MISSION

To identify and advance strategic programs and partnerships to deliver conservation solutions through locally-led conservation and to develop the next generation of conservation leaders.

VISION

To support delivery of locally-led conservation and to create future conservation leaders.

The National Conservation Foundation (NCF) provides conservation districts and other conservation organizations funding for research, educational programs and public outreach. In fulfilling its mission, NCF has two programs that work to develop the next generation of conservation leaders: the NCF-Envirothon, a high school environmental and natural resources program and competition, and the Next Generation Leadership Institute, a new program to cultivate the next generation of locally-led conservation leaders.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

5 LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

7 WHO WE ARE

9 2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

11 NCF-ENVIROTHON

29 NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

37 FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN
Earlier this year, I was fortunate to spend two weeks overseas doing international development work in Africa through the organization Cultivating New Frontiers In Agriculture (CNFA). As I reflect on my time overseas providing technical assistance to farmers in Kenya, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, I am reminded of the importance of NCF’s mission to develop the next generation of conservation leaders.

As we face growing challenges with food security and the natural resources that sustain us both domestically and abroad, having strong, educated leaders who can provide a voice for natural resource conservation is going to remain critically important. Presently, NCF accomplishes this through its two key programs—the NCF-Envirothon and the Next Generation Leadership Institute (NGLI).

For over 40 years, the Envirothon has been educating and leading high school students to careers in natural resources. Envirothon’s reach has grown beyond the borders of the U.S. and Canada to include student participation throughout China, with an increasing interest from other countries and territories.

The development and launch of NGLI was a major accomplishment for NCF. Over the past year, a great deal of energy was dedicated to crafting an innovative and exemplary program that will foster the next generation of conservation district leaders and we celebrated the inaugural cohort’s graduation in February.

And NCF is eager to continue progress with international leadership opportunities through CNFA. Already this year there has been significant collaboration with NCF and CNFA leaders and we look forward to future opportunities for NCF leaders and program participants to work with CNFA.

As Chair of NCF, it is my honor and privilege to work with such an excellent group of trustees, stakeholders and supporters. On behalf of the board, I thank you for your support in 2021 and I look forward to the opportunities NCF has for the future!

Brent Van Dyke
NCF Chair
NCF’s Future is Bright!

It is a pleasure to serve on behalf of NCF as the executive director. While 2021 was an atypical year, one of the accomplishments I am most proud of is working with the board of trustees to sustain the foundation’s program and forward progress through a period of high uncertainty and challenges.

One of the highlights of 2021 for me was being part of the return to more regular programming for the Next Generation Leadership Institute. The inaugural cohort held a special place being the first group of many that will go through the leadership development program, but this cohort will always be especially meaningful because they persisted through a global pandemic and had a 100 percent graduation rate at the 2022 NACD Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida. Congratulations to Barbara, Cassius, Joe, Mark, Phil, Ryan and Samantha on this extraordinary milestone in your leadership journey!

We also look forward to the return of regular programming for the NCF-Envirothon. Many hours were logged in 2021 through numerous virtual events and it was inspiring to see the dedication of so many students, advisors and volunteers to ensure a virtual international competition was held in
2021. Special thanks to the Nebraska Association of Resource Districts for hosting the successful 2021 virtual competition. We look forward to the return to regular competition as the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts hosts the 2022 competition in Oxford, Ohio.

Finally, NCF devoted strong attention to planning for its next chapter by engaging with a professional fundraising firm Schultz & Williams to provide a comprehensive fundraising plan that will help the foundation sustain its programs and grow for the future. We look forward to successful implementation of the fundraising plan in 2022 and beyond.

Thanks to the dedicated volunteers on the NCF Board of Trustees, the amazing staff that supports the foundation's programs and operations and the many individuals around the globe that support the foundation through contributions of time and resources. The future of NCF is bright because of the people that sustain its work with their gifts and talents!

Thank you!

