



The Charter School of Wilmington team: Advisor Conrad Rice, and team members Naman Agrawal, Martin Kurian, Jason Liu, Gavy Aggarwal, and Alex Mink.

Photo by Deborah Logan of Creative Exposures.

Charter School of Wilmington team takes 7th place at 2013 North American Envirothon in Montana

DOVER (Aug. 22, 2013) – A five-member team of high school students from Charter School of Wilmington took seventh place in the North American Envirothon, the continent’s largest high school environmental competition. The announcement was made during the closing ceremony of the weeklong competition, held Aug. 4-9 on and near Montana State University in Bozeman, Mont., and sponsored by Canon U.S.A., Inc.

“I congratulate the Charter School of Wilmington team on their outstanding performance,” said Governor Jack Markell. “Their hard work and commitment to protecting our environment sets a wonderful example for all of us. Behind every successful team is a strong support network and I thank the family members, teachers and Delaware Association of Conservation Districts members who made possible a great opportunity for these talented young people.”

Charter School of Wilmington team members Jason Liu, Alex Mink, Martin Kurian, Gavy Aggarwal and Naman Agrawal joined more than 280 teenagers representing 47 states, nine Canadian provinces, and one Canadian territory to compete for a share of \$175,000 in scholarships, host grants, and Canon products. For their seventh place finish, each Charter team member received a \$1,300 college scholarship from Canon U.S.A. The Delaware Association of Conservation Districts, as sponsor of the Charter team, received a Canon printer and camera.

“Over the past few years, the Charter School of Wilmington has emerged as a national leader in environmental education,” said Delaware Department of Natural Resources and

Environmental Control Secretary Collin O'Mara. "Their success not only demonstrates the team's extensive knowledge and understanding of protecting the future of our natural resources, but also the strength of the Delaware Envirothon program. My sincere appreciation to the Delaware Association of Conservation Districts, the Envirothon committee and the many teachers, parents and mentors who are committed to environmental education throughout our state."

Team advisor Conrad Rice and his wife accompanied the Delaware team to Montana, along with Rick Mickowski, chair of the Delaware Envirothon, and Kerin Walsh, Delaware representative to the North American Envirothon Committee.

"The team put in a lot of hard work and studying to place in the top 10 again," said Mickowski. "We are extremely proud of their accomplishment and how they represented their school, the Delaware Envirothon, and the state of Delaware while in Montana for the competition."

The Envirothon tested the teams on their practical knowledge of soils and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and the current environmental issue of Sustainable Rangeland Management: achieving a balance between traditional agricultural uses with non-agricultural uses on Montana rangelands. Besides being tested on the topic, the team had to prepare and give a 20-minute oral presentation before a panel of five judges.

Team member Naman Agrawal said the Envirothon was a great experience for the Wilmington team. "We've learned so much about how to manage our natural resources more responsibly, and it was nice to see other teams sharing the same passion," Naman said. "We met kids from all over the continent and witnessed an entirely new environment to work with in Montana. Even past the scope of this competition, what we learned has made us much more aware of and prepared for the environmental problems of the future."

"Envirothon is truly a great competition because it presents us with an awareness of our environment in an ever-changing world," added Naman's teammate, Martin Kurian. "Because of this competition, I think our whole team has a deeper understanding of how the environment around us works, and how each and every decision we make not only affects it, but also the economic, societal, and cultural ties that our environment intrinsically possesses with us."

The week of the competition was jammed full of activity. Sunday, the arrival day, included registration, a team photo session, opening ceremonies with a presentation of the state flags followed by a team trading session. Delaware Envirothon t-shirts were a hot commodity.

Monday was a training day at a ranch south of Livingston, Mont., about 30 miles from the University campus. After training, the students were treated to an evening at the Museum of the Rockies, which has a world class dinosaur exhibit. Tuesday was a full day of testing at the ranch followed by an evening dance.

On Wednesday, the teams visited Old Faithful at Yellowstone National Park with a BBQ meal and rodeo in West Yellowstone. Thursday was back to work with training on the presentation topic followed by many hours of preparation for their oral presentation. Friday was the big day with the Delaware team having an early draw for an 8:15 a.m. time slot. That evening, everyone waited in suspense for the announcement of the top 15 teams to see who would take first place.

The Delaware Envirothon is sponsored by the Delaware Association of Conservation Districts. Members of the planning committee represent Delaware's three Conservation Districts, the

Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Delaware Forest Service, the Delaware Department of Agriculture, the University of Delaware - Cooperative Extension, Delaware Nature Society, and the Delaware Solid Waste Authority.

The Charter School of Wilmington team qualified to represent Delaware in the North American competition after placing first in the Delaware Envirothon competition held April 25 at Wicked R Western Productions near Dover.

To learn more about the Delaware Envirothon program, please visit www.delawareenvirothon.org.

For more highlights about the North American Envirothon and for pictures from the 2013 event, please visit www.envirothon.org.

Vol. 43, No. 326