

Missouri Envirothon Committee Meeting

NRCS Conference Room

Columbia, MO

June 8, 2004

Present: Bill Bohnert, Jackson SWCD and KC Region; David Dix, MASWCD Treasurer and Southeast Region; Gary Fak, Green Hills RC&D; Rose Marie Hopkins, DNR Soil and Water Conservation Program; Tina Hovendick, Benton SWCD and Central Region; Peggy Lemons, Cole SWCD and MASWCD; Jennifer Lewis, St. Charles SWCD and St. Louis Region; Judy Stinson, DNR Soil and Water Conservation Program; and Linda Young, Cooper SWCD and Central Region.

Call to Order. Judy Stinson called the meeting to order at 10:10 in Peggy's absence. Peggy arrived very soon thereafter and assumed chair of the meeting.

Minutes. Gary Fak moved to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report. There was no treasurer's report as Carol Hubbard was unable to attend the meeting. Peggy explained that she is of the understanding that finances are OK. Money has been received from Bass Pro and some of the societies. She, Judy Stinson, and Rose Marie Hopkins met with the Conservation Federation of Missouri regarding potential financial support. If there are any questions relating to finances, Peggy offered that we will be able to address them at the next meeting in Springfield.

Regional Competitions.

Fall Competitions. Judy Stinson distributed the list by order of the finalists of the 2004 Missouri Envirothon. None of the top ten winners was from an area with a fall competition. Advisors had expressed concerns to Judy about the time lag from the regional competition until state and how that might effect their teams. David Dix voiced a concern about a senior taking early graduation at the semester and then being unable to go to state with a fall regional. Linda asked how Northeast and Southwest schools had done last year with spring regionals. Judy reported that four of the top ten in 2003 were from Northeast or Southwest. Bill asked if regionals had done training differently. Peggy explained that there had been no changes in training although Southwest intends to do more training because of observing the Kansas City regional. Gary Fak asked if the state committee has the authority to mandate the regional dates. Judy explained that the committee does have that authority but Peggy explained that we prefer the regions establish their own schedules. Judy explained that the teachers like the fall timing for less competition with other activities but they don't want to put their teams at a disadvantage. The consensus was to give regions another year to decide what time of year they prefer to hold their regional competitions.

Score Sheets. Peggy explained the importance of returning the score sheets to the schools. This allows the teams to know where they need to concentrate preparing for the state competition and future Envirothons. It varies by region as to the custom for returning score sheets. Kansas City returns them at the event. Central does, too, if the

printer is working; otherwise, they are returned shortly following the competition. Peggy reinforced that returning the score sheets was adopted as a requirement by the board at an earlier meeting.

30% Hands-on Questions/MDC Trunks. The Central Region expressed that their test is 30% or more. Peggy reiterated the importance of site-specific, hands-on questions. Judy reported that all regions had responded to Syd Hines offer on behalf of MDC for a resource trunk for each region. Peggy expressed appreciate for MDC's efforts in this area. The trunks will be a great resource for the regions. Judy is working with Syd to obtain a trunk for the state competition. Jennifer Lewis is concerned that scheduling could be an issue for the materials in the trunk. It was discussed having the sections distributed separately so several schools could have access to parts of the trunk at one time. The trunks are a starting-point; each region is reminded it should be prepared to supplement the materials in the trunk.

Visiting Other Regions. Judy reported that Kathryn Braden attended the Kansas City Regional. Bill Bohnert commented that they both benefited from each other. Bill would like to attend Central's. Tina and Linda announced that the date for the Central Envirothon has been set for April 13, 2005 at Arrow Rock Historic Site and encouraged Bill to come. Peggy encouraged all regions to attend another region to see how others operate their regions. David asked how to get 20 teams like Central has. Tina explained that volunteers come to help and see how it works, which generates local enthusiasm to take into the schools. Peggy shared that the new info-ed grants are making specialists available to go to the schools and talk about Envirothon. For example, Cole County shares an info-ed specialist with Moniteau County, who is credited for three new teams in the competition this year.

2004 State Competition. Peggy asked for comments. Rose Marie Hopkins distributed comments she had received from volunteers. They included time issues, criticism of the soil pit, and student inter-action with teachers. Tina explained that not all teachers went on the farm tour and did have access to the students. One teacher didn't go on the tour but rode the Katy Trail instead. It was decided that teachers/sponsors would be required to leave the area, whether they participate in the activity arranged for them or leave entirely and go elsewhere.

Judy commented that from her perspective, this was the most stressful competition she has been involved with. She experienced complications with volunteers to set-up the day before and that morning, the teacher tour and transportation had not been arranged. There was a lack of hands-on questions on the tests, especially for wildlife and aquatics. Most things were dealt with but there were challenges that occurred that could have been prevented and avoided.