Jeremy Peters
NCF Executive Director
## LEADERSHIP

### 2021 NCF Executive Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Brent Van Dyke</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Chair</td>
<td>Tim Reich</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>John Redding</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Patti Lardie</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACD Immediate Past President</td>
<td>Tim Palmer</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate Past Chair</td>
<td>Steve Robinson</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-Large Member</td>
<td>Rudy Rice</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Jeremy Peters</td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2021 NCF Board of Trustees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Perlman-Whyman</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shana Joy</td>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene Moore</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Smart</td>
<td>Utah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Millie Langley</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earl Garber</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rick Jeans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Warner</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bevin Law</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gene Schmidt</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Mosel</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEAM

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# 2020 NCF Financial Report

## Revenue

### FY 2021 Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DUES</td>
<td>$19,800</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation Fees</td>
<td>$15,350</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Grants</td>
<td>$303,313</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sources</td>
<td>$97,288</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$470,751</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Pie chart showing revenue sources](image)

- **Dues:** $19,800 (4%)
- **Sponsorships:** $35,000 (7%)
- **Participation Fees:** $15,350 (3%)
- **Government Grants:** $303,313 (64%)
- **Other Sources:** $97,288 (21%)

![Bar chart showing revenue distribution](chart)
## FY 2021 EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>$360,624</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>$84,509</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$503</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$445,636</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Chart showing program services, management and general, and fundraising expenses]

- **Program Services**
- **Management and General**
- **Fundraising**
HOW DO WE BALANCE QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT?

OVER 25,000 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, CANADA AND CHINA EMBARK ON A JOURNEY EACH YEAR TO OFFER SOLUTIONS TO THIS CRITICAL QUESTION THROUGH THE NCF-ENVIROTHON.
ABOUT US

The NCF-Envirothon is a hands-on environmental and natural resources problem-solving competition that builds leadership skills for high school students, grades 9-12 (ages 14-19), in the United States, Canada and China.

From its inception in 1979, the Envirothon program has grown and evolved but always with a similar mission: to provide students with hands-on outdoor experiences to learn about natural resources. The Envirothon curriculum spans five core topics: Soils and Land Use, Forestry, Aquatic Ecology, Wildlife and a Current Environmental Issue that changes from year to year.

Emphasizing hands-on learning and real-world application of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) concepts, Envirothon students can be found getting their hands dirty in a soil pit, measuring basal area in a forest, determining water quality, and many other activities involving skills used by resource conservation professionals. Working as a team of five, students will put their skills and knowledge to the test at local, state/provincial and international competitions each year for scholarships and awards.

MISSION

To develop knowledgeable, skilled and dedicated citizens who have an understanding of natural resources and are willing and prepared to work towards achieving and maintaining a balance between the quality of life and the environment, accomplished by developing in young people an understanding of the principles and practices of natural resource management and ecology and through practice dealing with complex resource management decisions.
The National Conservation Foundation (NCF) assumed leadership of the Envirothon program in 2014.

The mission of the NCF is to identify and advance strategic programs and partnerships to deliver conservation solutions through locally-led conservation and to develop the next generation of conservation leaders.

The Foundation understands the powerful impact of the Envirothon program on so many students’ lives and its great potential to develop new leaders in conservation. The NCF-Envirothon Operating Committee (NCFEOC) is comprised of appointed representatives from the five Envirothon regions in North America: the U.S. Southeast, the U.S. Northeast, the U.S. West, the U.S. Mid-West and Canada; as well as one representative from the National Conservation Foundation board. The NCFEOC also has up to three At-Large members, who can be from any region.

The NCFEOC provides recommendations to the NCF Executive Committee regarding the direction of the NCF-Envirothon. They work continually to update educational guidelines and curriculum frameworks to aid states and provinces in better serving their educators and students. In addition, they assist the host state/province in promoting, organizing and conducting the NCF-Envirothon annual competition and are responsible for the development of rules and policies for conducting the program.
LETTER FROM 
THE CHAIR

Looking back, 2021 was a year to remember! The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact everyone, including Envirothon. Facing another year of restrictions and social distancing meant Envirothon programs everywhere had to develop new techniques and tools for how we interact and engage with students. A challenge experienced by every state, provincial and partner nation Envirothon program, as well as the NCF-Envirothon annual competition.

Distance education and remote learning gained traction in states and provinces and many programs offered virtual trainings via Zoom. Webinars and training videos were made by resource specialists and posted online for teams to view and learn from remotely. To aid teams, NCF-Envirothon kicked off the ‘NCF-Envirothon iNaturalist Project’ in late 2020 as a supplemental learning resource for Envirothon students that could be utilized as a team training exercise or independent study in preparation for 2021 competitions. Activity guides for Envirothon’s areas of study are continually being developed. The first set, Forestry Ecosystem Exploration, was released in 2021.

I encourage and invite all Envirothon students, educators, and supporters to join the project. Your participation and nature observations can provide continuous learning opportunities and awareness for students throughout the year no matter where they are located. Please visit www.envirothon.org for more information on how to join.

