tests and have others proofread

- Make sure technical terms on the test are in the resource materials provided

- Orals – no photos during the presentation. Nobody except the team buddy is in

- the orals. Video the orals and give to the team. No identifying apparel on the

- kids and the judges are to be told not to ask where the kids are from. Appearance

- is important. No hats during the presentation. Tuck shirts in. Have the door

- monitor help with school apparel. Send judges the information a few days in

- advance and explain the judging sheet with the judges to know what to listen for

- (citing references, etc.). Keep judges' attitudes in mind; screen judges. Help

- judges plan their follow-up questions. Citing references is very important. As the

- teams are trained, remind the teams they are to present a single viable solution.

Eye contact is important. Teach the kids to talk to the judges, not the visuals.  
Check spelling on visuals.

Bill Bohnert asked if someone from the state committee could help with oral training. Judy and Peggy both said absolutely. Kansas City could be having this training in early December following the Training Conference.

Peggy announced that Bill White and Aaron Jeffries will be offering training for the regional testwriters for the wildlife components this summer. This is to help ensure greater consistency among regions in this resource area.

Kathryn said that the Southwest Region has already had the review of their competition and it was very positive with the exception of comments about one school winning so much. That was not of much concern to the committee as that school had quite a few teams. The next regional for the Southwest Region has been set for the fall on October 29. Southwest's regional rules have been amended to limit no more than three teams from a single school. This year, the oral judges were traded during the day to help keep it more fair. There has been a request for spectators for the oral competitions but the committee doesn't expect to be making that change. There was also a complaint about a relative of one of the team members being involved in the competition but the committee doesn't consider that to have been any kind of problem.

Linda Young asked if there is a master list of study information for each resource. She realizes that wildlife has a CD but is interested in others. Peggy explained it is up to each region's test writers. Kathryn discussed the list of state resources. Bill suggested we put all the resources on CD with hot links so all will have everything together. Kathryn reinforced that we all should have the same list so we're all on the same level. Peggy said the resource list hasn't changed since the regional competitions began except for the current issue and orals information, which changes annually.

**Review of the State Competition.** Rose Marie Hopkins shared copies of the emails she received from volunteers with comments concerning the competition, facilities, food, and other items relating to May 1. At the 2003 competition, Rose Marie was responsible for the volunteers, judges, and worker training. This year, we gave priority to volunteers that had not worked at the Envirothon before in order to train more people in preparation for 2005. More people were used by assigning one person per team. As is the usual practice, there were people with no specific assignments to be used to fill in for people that didn't notify us they weren't coming. There were a few of those but not many. Extra people are very important because you never know. With the change in locations of the stations due to the weather, there was more standing around because we didn't need some of the jobs that would have been necessary if we had been spread out as expected. Peggy talked about the importance to have Plan B and more. This year, we had to deal with lightning but we also had to work without her plus make accommodations for a kid that came to the competition with a broken ankle and no crutches. When unforeseen situations arise, they have to be handled and they were.

Carol and Lena discussed the registration process. They felt it worked well and was smooth. They said it was good to keep at least one or two that have done registration

before so there is that history of how to do it. They concur that it is important to process one team at a time.

Judy talked about the rotation schedule. There were quite a few comments about too much time at the stations, but with no travel distance, it made it seem much longer at a station. In addition, the students didn't seem to need all the time for the test. In order to have the time schedule work with the oral component, the rotation probably needs to stay at 45 minutes.

DeDe heard complaints about the quality of the aerial photos at the wildlife station. It is also important to make sure all the equipment needed to take the test is available. The issue here was that a question required use of a clinometer. Fortunately, there was one available but it was a judge's personal equipment.

Mary Burt told Judy that for the most part, she was pleased with how the test writing ended up and plans to continue being responsible for test writing. She instituted a review committee, which was a good addition. The test and answer keys posted did not exactly match. When kids saw the keys, they told their teacher they hadn't had any multiple choice questions and the advisor questioned it. The form of some questions had been changed from multiple choice to listing but the questions were the same. The keys to be posted must be the same as the actual test.

Judy complimented DeDe on a wonderful job on the oral question. It was noted that the oral question and the current issue need to be included on the evaluations.

In respect to the awards, the students seemed pleased with them and what was provided. In the future, it would be a good idea to video the awards ceremony as the Little Creek team had a great reaction when it was announced they had won. It would have been great footage to have to use for promoting the Envirothon. Bill suggested we may want to film throughout the day. MDC filmed at Runge two years ago so Peggy will make sure we have copies of what was used for Missouri Outdoors.

