

## **2026 VIRGINIA DOMINION ENERGY ENVIROTHON STATE RULES**

1. Students enrolled in grades 9-12 or an equivalent home school ranking during the current competition are eligible to participate.
2. Each VASWCD Area may send the top three teams from the Area contest to participate in the state Envirothon contest. Teams advancing to the state competition must have competed in their respective local and/or area competition. The top three teams must represent three different groups ex. different schools, FFA team, 4-H Club, Scout troop, home school group etc. In the event that a top 3 team is unable to attend, the fourth-place team may attend the state Envirothon contest. Each team may represent any group of high school aged students including but not limited to FFA, 4-H Club, Ecology Club, Scout troop, home school group, etc. Coaches may be teachers, scout leaders, parents, or any interested adult. Each team must be represented at the state competition by a coach that uniquely represents one team. Team members must also exclusively represent one team.
3. A state registration form is due to the VASWCD office by the noted deadline. State contest materials will be distributed to the host of each Area competition before each Area Envirothon so that the materials may be distributed to the teams that will advance as soon as that team is known. It is the SWCD's responsibility to let the VASWCD office know the teams participating in the state contest in a timely manner so that arrangements for teams can be made. It is the duty of the coach to make sure appropriate chaperones are in keeping with their individual school policies for field trips. The VASWCD requires a minimum of 1 chaperone per team. Information will be included in registration materials that relates to housing and meals.
4. A team must consist of five members. One or two alternates are allowed. In the event an original member is unable to participate, a registered alternate may take their place. Changes to a team roster will not be allowed past the registration deadline, unless approved by VASWCD in emergency circumstances. Alternates will not be allowed to go to the stations with their team and may not help the team set up during the presentation part of the contest. In the event of an emergency that would prevent a registered five member team from competing in the state competition, the VASWCD Envirothon committee may allow a team to compete with fewer than five members. The respective coach must certify the legitimacy of the emergency by phone or letter. If a registered five member team is not complete and present at the start of the set presentation time, the VASWCD may impose a penalty up to disqualification.
5. Coaches or advisors must accompany their team to the state contest. Coaches or advisors must be 18 years of age or older and not a currently enrolled high school student. They will not have contact with their team at the stations during the competition but may be guides for other teams during the contest, if needed.
6. The contest will consist of questions on soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and special issue: "Non-Point Source Pollution: It begins at home" The station areas will be worth 1/7 each of the overall score. The oral presentation will be worth 2/7. Tiebreakers for overall placing shall be as follows: Current Issue score; Soils score, Aquatics score, Forestry score, and Wildlife score.
7. Team members work together to answer test questions, submitting one completed test to the station judges before moving to the next station. Each station will allow 40 minutes for teams to complete the test, along with additional time to rotate between stations.
8. Oral Presentations will be given Sunday afternoon of the competition. Each team will be assigned a location and time for their presentation. Each team will have 5 minutes to set up, 20 minutes to make their presentation and 5 minutes to answer questions from the judges—30 minutes total. The NCF- Envirothon presentation score sheet will be used at the State contest with additional criteria included to meet the current oral presentation problem requirements. There will be two rooms assigned for up to nine presentations each. There will be a minimum of two sets of five judges. After each presentation, judges will rotate to ensure no set of judges is used twice. The high and the low score from each presentation will be dropped and the remaining scores averaged and rounded to the nearest hundredth following the practice of the International Envirothon. During the final round, the teams with the top two presentation scores will present to another panel of judges for final ranking. Scores are calculated in the same manner as in the preliminary round. The scores from the final round will be averaged with the teams' first round scores. If a top 2 team does not have a full 5 member team present for the 2nd round of scoring, the VASWCD

committee may disqualify the team or impose a penalty as deemed appropriate by the committee. The only visual aids or resources allowed will be Microsoft PowerPoint (PPT). Google slides may be used in creating the presentation but should be downloaded to a PPT file for competition day. No additional items may be handed to judges during a team's oral presentation including but not limited to brochures, food, promotional items etc. If PowerPoints are used, they must be submitted to the VASWCD no later than 1 week prior to the competition (May 10th, 2026). It is strongly suggested to bring a backup copy of your presentation to the competition on a flash drive in the event of technical issues. Students should include a list of resource references and information to present to oral presentation judges in their final power point slide of their presentation. Each team will be assigned a team letter for representation during the event. A team name should not be mentioned during oral presentation or school/team shirts worn that identify the school or SWCD.

9. The scores of the Sunday afternoon presentations (worth 2/7 of total) will be added to the scores of each station (worth 1/7 each) on Monday. The top two oral presentation teams will give their presentations again in front of everyone while the final scores are being tabulated. Team presentations will not be scored a third time.

10. Medallions will be presented to teams who earn the highest score in each of the stations (forestry, aquatics, wildlife, soils, and current issue.) Awards will be presented to the top overall scoring team.

11. The first-place team will represent Virginia at the NCF-Envirothon (July 19<sup>th</sup>- July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026 in Starkville, Mississippi). If the first-place team is unable to go, the second-place team will represent Virginia at the International Envirothon contest. VASWCD will cover registration and fees for 5 team members and 1-2 coaches at the International competition.

12. Medical needs, emergencies and student conduct during the competition are the responsibility of the school/coach or group the team represents during the contest. Please have students share medical information such as allergies or medication needs with coaches before leaving for the contest. The contest should be considered a school or group sanctioned field trip. Check with the school or affiliated group about appropriate permission slips or liability waivers that apply to field trips for your school system.

13. Teams may only bring water bottles to testing stations (Calculators, clip boards, writing utensils, Biltmore sticks, and other items will be provided as needed). Students are not permitted to use cell phones or electronic devices (including smart watches) during testing, except for necessary medical devices. If caught using any electronic devices inappropriately, the team shall be disqualified. No bags of any kind should be worn during the event. Team escorts can assist in holding any items necessary for health reasons.

14. Any concerns related to testing should be brought to the immediate attention of the Scoring Committee and/or Envirothon Coordinator. Cheating will not be tolerated and is subject to disqualification. Teams must submit written appeals to the Envirothon Coordinator within 30 minutes of the completion of final testing station. Appeals forms can be found at score keeping headquarters. An Appeals Committee will review appeals and proper action will be taken if necessary. All decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

15. Local and Area Envirothon Rules will not conflict with the aforementioned Virginia Envirothon Rules.

16. Any infraction of the Virginia Envirothon Rules may result in disqualification and dismissal from the event and host site.

17. Teams are not permitted to take completed tests home. Time will be provided to review tests and answers keys on site following the competition. Photos or detailed notes of tests or answer keys is not permitted.

18. Envirothon participants will respect that the VASWCD and/or host site reserves the right to require participants and guests on campus to comply with all current governmental orders and public health guidance as it relates to COVID-19 and any other communicable or infectious disease. Virginia Envirothon participants should follow all current recommended health procedures and guidance in order to protect the health of the university employees and all Envirothon participants and volunteers.