

NCF-Envirothon Operating Committee Winter Meeting

MINUTES

Saturday, February 10, 2024 | 9 am - 5 pm PT

Sunday, February 11, 2024 | 9 am - 12 pm PT

**Denotes action items.*

Saturday, February 10, 2024 (start time: 9:00 am PT)

***Action items underlined and in bold.**

1. Call to Order by Millie – 12:05
2. Roll Call and guests by Brooke

Millie Langley, Stephanie Tolar, Linda Dee, Erin Appleby, Courtney Curenton-Baker, Tammy McKeever, Wayne McKeever, Becky Geneau, Anne LeBrum Ruff, Irene Moore, Wendee Dodds, Shonny Nordlund, Carrie Milligan, Megan Grimes, Ashley Melvin, Brooke Myres, Debbie Waycott, Kelley Farrar, Keith Owens, Harvey Waller, Martina Reyes, Nick Ivey, JoAnn Kurtis (NY)
3. NACD Education Update – Keith Owens
 - a. wife Lisa is now on NCF Board of Trustees
 - b. appreciate all of group members hard work!
 - c. Tell our story – important for the board of trustees and executive board to hear what it takes to make the event happen and how impactful it is
4. Millie – present Becky with Hall of Fame award!
5. Approval of November 2023 Virtual Meeting Minutes* (*attachment*) – Motion made by Megan, Motion seconded by Ashley, no discussion, **Motion Carried**
6. O.C. Membership Update (*attachment*)
 - a. Midwest and Northeast vacancies
 - b. Three at large positions - Ashley, Mark, and Kelley fill these
 - c. Could rearrange the map or ask NCF board to appoint temporary at large to fill these vacancies, personally reach out to the state reps in the areas to personally invite them to represent the area
 - d. Motion made by Megan to present to the NCF Trustees that Jennifer and Millie will reach out to state reps in underrepresented areas personally to invite them to the committee, if unsuccessful, at large positions will be added on a temporary basis – Motion seconded by Carrie, no further discussion. **Motion Carried**
7. Nomination of 2024 Operating Committee Officers* - there are not terms or limitations on length of service – Carrie moved to keep officers as is – Motion seconded by Shonny – no discussion – **Motion Carried**

- a. Chair – Millie
 - b. Vice Chair - Wendee
 - c. Recorder – Brooke
- 8. NCF Update – tabled until a trustee comes in
- 9. NCF-Envirothon Program Manager Update - Jennifer
 - a. 2024 – membership total of 54 total – 46 states (Michigan new program), 6 provinces, 2 partner nations: China (approximately 2000 students participating) and Singapore (approximately 75 students participating)
 - b. Rep meeting in December: well attended, Forestry Supplier 7% discount
 - c. Smithfield Foods sponsoring 2024 year – have been given state reps for states with Smithfield locations so they can reach out to those states – new liaison (Casey)
 - d. Working with Canon – submitted sponsorship proposal to them this past fall and leadership team voted to support NCFE! – working on agreement now to determine amount and deliverables
- 10. NCF-Envirothon Education Specialist Update - Stephanie
 - a. NY – getting all materials completed although a bit behind, first draft of questions for all subjects, draft of rules and regulations, had special approval to not follow new model for hosting
 - b. 2025 will be following the new education guidelines
 - c. Alberta – provided comments on current issue, will be forest stewardship related, official title posted by the end of February 2024
 - d. Education Host Guide changes made – more to come later in the meeting
 - e. Diversity Grant information coming later in the meeting
- 11. Competition/Host Updates -
 - a. 2023 New Brunswick wrap-up report – Becky
 - i. Still recuperating, committee members for event are remaining involved
 - ii. Fiscal year ends March 31, bills are in, just over \$800,000 likely will go up a bit more as books are finalized, coming out a bit ahead financially
 - b. 2024 New York (*attachments*) – 11am – *Blanche's husband passed away early this week– card to be signed by committee*
 - c. 2025 Alberta – *tabled until Sunday morning (9:30 am PT)*
 - d. 2026 & beyond
 - i. 2026 Mississippi – submitted letter of intent to host, have hosted in the past but new leadership who were not involved
 - ii. 2027 Maryland – submitted letter of intent to host- will be the 10 year anniversary of the last time they hosted (Barry)
 - iii. 2028 and beyond – wide open – if interested reach out to Jennifer

e. Host Guide (v2025) Updates (*attachments*)

