

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION FOUNDATION-ENVIROTHON

# Program Policies

Adopted July 29, 2015

Amended: February 13, 2024

**The National Conservation Foundation Envirothon (NCFE) shall be conducted under the following Program Policies, as provided by the National Conservation Foundation (NCF), the National Conservation Foundation Envirothon Operating Committee (NCFEOC), and the Host (group assigned to coordinate and deliver the NCFE Annual Competition).**

**Nondiscriminatory Statement:** In accordance with applicable civil rights laws, the National Conservation Foundation Envirothon (NCFE), its offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering NCFE programs are prohibited from and shall not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by the NCFE.

### I. NCF-Envirothon Program

1. The NCF-Envirothon (NCFE) Competition Year is the one-year period that will correspond with all programming and educational activities pertaining to the Annual Competition. The competition year will begin on September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year prior to the competition and will end on August 31<sup>st</sup> after the competition has concluded.
2. Participation and membership in the NCFE are open to all dues-paying U.S. states, Canadian provinces, and Partner Nations.
3. All states/provinces/partner nations will pay the same membership dues rate based on the number of teams they are eligible to send to the annual competition each year:
  - a. States – 1 team per state

- b. Provinces – 1 team per province
  - c. Partner Nations – 1-3 teams per nation
4. The annual NCFE Membership Dues rate will be set by the NCF, with input from the NCFEOC, at least one (1) year prior to the start of each Competition Year.
  5. Beginning in Competition Year 2022 (Sept 1, 2021-Aug 31, 2022), the annual NCFE Membership Dues will be due by December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.
  6. Failure to pay all outstanding Membership Dues could result in ineligibility of team participation in the NCFE annual competition, forfeit of the right to use the Envirothon name/logo, restricted access to NCFE resources, and more.

## **II. State/Provincial/Partner Nation Envirothon Programs**

1. All state/provincial/partner nation Envirothon programs shall be sponsored and coordinated by a primary Organizing Agency that is responsible for organizing local Envirothon competitions to determine the state/provincial/partner nation team(s) eligible to compete at the NCF-Envirothon annual competition each year.
2. Organizing Agencies include, but are not limited to local conservation districts or associated conservation agencies or state/provincial/national associations, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, educational organizations, etc.
3. An Organizing Agency shall become an affiliate/partner of the NCF and the NCFE and has an obligation to promote, organize, and educate local students, advisors, schools, etc. about Envirothon, in turn growing the program within its state/province/nation.
4. If a state/provincial/partner nation Envirothon Organizing Agency is not fulfilling its obligation of coordinating state/provincial/national competitions for three (3) consecutive years, the agency forfeits ownership as the organizer of the program. This would then allow another agency to become an affiliate/partner of the NCFE, which will allow them to organize and host a state/provincial/national Envirothon competition.

5. Partner Nation Envirothon Organizing Agencies will enter into a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the NCF that will outline all terms and conditions of participation specific to that nation and will be reviewed/renewed every four (4) years.

### **III. Annual Competition**

1. Each U.S. state and Canadian provincial Member is entitled to send one (1) team to the current year's Annual Competition, provided membership dues are paid in full by the set deadline of the current competition year.
2. Each Partner Nation Member is entitled to send up to three (3) teams to the current year's Annual Competition, provided membership dues are paid in full by the set deadline of the current competition year.
3. The Annual 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. The Annual Competition shall last a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of six (6) days, hereafter known as the competition week. The length will be based on recommendations by the Host to NCF for final approval at least two (2) years in advance of the competition.
4. Team members, advisors/chaperones, volunteers, guests 21 years or older ("Guests"), and NCF-Envirothon representatives (NCFE reps.) must sign an NCFE "Code of Conduct" and may be subject to a criminal background check and/or health screening each year.
5. Every person attending the Annual Competition in any capacity must be registered.
6. Transportation and meals en route to and from the Annual Competition will be the responsibility of each participating team, guest, and/or volunteer. Meals will be provided by the Host beginning on the evening of Day 1 (registration day) and ending with breakfast on the morning following the Closing Ceremony.
7. All participants in the Annual Competition must provide proof of health insurance to participate in any NCFE scheduled function.

8. The following individual Registration rates will be set by NCF, with input by the Host and NCFEOC at least seven (7) months in advance of the annual competition:
  - a. Team Registration fee (for up to five (5) team members and two (2) advisors/chaperones from the same state/province/partner nation; covers rooms, food and all activities for the week)
  - b. On-Campus Guest Registration fee (for any guest staying on campus; covers room, food, and all activities for the week)
  - c. Off-Campus Guest Registration fee (for any guest staying off-site for the full competition week; covers food and activities for the week, but not lodging)

The fees collected will be utilized to offset a portion of the costs of room and board for the teams and guests during the week.