Like team trainings, competitions to test students on their knowledge and skills had to adapt. Due to lower COVID-19 cases in certain pockets of the U.S., a few states were able to hold in-person competitions for their teams, with increased social distancing considerations in place. However, the majority had to learn about and implement online testing platforms that would meet their needs.

The 2021 NCF-Envirothon annual competition had to adapt as well, and I am very pleased to say that it was a great success! Nebraska, as our host, outdid themselves providing a great virtual experience for our 41 participating Envirothon teams and guests. Though we couldn’t be together physically, the interactive virtual event that Nebraska organized provided these teams the chance to communicate, engage, and challenge each other. The Opening and Closing Ceremonies they choreographed and produced were exciting, educational, and inspiring. Congratulations and thank you Nebraska on a job well done!

And to all the local, state, provincial, and partner nation Envirothon programs, as well as all the teams, advisors, volunteers and supporters who participated in 2021 – thank you. Your dedication and commitment to Envirothon is inspiring. Congratulations and thank you all!

Finally, I want to express my appreciation for NCF-Envirothon’s continued support from our sponsors and partners, such as the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, Smithfield Foods, INC., the United States Forest Service, the National Association of Conservation Districts, the National Association of State Conservation Agencies and all others. Thank you.

As always, please remember that for any general NCF-Envirothon questions, advice or information, your first point of contact is your state, provincial or partner nation Envirothon program Representative. They are ready and willing to help whenever possible. In turn, they can contact their NCF-Envirothon Operating Committee regional representative for questions or guidance. Operating Committee members are here to help keep continuity in the program, while finding ways and means for updates and innovation. Please check the NCF-Envirothon website for all those contacts!

Stay tuned for the details for our upcoming 2022 NCF-Envirothon annual competition from our host team in Ohio. The Ohio Host Committee is planning an outstanding event to be held at Miami University in beautiful Oxford, Ohio. The year’s current issue is “Waste to Resources”, a look at the waste produced at every level of our lives and its effects on our lives, our water, and the land. Miami University here we come!

Millie Langley - NCF-Envirothon Operating Committee Chair
In a typical year, NCF-Envirothon member programs at the state, provincial, and partner nation level organize and conduct hundreds of local Envirothon educational programs and competitions. Thousands of students annually participate in these programs with the goal of being the first-place team that will represent their state, province, or nation at the NCF-Envirothon annual international competition.

In 2021, these state, provincial and partner nation Envirothon programs continued to face local regulations, school mandates, and public health concerns that often made in-person Envirothon educational programs and competitions impossible. With the health and safety of students, advisors, staff, and volunteers being the top priority, the continuing impacts of COVID-19 necessitated a creative approach to 2021 education and competitions.

Distance learning tools and zoom sessions became a regular part of the Envirothon trainings offered by many programs. Using the lessons learned from those state and provincial programs who held virtual competitions the year before, 37 states and provinces held completely virtual competitions, two states held hybrid competitions (a mix of in-person and virtual) and four states and China held in-person competitions.

Despite overall event and participant numbers being down in 2021, there is a silver-lining to it all. Thanks to the increased use of remote learning and virtual competitions, several new teams of students, who due to barriers preventing their participation in past in-person competitions, were able to participate virtually in Envirothon for the first time. These students, who otherwise may not have been able to experience Envirothon during normal times, may become the leaders of tomorrow thanks to program innovation. These challenges taught everyone an important lesson about flexibility and access that will enable us to reach a larger audience with Envirothon in the future.
Envirothon in the U.S.

Beginning in Pennsylvania in 1979 as the “Environmental Olympics,” the Envirothon has since grown and expanded across the United States. In 2021, there were 43 states who were official members of the NCF-Envirothon program. Of those members, 34 states sponsored a team to represent them in the virtual 2021 NCF-Envirothon Nebraska competition.

Envirothon in Canada

In 1992, Envirothon spread to Canada, with the Canadian province of Nova Scotia being the first to join and compete at an Envirothon annual competition. Since then, other provinces across Canada have participated and in 2021, five provinces were official members of NCF-Envirothon. Of those, four teams representing Manitoba, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Ontario participated in the virtual 2021 NCF-Envirothon Nebraska competition.