- i. Possibly invite future host chairs to be an at-large member on the committee
- ii. Jennifer created a new document – “Preliminary Guide to Hosting” – a brief introduction to hosting a competition that is an overview and less detailed than bigger host guide, includes first steps to hosting, numbers of what it could cost (subjective), size of campus needed, fundraising, etc..
- iii. Host Guide is updated each year for the next year so that it has updated information – Jennifer and Stephanie did an overhaul on parts 1 and 2 of document – this guide will be followed for 2025 and beyond
 - Part 1 – logistics, committee structure, who does what
 - Part 2 – education content information, increases consistency of resource materials between competitions, allowed number of pages for various resource topics, test writing guidelines
 - Possibly having the PDF broken into different sections with links on the website rather than one huge document to make the necessary information for each topic more accessible
 - Host guide is not on website but test writing guidelines and sample test questions are on website
 - Shonny moved to approve changes to documents, Motion seconded by Megan, no further discussion, **Motion Carried**

12. New York 2024 Competition Host Update – JoAnn

a. Advisor and guest tours –

- i. Monday Option 1 - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge – 3 mile car tour then go to Muranda Cheese Company – tour production plant and go to store for cheese tasting
- ii. Monday Option 2 – start at Muranda Cheese then go to Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion tour of gardens and mansion on tram
- iii. Tuesday Option 1 – Women’s Rights National Historical Park then to Ganondagan State Historic Site in afternoon
- iv. Tuesday Option 2 – Seneca Lake Reel Tours then go to Deer Haven Park – former Army Depot two hour bus tour
- v. Finger Lakes Welcome Center – wine tasting tours come together at lunch time(Tuesday)
- vi. Wednesday Education Day – Niagara Falls State Park – take a Maid of the Mist boat tour then go to other activities in afternoon: Cave of Winds (additional costs) or Aquarium of Niagara (additional cost) or free attractions – hiking trails, power plant ruins, welcome center
- vii. Thursday Option 1 - Watkins Glen State Park – 2 mile hike drop 400 vertical feet, 19 waterfalls then go to downtown Watkins Glen

- viii. Trying to be able to take group to Watkins Glen Speedway
- ix. Thursday Option 2 - Ontario County Tour – agriculture tour then Hobart and William Smith Solar Farm visit
- x. Many things available to do around Geneva outside of tours, downtown Geneva 10 minutes from campus, Seneca Lake is very nearby as well, over 100 wineries in and around Geneva area, hiking trails and scenic drives, art museums, City of Rochester, Geneva Theatre, Strom Museum of Play, Seneca Farm and Zoo, National Soaring Museum – all tourist books available at registration table
- b. Student activities – trading session and ice cream social (Sunday night), Tuesday night surprise location, Tuesday night corn hole and bonfire with smores and electric car tournament, trivia questions throughout week competition, Friday will have many games set up on grass quad (kickball, four square, track) in case of rain there is a game room reserved, after awards presentation – dance planned for 3 hours with a DJ
- c. Tours prices will be around \$70 each, boat tour will be \$100 – all tours include transportation and lunches

13. Sam Fusella – President of NY State Conservation Districts

- a. welcome everyone to NY, we are ready, raising funds, this part of the state is beautiful, JoAnn and Blanche working hard,
- b. districts are very supported by legislature of NY

14. NY Competition Info – Jennifer

- a. Team Registration \$2300 – 5 students, male and female chaperone
- b. One Day Early Arrival \$400 – no food included (can purchase meals on campus)
- c. Single Room fee for advisors - \$175 + \$50 if coming in day early
- d. On campus Guest Registration \$800
- e. Off campus guest \$400
- f. Fee for lost room keys
- g. Airport Shuttle from Syracuse Airport – roundtrip fee
- h. NCF Representatives and out of town volunteers allowed to stay until Sunday
- i. Operating Committee should arrive Friday night
- j. There is no air conditioning for teams or advisors but there is for guests
- k. 2024 Oral Presentation Rules - Wendee moved to approve OP Guidelines, Motion seconded by Megan, no further discussion, **Motion carried**
 - i. Mark commented that he feels there needs to be more time allowed for OP than 6 hours – JoAnn responded that there isn't enough time to increase it but it was considered and discussed
 - ii. Create a better process for checking in OP supplies - differentiate the various bags that students are supposed to put their items into to return

OP supplies to help with checking in process – add a checklist in binder for check-in procedure

- I. Background checks are not required for adults – must send a certification in registration that you have taken a child safety training – Hobart and William Smith offers a free online course ~1 hour, Boy Scouts also offers one, teachers and other educational professionals will likely already have taken something to qualify

15. Curtis Elke - NRCS Guest Comments – NRCS appreciates everyone’s efforts and work that goes into these programs. NRCS supports Envirothon.