Tests/Test Writers. Jennifer posed the question asking if the same person was to write all parts of the test at a station. Tina explained that at Central, Donna (from Saline SWCD) compiles the entire tests and distributes the test in its entirety to the test writers for final review. This ensures consistency and hands-on activities and reduces redundancy from one station to another. Bill explained that for Kansas City, the test writers decided to write all the test questions for that ecostation, then reconcile the final test with all the test writers. Peggy suggested we back up a timeline for writers and schedule time in the fall to bring in the testwriters to select their station sites and begin

the process. Jennifer will be sharing these comments with Mary. She explained Mary is having some health issues that will necessitate a lengthy recovery. Peggy suggested that someone else might be considered to be assigned test writing for the 2005 state Envirothon to afford Mary better opportunity for recovery. Jennifer will check with Mary as to what she wants to do.

Oral Judges. This year there were three judges from DNR. Judy explained that from her perspective, this was good exposure for the Envirothon. They all had good comments and did a good job. Judy reiterated that for 2005, the judges at state cannot be judges at the Canon Envirothon. Rose Marie will keep this in mind as judges are identified for both state and Canon for 2005.

Rotation. The consensus is clear that the state competition does not need 45 minutes per rotation or as much time for travel between the stations. Linda commented that the site will impact the time requirements. The oral presentations will require time so there can be three sets of presentations although an option might be to have another panel of judges. The danger with a third panel is that this increases the potential for inconsistency between the teams of judges. Five minutes between stations may not be enough. Judy explained the issues she had with the team she escorted at the Central Envirothon and that one of the kids physically could not make it in the time allotted. Peggy suggested 40 minutes per station and ten minutes rotation. This would allow keeping two oral presentation teams of judges. The judges will have five minutes for scoring and so will have to keep moving. Bill commented that the easels that have been available the last couple of years at the state competition are not working; the teams have difficulty in attaching their posters. He suggested regular easels. Rose Marie suggested a board for backing to set the posters against on the traditional tripod easels.

Oral Presentation Scores. Judy distributed the 2004 and 2003 oral scores. These scores show significant improvement in the presentations. Jennifer asked about providing a video tape to the teams. At some regionals, they give the tape to the team as they leave the room but then the region doesn't have a tape. There was discussion about running two cameras, one for the individual team tape and the other for a cumulative tape of all teams in that presentation room. This is a topic to be discussed more in preparation for next year's competition.

Advisor's Tour. After the comments about the advisors interacting with the students, there was discussion about making the advisor activity or tour mandatory. There cannot be interaction between the students and the advisors.

Group Photos. Team photos were not taken this year as they are not considered to be necessary. The group photo was great and must be kept as an annual part of the process. A backdrop had been set up if a team wanted to take their own team photo but Tina suggested we not even offer team photos as it causes confusion at registration. If a team wants a picture, it should be their responsibility to think about it and get it taken.

Team Buddies. There was no problem in teams knowing who their teams guides were. It worked well to pair them up when sending them off. Bill reiterated there was no need for signs or hats. It would be nice to pair them up as the team registers but that didn't seem to work this year as registration was during the volunteer orientation. There does need to be a registration area for volunteers. A sign-in sheet would be an easy way to tell who didn't show up.

Lunch. The pizza was extremely well received and the committee is grateful to MDC for sponsoring the lunch. In the future, when a team is finished with the test, then it proceed on to lunch for crowd control. We would tell this to the team buddies and not to the teams to prevent them from rushing through the test just to get to lunch. Judy suggested that we need to include healthy snacks such as fruit in addition to the snack cakes. The kids drank plenty of water but less pop as there were a couple of cases left.

Registration Forms. In the past, registration has been more in-depth at the regionals and very cursory at the state competition. This year, we suspect there was a team that was considering switching team members. How to tighten up the registration to insure the same students that earned their way at the regional competition to come to the state Envirothon was thoroughly discussed. This will need to be discussed at the annual meeting at Tan-Tar-A.

MDC needs the students/advisors names for documentation for the food.

There was a question regarding parental consent for 18-year-old students. Brad Johnson, the Union Star advisor, was confused about conflicting directions on the registration materials. If a student is 18, then no parental consent is legally necessary. That will be remedied in next year's materials.

Judy praised the regionals. She really enjoyed participating in those she was able to attend and encouraged people to attend other competitions to see how they do it.

There were several suggestions for things to do at the end of the competition while the scores are being finalized. St. Louis has games to fill the time. We currently take the group photo. Judy is thinking about a slide show, information about the national competition, and a rookie award for a new school.

2004 Canon Envirothon in West Virginia.

Polo shirts for the team and those going. The state committee normally provides a polo shirt for each of the students and their advisors in the school color. This year's colors are maroon and white. Judy brought samples in various sizes. They will be about \$15 each including the stitching. Bill moved to buy the shirts for the winning team and the advisors. Motion seconded. Tina amended the motion to also buy shirts for the other Missouri people going to West Virginia. The amendment was seconded and passed. The amended motion carried.