Envirothon in China

In 2016, Envirothon China joined NCF-Envirothon as a partner nation program and held its first Envirothon competition. Partnering with the Duke Kunshan University, Fudan University and Shanghai Knowledge Innovation Center, the Envirothon China program continues to grow each year. In 2021, an estimated 2000 students from across China participated in the Envirothon China program and competition. The Envirothon China National Academic Challenge was held from April 2-5, 2021, and the top three teams went on to represent China in the virtual 2021 NCF-Envirothon Nebraska competition.
THE 2021 ANNUAL ENVIROTHON COMPETITION

The 2021 competition marked the 32nd annual NCF-Envirothon, and the first ever virtual event. Hosted by the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, the virtual event spotlighted Nebraska’s unique natural resources and conservation approaches, while the competition challenged, inspired and entertained competing teams.

41 teams from across the United States, Canada and China participated in the virtual competition from July 25-28. Utilizing online testing software and Zoom video conferencing technology, teams from opposite ends of the earth were all able to safely gather and test their knowledge and skills on the areas of Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Soils and Land Use, Wildlife, and the 2021 Current Issue of “Water Resources Management: Local Control, Local Solutions”.

The virtual event kicked-off on July 25 with an Opening Ceremony that featured messages from partners and sponsors, a showcase of videos introducing each participating team, and a keynote address from National Geographic photographer and Nebraska resident Joel Sartore about the importance of conservation. Sartore is a photographer, speaker, author, conservationist, National Geographic fellow and regular contributor to National Geographic magazine. He spoke to participants about his work with the National Geographic Photo Ark project that aims to inspire people to help save species at risk before it’s too late.

Team testing was held on July 26. Using an online testing platform, all 41 teams had between the hours of 8 am and 8 pm Central Time to complete all five required tests. Depending on their local time zone, some teams had either an early morning or a late evening test.

The winning 2021 NCF-Envirothon teams were awarded scholarships and awards, with the top three scoring teams receiving $30,000 in scholarships thanks to the support of Smithfield Foods, Inc. The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts Foundation awarded a total of $13,000 for fourth through seventh places and a donation from the Conservation Districts of Iowa provided awards for eighth through tenth place. Plaques recognizing their achievements were provided by NCF.
late night of testing, with the China teams, who were 13 hours ahead, testing in the middle of the night! It was a long day for all.

Following a day of testing, teams put their problem-solving skills to use on July 27 for the Oral Presentation portion of the competition. In the days leading up to the virtual 2021 competition, teams were given a real-world natural resources management scenario based on the Current Issue theme, and were challenged to develop a 20-minute presentation in response. Throughout the day, the teams logged into Zoom and presented their plan to a panel of judges. The judges, stationed in rooms located at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Innovation Campus, were able to observe the presentations and interact with the students directly to ask questions about their solutions.

On July 28, after 2 days of testing and judging, team scores were tallied, and the 2021 competition concluded with a live streamed event that was open to anyone to watch. With all the teams, guests and supporters watching the live presentation, the top three scoring teams were announced. Those three teams had to immediately log into Zoom and deliver their 20-minute oral presentations to a new, final panel of judges for a new score. These final Oral Presentation scores were combined with the teams’ five subject area tests scores to determine awards placement.

Immediately following those presentations, the livestream event concluded with the Awards Ceremony. NCF-Executive Board member and NACD Past
President Tim Palmer hosted the Awards Ceremony in which over $45,000 in scholarships and awards were given to the top 10 overall scoring teams thanks to event sponsors: Smithfield Foods, Inc.; the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts Foundation; NCF; and the Conservation Districts of Iowa.

The New York team from Esopus, New York, won the first-place honor. Rounding out the top 3 was the North Carolina team from Denton, NC in second place and the South Carolina team from Spartanburg, SC in third place. Additional recognition was awarded for teams with top scores in each subject area, as well as the Oral Presentation component. Sue Cummings, retired US Forest Service educator and long-time Envirothon supporter, was also honored as the 2021 NCF-Envirothon Hall of Fame inductee.

A complete list of winners of the 2021 NCF-Envirothon, as well as a recording of the livestreamed top three oral presentations can be found at www.envirothon.org.

“I’d like to congratulate New York and all of the teams for their hard work and dedication. Their knowledge about environmental and natural resource issues, as well as their commitment to these areas, have shown me that the future of conservation is in good hands.”
-NCF Chair Brent Van Dyke
“I was part of Envirothon for all four years of Highschool, and I loved every minute of it! I’ll be taking the knowledge and skills I learned with me as I embark on the next chapter of my life.”