16. Nick Ivy – Mississippi Executive Director State Agency – Guest comments

- a. Excited to host the 2025 Envirothon!
- b. Have 140 volunteers already
- c. Appreciate all everyone does for Envirothon

17. Bryan Evans – NCASWCD– Executive Director – guest comments

- a. Appreciates all everyone does

18. O.C. Standing Committee Reports

- a. Competition Advisory Team (CAT) – Wendee Dodds
 - i. Plan to have CAT meetings prior to competition so everyone is used to working together and understands duties
- b. Scoring Committee - Millie
 - i. Discussion on scoring/test grading at the annual competition – need to be careful that the grading (marking test) is consistent and correct then also scored (adding up score) correctly. Historically grading has been left to resource people but we need to start being more hands-on. Possibly have random spot checks on grading. Stephanie will be able to do this. Trying to mitigate issues from the start with test writing to be sure the question is asking for a direct answer. We have test writing protocols, partial credit point breakdown, and scoring procedures in place. Scoring is double checked – possibly have resource professional check each other as well to be sure grades match. All questions are graded by the same person to avoid inconsistencies in grading, possibly have second person go through each page grading.
 - ii. New York has 3-4 people per subject (besides Current Issue). Resource professional will do subjective answers, definitive answers will be SWCD volunteers. All grading will be at another site at testing location (not at station). Other resource professionals will stay at testing site. Will need to find additional resource professional to be at grading station if we want another resource professional checking work. Stephanie will plan to be at

grading site.

- iii. Designated tie breaker questions – can either be assigned prior as part of the exam or put separate from the exam that is only graded if needed. If part of the exam, typically the more difficult questions – usually choose 3. Ran into issues with separate questions not being answered by students. NY is thinking they will choose questions from the exam (unbeknownst to students). This needs to be added to host guide to have a procedure in place rather than choosing each year (future meeting topic of discussion).
 - iv. Discussion around test scores being so high and so close and whether we need to change approach to test writing. Are station managers teaching to the test during the training day? Questions must come from the resource material or during training day. Test from resource materials to level playing field across teams. Is it easier now than it was before since everything is covered during the training session? Currently max is 700 for resource pages in total. No action on this at this time just keeping it on the radar (future meeting topic of discussion).
 - v. PLAN: Try out new grading system in NY and then develop a protocol for future hosts to be added to the host guide. Grading will happen away from the testing stations. Stephanie will be at the grading site to oversee and spot check grading. Scoring will happen Thursday morning since portion of scoring team is also on CAT team. 10-12 people on CAT team and 8-10 on scoring committee. 2 people on each committee from NY.
- c. Diversity Grants Committee - Stephanie
- i. Committee met mid-January – approved 10 applications from US and 1 from Canada. Did not have enough funding to cover all projects. Envirothon New Brunswick (\$1000), Connecticut (\$4000), Maine (\$4000), New York (\$1000), South Carolina (\$4000), Washington (\$4000)
- d. Education Committee - Stephanie
- i. Chatted with Debbie but not entire committee. Plan to have a joint committee between scoring and education committee to go over previous discussion on scoring concerns. Work out wording for standard to add to host guide.
- e. Rules/Program Policies Committee (*attachments*) – Jennifer
- i. Begin doing an annual review at the winter meeting to check for things that need updated or changed (i.e. technology changes)
 - Discussed changing membership dues – decided to wait
 - Wendee asked if there were any questions that came up year after year with registration – Jennifer brought up that minor guest policy is difficult for people to understand, especially that they need their own chaperone and they have to pay the guest fee for the chaperone. Minor guests is an option for the host state to allow or not allow. Possibly resolve this as requiring minor students to register as off campus guest and not be

allowed to stay on site. Discussion of restricting minors and not allowing them to attend. Reworking the Minor Guest and Guest Registration section to restrict guests to only 21 or older. Shonny motioned to no longer allow minor guests and edit policies to reflect that. Jennifer will rework it tonight for review tomorrow. Motion seconded by Carrie. No further discussion. **Motion carried.**

- Discussion around chaperones and students being where they shouldn't be during the night. Jennifer and Mille have the discussion down to tell chaperones if you see something say something.

ii. Annual Review of [Program Policies](#)

- Jennifer will change this to reflect minor guests for committee review tomorrow.

iii. Annual Review of [Competition Rules & Regulations](#)

f. Hall of Fame Committee

- Open up nomination period sooner to allow plaques to be received on time
- Rules Committee will begin covering this subject
- Jennifer will order plaques for winners that received bowls in 2022 because some people did not receive plaques for mounting on the bowls

19. Old Business

- Envirothon Alumni Committee Proposal (*attachment*) – Becky Geneau
 - Successional planning, help during competition, offer scholarships to attend, retention of participants, plan to start recruiting at NY competition