Giveaways. It is time to get stuff to Peggy, Judy, or Rose Marie for the teams to trade at the opening trade session. They will need to have the items by July 15. Items can be given to district coordinators to bring to Jefferson City, if that is more convenient. Since Peggy, Judy, and Rose Marie will be driving, then they will take the trade items with them to save shipping costs.

Who's going when. Peggy, Judy, and Rose Marie will be leaving on 7-25. Gary will be flying into Charleston that Monday and returning on Friday. Mary doesn't know if she will be going. Jennifer will probably ride with Laura Cowart and Sherry Doane, who will be driving.

Missouri Basket. Traditionally, the state next in-line presents the host state with a basket of goodies from their home area. The committee believes a better basket can be made than if we bought a prepared basket. If anyone has items to contribute for this, they will need to get them to Peggy and Judy by July 1.

Updated List of Resources and Study Materials. DeDe is working on this. There seems to be lots of confusion regarding the current issue topic for 2005. Bill said there is no title for the current issue on the web site. Judy explained that the current issue is Cultural Landscapes. Peggy will check on the Canon Envirothon web site issue. Those attending from Missouri will be presenting packets for the Canon Envirothon Committee members at their presentation including welcome information from Missouri.

PowerPoint Welcome. Peggy distributed printouts of what she's begun for the presentation to make to the CEC folks in West Virginia. This is the time to give final details about where 2005 will be held, how to get there, where to stay, and what to expect. She has a real good start but more will be added to what Peggy has started.

Registrations. Peggy has some of the registrations but she'll collect the rest next week in Springfield and submit them altogether. There are two different due dates for registrations in the materials, June 14 and July 14, so there is some confusion as to when the registrations are actually due. Peggy will be responsible for them.

2005 Update.

Station Sponsors. Peggy shared information relating to sponsor options. These had been prepared for the meeting with the Conservation Federation of Missouri. Peggy encouraged those present to think about potential sponsors. The budget distributed is not exactly current. As the event gets closer and contracts are finalized, then some amounts change becoming final amounts instead of projections. For example, the bus contract is almost double that projected. It is felt that finances will be workable but there will be extra costs at the last minute that will have to be covered. Next week, Peggy and Judy will lock-in the bus contract.

Volunteers. Rose Marie reported that there seem to be plenty of people interested in volunteering for 2005, but that this is what she expected as there is always great support from district people for Envirothon activities. Her biggest concern is for the oral judges as there will be 12 teams of five judges each and they must be balanced by professional interest and gender. Also, the oral judges cannot have had any other involvement with the teams during the week so prior volunteers can't just be rotated in to fill a deficiency. Rose Marie also reported that the Conservation Federation of Missouri has volunteered to let us submit articles for the CFM newsletter between now and the 2005 event to help solicit volunteers. We are allowed space for 600 words. The first article has been written and provides a background of what the Envirothon is and explains that we're hosting 2005 in Missouri. Future articles will start moving toward soliciting volunteers.

Testwriters. DeDe was unable to be at the meeting but Peggy reported that she is working on the tests and is in good shape.

Tours. Tina reported that she needs help with the canoe trip as Travis Dinsdale has been promoted and moved to St. Joseph. The committee will work on suggestions for help for her.

Judy raised that the St. Charles West team advisors have requested that the Missouri committee pay for one of the advisor tours in West Virginia, as was done for Little Creek advisors last year in Maryland. Gary moved to pay for the conservation tour in West Virginia for two advisors. Motion carried.

Invitation Page for Missouri. The committee reviewed several options for Missouri's invitation page for the memory books for West Virginia. It is customary for the upcoming year's state to submit a page for the next year's competition. The committee made very minor suggestions to the one selected, which had been designed by DeDe. It does a good job referencing the current topic and representing the state.

Next Meeting. The next full meeting of the committee will be at Tan-Tar-A on November 28, 2004 at 7pm in conjunction with the Training Conference. Peggy announced there will not be a 2005 Canon Envirothon meeting at that time but only the annual meeting of the state board. There will be ample other meetings specific to 2005 in Springfield so a meeting at that time is not expected to be necessary.

Other Business. Judy shared that Jack Boles, one of last year's team sponsors, suggested a test file of all national tests be compiled. This would be helpful for the team going to the Canon Envirothon each year to be able to review the format and type of questions used at that level. The tests are always returned to the sponsors so tests are available for many of the competitions since Missouri has participated. The committee felt this was a good suggestion. Judy is in the process of collecting tests from Michigan through Maryland.

Adjourn. Bill moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:50.

Rose Marie Hopkins
Secretary