“While I was sad to compete in a virtual competition, I am grateful that they still worked hard to host a competition under the worst of circumstances during the pandemic! Overall, given the circumstances, I think it was an awesome competition!”

“It was a very exciting and challenging competition. I found learning about Nebraska’s environmental issues enriching and fun.”
NCF-Envirothon Learning Objectives: The new NCF-Envirothon Learning Objectives were released in September 2021 for use in the 2022 competition season (September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022). The purpose of the Learning Objectives is three-fold:
1. To outline what skills and knowledge are needed to be successful at the annual international competition,
2. To provide a comprehensive framework for the development of future NCF-Envirothon educational materials, and
3. To guide states, provinces, and partner nation Envirothon programs in developing their own learning objectives and curricula.

Learning Objectives were developed for each of Envirothon’s five core areas of study: Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Soils and Land Use, Wildlife, and the Current Issue. They were developed with an international focus in mind, with respect to the vast diversity of ecosystems found in our state, provincial, and partner nation programs. These Learning Objectives were designed to be comprehensive in scope and depth, with the understanding that not every learning objective will be relevant to every state or province, and not all learning objectives will be used for each international competition.

Virtual Testing: One of the biggest challenges for the 2021 NCF-Envirothon annual competition was the transition to online tests. By its very nature, the NCF-Envirothon program is a hands-on, interactive competition. NCF-Envirothon staff worked closely with the Nebraska Host committee to transition the tests for the five areas of study that had initially been written for an in-person competition. Revisions to how questions were written were needed to format them into versions that worked virtually, all while striving to maintain the Envirothon’s focus on critical thinking and practical application skills.

To virtually bring the “outdoors and hands-on” component of Envirothon to the students, the tests featured questions to closely mimic what would have been done in person. Teams identified mammal species using close-up photos of animal skulls on the Wildlife test, calculated slope using topographical maps for Soils and Land Use, and counted virtual trees to measure the basal area of a stand for Forestry, among other “hands-on” adaptations to the tests.

Social Media: NCF-Envirothon’s presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn continued to grow throughout 2021. Posts presented nature-based education topics, pictures from current and past events, information on programming and Envirothon activities and more.
Team Training and Engagement Webinar for Advisors: NCF-Envirothon hosted its first-ever Zoom Webinar for Envirothon team advisors in late 2021. This webinar showcased some fresh perspectives for student engagement both in-person and at a distance, including how to cultivate student enthusiasm through experiential learning and connection. This webinar helped to orient advisors to the educational resources available from NCF-Envirothon, including the Learning Objectives and iNaturalist project and activities, as well as tools from our partners at NRCS, the US Forest Service, and NACD. This webinar also provided a forum for advisors to share what has been working well for their teams, and to exchange ideas with advisors in other states and provinces.

Distance Education for Students: With many schools and education programs still in flux with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, the NCF-Envirothon iNaturalist Project has continued to be an excellent educational tool for students, advisors and resource professionals, whether students are training in-person or at a distance. Highlighting the hands-on, outdoor focus of the program, the NCF-Envirothon iNaturalist Project offers a unique platform for ecological exploration and education.

In 2021, a Forestry Ecosystem Exploration activity was developed to help advisors and students focus their use of iNaturalist in one of the Envirothon subject areas. This activity includes a full Advisor Guide, complete with a lesson plan and correlations to educational standards, as well as a Student Guide, which allows students to complete the activity independently. More activities for the other Envirothon subjects are being developed.

Distance Education and Competition Planning Webinars for Envirothon Program Partners: The “Envirothon at a Distance” webinar series was initiated in late 2020 to help our state, provincial, and partner nation Envirothon program members navigate the challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This series continued into 2021 to provide resources and guidance to many local programs who were hosting virtual competitions for the first time. Topics covered in these webinars included logistical considerations, training at a distance, conducting virtual tests, and more. This series concluded in Spring of 2021, as most programs started hosting their local competitions.

Following positive feedback from the “Envirothon at a Distance” series, NCF-Envirothon hosted another session for state, provincial, and partner nation Envirothon program representatives and steering committee members in November of 2021. This series focused on competition planning considerations for the 2022 season, as many of our programs continued to face impacts from the pandemic.
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
CRYSTAL POWERS, NE

Since the very first competition, hundreds of thousands of students have participated in Envirothon over the years. Today, Envirothon Alumni can be found across the world, with many going on to successful careers in environmental and natural resources conservation. They are forest rangers, climate scientists, biologists, conservationists, soil scientists and more – the current leaders of conservation. Many attribute their ultimate career paths to first being introduced to these areas by Envirothon. We are eager to hear from Envirothon alumni! Whether they competed at a local competition for one year, or attended the annual national and eventual international competition we are interested in engaging with them.