20. New Business -none!

21. Adjourn meeting by Millie at 6:35pm – Will reconvene Sunday, February 11 at 9:30am

Sunday, February 11, 2024 (start time: 9:30 a.m. PST)

1. Call to Order by Millie – 12:32pm– Roll Call

- Present at start: Becky Geneau, Megan Grimes, Wendee Dodds, Millie Langley, Brooke Myres, Shonny Nordlund, Carrie Milligan, Ashley Melvin, Mark Hedge, Jennifer Brooks, Stephanie Tolar, Linda Dee, Courtney Curenton-Baker, Irene Moore, Keith Owens, Lisa Marochak, Andrea McKeown, Tammy McKeever, Eric Shideler, Jennifer Standridge, Rudy Rice, Mike Beacom, Tyler Brown, Dien Judge
- Joined later – Harvey Waller (NC), Martina Reyes, Nick Ivey

2. Tyler Brown – NASCA President – appreciate what everyone does. NASCA supports you. Thank you! Donated to NCFE \$1000 + \$500 memorial. If you do not know your state agency representative reach out to NASCA to get introduced.

3. 2025 Alberta (*attachments*) – Chantelle Bambrick - Alberta
 - a. [Mount Royal University](#) – need an updated room number estimate for Mount Royal before they can sign a contract. Plan to sign contracts in February (one of the hosts for the Calgary Olympics)
 - b. ~\$800,000 Canadian dollars. Forest Resource Improvement of Alberta – West Frazier, Camphor, (**Missed this one**)
 - c. Hiring an event planner (accepting proposals now for hire), cultural advisors, indigenous elders, making it inclusive
 - d. Calgary, Alberta, Canada - July 20 - 26, 2025
 - e. Hoping to go to Rocky Mountains for Education Day
 - f. Entire board plans to go to NY to experience a competition prior to hosting
 - g. 8-9 committee members review contract and share any questions or concerns with Jennifer
Plan to have topic blurb on website by end of the month
4. Old Business items carried over from the Feb 10th meeting
 - a. Continued discussion on minors allowed at competition – Jennifer went through policy and rules to remove anything related to minor guests and added that minor guests are not allowed. Discussion on whether guests can be 18-21 years old or just older than 21. Removing definition of a guest and making it all inclusive with “Registered Guests”
 - b. Policy updated to match rules for due date of June 1
 - c. Change wording to match guidelines in policy that testing will only be 55 minutes
 - d. Shonny motioned to accept all changes (minor guest, due date, testing length), Motion seconded by Carrie, no further discussion, **Motion carried**
5. New Business
 - a. Durham County Soil & Water Conservation District Diversity Grant showcase – Lisa Marochak, NC - recipient of 2020 Diversity Grant \$4000. AR sandbox. Ended up costing over \$6000. Projector, monitor for desktop – 3d topography model in sand with projection from overhead. Very large and heavy to move and must be recalibrated each time. Have made training videos to share online and brought to some events. Targeted diverse audience is urban students. Other more affordable models now available on the market. Kinetic sand is lighter and holds shape better. There are premade kits that have everything and are easier to move around in a small enclosed trailer. Calibration is tough.
 - b. NACD Stewardship and Education Update – Aimee Figgatt – demonstrated what is available through NACD Marketplace. Stewardship Theme is May the Forest be with you, Always. Theme runs August to August – 2026 theme is Home is Where the Habitat Is. Content is forestry as it relates to forest conservation for conservation

districts. If you have a nacd.net.net email address emails get filtered out so you must email Aimee first. Print rate is government rate from federal print. Marketing materials – can be customized. Education Box includes marketing rack cards, K-8 lesson plan books with 25 lesson plans, activity journals, bookmarks, color me in bookmark, district greeting thank you cards, placemats (primary and intermediate – 7 options), themed t-shirts available too. Marketplace does not make a profit, items are at cost plus shipping. Stewardship Week poster contest posters, change to photo and poster contest – additional assist category includes students who need assistance of adult. Braille poster contest – tactile posters.

6. No other business.
7. Millie Adjourned 1:46 pm

Save the Dates:

- March 20, 2024 – 2024 NACD Spring Fly-In | Washington, D.C.
- April 28 - May 5, 2024 – 69th Stewardship Week: Forestry, *“May the Forest Be with You, Always”*
- July 28 - August 3, 2024 - 2024 NCF-Envirothon Annual Competition | New York
 - O.C. Summer Meeting – Saturday, July 27, 2024 (*exact times TBD*)
 - O.C. members can arrive on campus on Friday, July 24, 2024
- August 10-13, 2024 – 2024 NACD Summer Conservation Forum and Tour | Boston, MA
- February 8-12, 2025 – 2025 NACD Annual Meeting | Salt Lake City, UT