9. The following individual registration fees are optional and will be set by the Host, with prior approval from NCF and the NCFEOC, at least 6 months in advance of the annual competition:
  - a. Single Room fee for Advisor(s)/Chaperone(s)
  - b. Operating Committee 2-day early arrival fee
  - c. Team 1-day early arrival fee
  - d. Guest 1-day early arrival fee
  - e. Day Guest fee
  - f. Education Day Guest fee
  - g. Awards Banquet fee
  - h. All other fees not covered above

It is at the discretion of the Host to set all terms and conditions of what is covered and/or provided by the above fees.

10. NCF will collect and process all registration fees, retaining a percentage for the growth and sustainability of the program.
11. All team registration fees shall be submitted to the NCFE by June 1 of the current competition year. Team registration fees paid after June 1, but before

the registration form deadline (to be determined by the Host), will incur an additional \$150 fee.

12. All team and guest registration forms, listing the names and other pertinent information of team members, team substitution candidates, advisors/chaperones, and guests, must be submitted to NCFE on or before the date set by the NCFEOC and Host each competition year.

#### **IV. Host Responsibilities**

1. The Annual Competition will be subject to a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NCF and the Host at least two (2) years in advance of hosting and will be delivered according to a proposed budget between the two parties. Sponsorships of the Annual Competition sought by the Host are subject to guidelines for sponsorship mutually agreed upon by the NCF and the Host.
2. The MOU shall include a Host/NCFE working/target schedule along, with critical or completion dates for major milestones.
3. The Annual Competition educational component will be organized and executed following the stipulations and recommendations as outlined in the NCFE Future Host Event Information Guide and supporting documents.
4. Each Host must provide NCF with proof of event insurance as determined by the college/university and meet the approval of NCF in accordance with the specifications set by NCF each year.
5. Housing and meals for the competition week will be provided by the Host for all registered teams, advisors/chaperones (up to two (2) adult advisors/chaperones per team from the same state/province/partner nation), and guests. Additional day guests (those not registered to attend the full competition week) may purchase meals and housing (if available) at a rate established by the Host.
6. Competition training and testing sites used by the Host during the Annual Competition should not include any sites used by the local state/provincial/partner nation Envirothon program within the four (4) years prior to the Annual Competition.

## **V. Education**

1. The Current Environmental Issue topic for each year's annual competition will be developed by the Host, in coordination with NCFE and the NCFEOC. The major topic will be confirmed by the NCFEOC, along with the site Host announcement, no less than two (2) years in advance of the applicable competition.
2. Reference Materials:
  - a. Reference materials for the five natural resource areas should be compiled with guidance from the Learning Objectives outlined by NCFE.
  - b. Final drafts of the Current Issue reference materials and of the host-specific reference materials for all five stations will be sent by the Host committee to the NCFE staff and the NCFEOC by the date outlined in the Future Host Event Information Guide and MOU.
  - c. The Current Issue reference material packet and learning objectives will be posted to the NCFE website by September 15 prior to the competition.
  - d. The Host site-specific reference materials for the five natural resource areas will be posted to the NCFE website by May 1 of the competition year.
  - e. The NCFE state/provincial/partner nation Representatives are responsible for making reference materials available to their participating team as soon as a winning state/provincial/partner nation team has been identified, but no earlier than May 1 of the competition year.
3. Testing Stations:
  - a. There shall be five (5) natural resource testing stations: Soils and Land Use, Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Wildlife, and a Current Environmental Issue. Each subject area will have a percentage limitation on the amount of site-specific content as identified in the approved NCFE Future Host Event Information Guide and Test Writing Guidelines.

- b. The five station tests will be conducted by the Host with guidance by the NCFEOC and assistance from cooperating agencies and/or environmental/natural resource professionals.
  - c. The five station tests will be developed with guidance from the NCFE Learning Objectives for each of these areas.
  - d. Each of the five-station tests will highlight the depth and breadth of student knowledge in those areas. Questions will include foundational concepts and higher-level applications. Each of the five natural resource areas will also make connections to the other resource areas in the training and testing materials.
  - e. Each of the five-station tests will run for 55 minutes.
  - f. The five station tests will reflect scientific methodology and practices and may include the use of both imperial and metric measurements where applicable.
  - g. The Host will provide equipment and resource materials needed for training and testing.
  - h. Any changes to the Annual Competition format must be made as set forth in the NCFE Future Host Event Information Guide and approved by the NCFEOC no later than one year prior to the Annual Competition to which the changes will apply (i.e., splitting the training and/or testing up between two days, holding ecosystem testing vs. specific station testing, etc.).
  - i. Additional rules specific to and required by the Host site/campus must be submitted to the NCFEOC for review and approval no later than one year prior to the Annual Competition.
- 4. Advisors and approved guests may be offered a chance to observe the training and testing stations as determined by the Host and the NCFEOC.
  - 5. Oral presentation will be judged by professionals from various state/provincial and natural resource organizations, agencies, and/or businesses.
    - a. The oral presentation scenario should be based on the current issue topic but should also require students to consider all of the other resource areas.