The email response from Colleen Meredith was referenced regarding the teacher's field trip. She had reported that it was a great trip. Gary Van de Velde did a wonderful job putting the trip together, especially being a last minute plan. Rose Marie realized that she had not sent any kind of thank you note to Gary and will take care of that. There was a suggestion for the teachers to take the test next year. Rose Marie suggested that we see how the schedule might be worked to add another rotation so the teachers would actually have their own rotation taking the test. When they go to the oral presentation time, they could talk with the judges about what they are looking for and maybe give the teachers some pointers about how to better prepare their teams. The committee felt this could be a valuable experience for the advisors.

Tina Hovendick reported on the evaluations at the end of the day and the group picture. A picture was taken of all the teams together on the hillside in front of the Carver Farm. She felt it was a good thing to do the group picture because it was a good way to buy time during the final scoring plus it is a good thing to have for promotion. Teams were required to complete an evaluation in order to get into the room with the answer keys this year. For the most part, there was no problem. Some teams refused to do evaluations so

they couldn't see the key. Evaluations were sent to the advisors after they returned to their schools but some advisors wanted evaluations that day. The evaluation process will continue to be reviewed but for the most part was more effective this year.

There were three rooms used in the scoring process this year. The actual scoring was done in one room, two computers were in another room entering scores on a spreadsheet, and the wall board was in a third room completed manually. Judy felt much greater confidence with the scores she used to announce the winning teams as they had been triple checked. Carol noted that dividing into different rooms reduced confusion.

Lena reported that her experience with team buddies was that they loved their teams. There were limited comments from some that they disliked wearing the hats and that some team buddies weren't very nice and didn't do their jobs. There were also complaints about team buddies not knowing other team buddies in their rotations and that the assignments should be made so they rotate with other adults they know. Rose Marie said that next year during the volunteer orientation, it needs to be more clearly explained that the team buddies can visit with the team and find out about them. At least one team buddy misinterpreted the policy for the oral judges. DeDe noted that she heard complaints about the amount of down time team buddies have during the testing and suggested the instructions distributed to volunteers explain to expect this and suggest bringing a book or something to do while the students are testing. These are some things that come with people that are new to the Envirothon and that next year, they'll know better what to expect.

Comments about the food were primarily about using only one line. There were a couple of comments about the burgers not being done but they didn't know they were pork burgers.

Tina reported that the team photo process did not go very well. The place for the photos needs to be in an area away from where people will be. She also suggested the team hold a sign showing who that team is. Three people are too many for handling team pictures and two are enough. A separate room would have been nicer.

Judy explained that we may want to consider insurance needs since we are no longer directly affiliated with MASWCD. If the site is at MDC or a University farm, there would be insurance but the Missouri Envirothon would probably still need liability any way. Bill questioned if the regionals also need insurance. Peggy will check on insurance and get information to the regions.

There were additional comments about the amount of time for the sessions. Tina said there seemed to be too much testing time. Judy said that will probably stay the same because of the time needed for the orals.

**Regional Boundaries.** Changing the regional boundaries was discussed at the December board meeting at Tan-Tar-A and was to be revisited at this meeting. The proposed changes that were originally discussed were in the packets. Kathryn reported that the Southwest Regional board suggests taking off St. Clair and Hickory while adding Dallas, Webster, Douglas, and Ozark. Bill said Kansas City will work with what works best. Tina said that Henry would like to stay but Phelps and Crawford might possibly go to a

different region. David Dix reported that Carol Barnes would like to keep Ripley County in the Southeast Region. Lena said that Northeast would like to keep Schuyler, Adair, Macon, and Randolph. In response to this input, Peggy asked if the regional boundaries really need to be changed. She reminded the committee that the main reason for the proposed change was because the two urban areas were having trouble getting teams and people to help.

Tina moved to include Ray County in the Kansas City Region plus Montgomery and Gasconade to the St. Louis Region. In discussion, Peggy committed to contact Bill White about this change and Tina will contact Montgomery and Gasconade to see if moving is acceptable with them. All regions represented concurred this would be a good plan to increase participation and assistance in their respective regions. The motion carried.