- b. Judges for the oral presentation will be required to participate in an orientation and training session delivered jointly by the NCFEOC and the Host.
  - c. Oral presentation topic training and additional resources will be provided to both the judges and the teams prior to sequestration and/or judges training.
  - d. Per judging room, each panel of preliminary oral presentation judges should include two environmental natural resource educators from high school level or above or from an accredited nature/environmental education center. Additional judges may be oral presentation topic specialists, agency representatives, conservation district board members, local agricultural/environmental boards, sponsor/partner representatives, local elected officials, etc.
  - e. For the final judging panel for the top three teams, the group should include one to two environmental natural resource educators from high school level or above or from an accredited nature/environmental education center. Additional judges may be oral presentation topic specialists, agency representatives, conservation district board members, local agricultural/environmental boards, sponsor/partner representatives, local elected officials, etc.
6. All station presenters, oral presentation presenters, and preliminary oral presentation judges will be selected by the Host with advice from the NCFEOC.
- a. Station presenters and oral presentation presenters should be natural resource professionals or experts in their field.
7. The judging panel for the final round of oral presentations from the top three teams may consist of five (5) or seven (7) judges:
- i. For a panel of five (5) judges, the Host will select four (4) judges and NCF will select one (1).
  - ii. For a panel of seven (7) judges, the Host will select five (5) judges and NCF will select two (2).



## **VI. Awards and Recognition**

1. Awards for the Annual Competition will be announced prior to the Annual Competition. NCF is responsible for all awards, which could include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Monetary awards.
  - b. Awards appropriate for display at school.
  - c. Individual team member awards.
  - d. Awards for the top-scoring team(s) in Soil/Land Use, Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Wildlife, and Current Environmental Issue.
  - e. Award for the highest Oral Presentation score of the preliminary oral presentations, the Don and Mary Jane Spickler Award.
2. Additional awards may be made but must be approved by the NCFEOC prior to the Annual Competition.

## **VII. Official Language**

1. English shall be the designated official language of the NCFE annual competition.
2. If at such time, a team qualifies to participate in the NCFE annual competition that English is not their first language, a formal request, no later than one (1) week following the completion of their state/provincial/partner nation competition, may be made to the NCFEOC.
3. NCF, the NCFEOC, and the state/province/partner nation sending a non-English speaking team will negotiate the expenses and needs for translation services for these teams.
4. The following items will/can be negotiated on a case-by-case basis between the NCFEOC and the state/province/partner nation:
  - a. Study materials and documents in first language
  - b. Interpreter for station training sessions in first language
  - c. Written field tests and answer keys in first language
  - d. Oral presentation scenario provided to the team in first language

- e. Bilingual judges or translation services in order for delivery of presentation in their first language

### **VIII. Competition Accessibility**

1. A priority of NCF-Envirothon is to make environmental and natural resource education accessible to all students. For students with learning differences, disabilities, or other conditions requiring accommodation at the annual international competition, NCF-Envirothon will endeavor to provide those accommodations to the fullest extent possible.
2. If at such time, a team qualifies to participate in the NCFE annual competition that has a student team member(s) or substitution candidate with a learning difference, disability, or other condition that requires accommodation to allow them to compete, a formal request, no later than one (1) week following the completion of their state/provincial/partner nation Envirothon competition, may be made to the NCFEOC.
3. NCFE and the state/province/partner nation Envirothon program of the qualifying team will discuss appropriate training/testing/oral presentation accommodations needed and negotiate any associated expenses for the team.

### **IX. Rule Infractions**

1. Any infraction of the rules and regulations of NCFE would result in disciplinary action or disqualification from the event and host site by the Host/NCFEOC. If disqualification should occur and damages to property are incurred, NCFE or the Host would assess the cost recovery of any damages. This cost would have to be paid before the state/province/partner nation could participate in any future NCFE events.
2. If disqualification should occur, the team would have to immediately leave the campus at its own expense.
3. A committee will be appointed prior to an NCFE annual competition to decide actions to be taken should any infraction of the rules and regulations occur.
4. Since students compete in the NCFE annual competition as a team, the actions of one or more members of a team may be considered the actions of the team as a whole.

## **X. Competition Advisory Team**

1. The Competition Advisory Team (CAT) is a group of NCFEOC members, as well as representatives from past and future Hosts, that are brought together to assist the current Host with the delivery of the training and testing portion, along with the Oral Presentation component of the annual competition.
2. Members of the CAT may have the following duties and/or others, as outlined in the NCFE CAT Duties document and agreed upon by the Host and the NCFEOC:
  - a. Serving as a proctor at each station. This includes interpreting rules and testing protocols, as well as resolving any issues of fairness and equity.
  - b. Monitoring/overseeing the station training/testing to ensure the NCFE Operating Guidelines, Rules and Regulations are being adhered to and to provide guidance on these Rules. The member will determine, document, and report inconsistencies and/or violations to the NCFEOC.
  - c. Officially monitoring the "start" and "end" time for each station.
  - d. Determining when and how to address medical concerns/emergencies in cooperation with the Host.

## **XI. Amendments**

1. NCFE Program Policies are subject to change pending approval as set forth by NCF. Changes will be provided in advance to all teams and advisors.