**2004 Regionals.** Holding regionals in the fall will move the calendar up for posting the oral question. At this time, the Southwest and Northeast Regionals will be held in the fall. Southeast has discussed a fall regional but it is believed that Carol's last comments were to keep a spring competition. The oral question must be posted four weeks prior to the first regional so DeDe will be working on the question almost immediately after returning from the Canon Envirothon this summer.

**Sites for 2004 and 2005.** Peggy brought up that it is time to decide on the location for the 2004 Missouri Envirothon. Since holding the Missouri Envirothon at Runge, the committee has felt strongly about holding it at Runge again in 2005 since there will be so much going on that year in preparation for the Canon Envirothon. The facilities and staff at Runge made holding the competition at that location very easy. However, the current issue for 2004 would be in keeping with the Runge location. The issue for 2004 will be urban-oriented. The 2005 issue will be historical. In the past, the committee has tied the location into the topic. Site options included UM-C South Farm, UM-C Penney Farm at Midway, Lorna Domke's Prairie Trust, Lincoln's Carver Farm (since this year was not outside), Arrow Rock State Park, and Rock Bridge State Park. Bill also offered Central Missouri State University's farm as the new farm manager was a vo-ag teacher that has participated in the Kansas City Regional and has offered those facilities. It was suggested that Warrensburg might best be considered as a regional location at this point but is certainly another option to keep in mind. The first issue before the committee was to decide whether to select locations based on the ease of help and location or tying into the topic. After discussion, the consensus was to continue to tie the location to the topic. DeDe moved to check out the University's South Farm and other options for 2004 for the urban setting and keep the Runge Nature Center for the 2005 historical site. The comment was made that there is much greater difficulty in finding a site with historical significance than a site with urban issues. The motion carried.

**2005 Maryland.** Peggy needs registrations by June 1 for those going to the Canon Envirothon at Emmitsburg, Maryland. There are 12 planning to go. If DNR does not approve Rose Marie's travel, then the Missouri Envirothon will pay for her. Some of those going will fly from St. Louis, some from Kansas City, and the rest from Springfield.

The Fifth Topic question is to be presented at Maryland. Peggy would like DeDe to do this. Since Travis Dinsdale is going, he can cover the testing at that time if there is a scheduling conflict. A subcommittee will work with DeDe to set a date to work on that question. The subcommittee will include Peggy, Judy, Rose Marie, and DeDe.

This year, the sponsoring states will only need to provide one extra shirt in addition to the t-shirts provided by Canon and the state shirt the team received at the Missouri Envirothon. Carol moved to purchase polo-style shirts with the Missouri Envirothon logo embroidered on them for the team. The motion carried. Judy will use her best judgment as to the color selected. Those traveling to Maryland other than the team and sponsors will be responsible for purchasing their own shirts and are encouraged to do so.

Each year at the Canon Envirothon, there are advisor tours available at an additional fee but the Missouri advisors have never participated. Sometimes, the tours are sight-seeing but often they are educational opportunities. Maryland has several tours planned on a variety of interesting topics. Kathryn moved to pay for two to go on the ag tour and revisit the option to pay for sponsors annually. This will allow the committee to evaluate the quality of the tours without committing financial support. The motion carried.

**2005 Update.** Judy distributed Canon's suggested timeline for the two years prior to hosting the Canon Envirothon. According to the schedule, Missouri has done everything except set a schedule of host committee meetings. Judy shared that our goal is to keep six months ahead of the recommended timeline.

Peggy gave an update on fundraising. The soil and water conservation districts are asking her about how the money will be used that they have committed to donate. The district money will be used to sponsor the soils station. Carol announced that Christian SWCD has paid the district's entire \$2000 pledge. Rose Marie confirmed that matching grants or administrative grant money could be used for this purpose because of sponsoring a specific educational event.

**Other Business.** DeDe mentioned that in April she was driving with Roger Hansen for three hours and took advantage of the opportunity to plug the great need expected for volunteers in 2005. Roger reinforced NRCS' support in Missouri and directed the committee to make contacts with Montie Hawks and Leslie Michael.

Kathryn wanted to know if more copies of the guide book are available. Peggy explained that it is on the web site so anybody could print off their own copy.

**Next Meeting.** Peggy announced that the next meeting of the full committee will be November 30, 2003 at Tan-Tar-A at 6 pm in conjunction with the Training Conference.

Judy moved to adjourn the meeting 2:04.

Rose Marie Hopkins  
Secretary