In 2021, Envirothon Alumni were encouraged to submit their Envirothon Alumni Stories and connect with us on social media. Those on LinkedIn were urged to join the Envirothon Alumni Network group to share stories, chat about careers, post jobs, and more.

Leading up to the 2021 NCF-Envirothon Nebraska competition, we spotlighted a few Nebraska Envirothon alumni on social media who helped make the 2021 competition a success, such as Crystal Powers. Today, Crystal is the Research and Extension Communications Specialist for the Nebraska Water Center, Nebraska Extension, and Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska. Her role includes communication and coordination between academic faculty and water managers across the state to address water, food, and natural resource challenges. She shared about her Envirothon experience in her own words.
What inspired you to participate in the Envirothon program? I enjoyed knowledge-based competitions and Envirothon also brought in hands-on skills in beautiful settings.

How did your involvement in Envirothon influence your career goals? Envirothon gave me the opportunity to see careers that involved conservation. I realized I too had a passion for helping people through caring for our natural environment and enjoyed telling others about it. I saw how agriculture and nature can work together. I went on to major in environmental engineering focused on agroecology as well as communicating the science. In my career I have continued that same focus of bringing people together to tackle some of the world’s wicked problems.

Are there any skills that you learned through Envirothon that you currently use? Being observant of nature. Communicating science. Researching problems. Working as a team.

Your Envirothon experience in your own words? As a freshman and sophomore, it was a great contest to get outdoors and combine knowledge across several different environmental topics. We made it to state both years and loved the opportunity to travel to state parks I had never seen. By my junior year, we had a really great team and were getting good at preparing for the special topics and presentations. We qualified for the international competition and traveled to the amazing Redwood forests of California which continue to inspire me to this day. Our senior year we were back with a few new team members and again qualified for internationals which took us to Nova Scotia. The Bay of Fundy was amazing and the glimpse into a maritime province was a great cultural experience for this 'land lubber.' Envirothon combined several of my passions: curiosity, nature, agriculture, competition, and travel.

What do you think students gain from participating in Envirothon? Better understanding of nature and conservation, seeing that agriculture and conservation can work together, love of the outdoors, meeting people from all over who also care about the environment, seeing new career opportunities.

Why should today's students choose to pursue environmental ecology, natural resource conservation and/or agriculture as a field of study? These disciplines are critical for the future. The very foundation of our cultures is based on providing food and clean water while finding ways to conserve beauty and cultural value of our landscape. Yet we are facing huge environmental challenges around water, climate, biodiversity, food, and health. Students can be a part of solving these wicked problems! They can become leaders in serving their communities and finding regenerative solutions for a better tomorrow.

More stories like hers can be read at www.envirothon.com
Each year, more than 25,000 high school students across the United States, Canada and China compete in their local Envirothon program with the goal of making it to the National Conservation Foundation (NCF) Envirothon international competition. The NCF-Envirothon tests the students in the areas of aquatic ecology, forestry, soils/land use, wildlife and a current environmental issue. This year’s current environmental issue was “Water Resources Management: Local Control, Local Solutions.” The goal of the current environmental issue was to educate students from across the globe about Nebraska’s unique Natural Resources Districts and how we manage our natural resources.

The students were presented the real-life scenario of the Bazile Groundwater Management Area in northeast Nebraska with instances of high nitrates in the groundwater. They were provided background information on the area, including major land use, township nitrate concentrations and current rules and regulations.
The teams were asked to present one set of groundwater rules and regulations with four phases and come up with three new practices that are not currently being used to address the nitrate problem.

Recommendations from student teams included:
- Nitrogen coagulation treatment
- Require permits for use of nitrogen fertilizer
- Prohibit nitrogen fertilizer application of more than 50 lbs. per acre
- Required livestock exclusion, vegetative treatment systems and pasture management of animal feeding operations (AFOs)
- The NRD would set the recommended nitrogen application rate

We wanted the teams to understand what makes Nebraska different from other U.S. conservation districts. Teams were challenged to come up with innovative solutions and to take into consideration the social, economic and political impacts of their decision making, similar to what NRD board of directors and staff do daily.

Hosting the NCF-Envirothon was a great opportunity to showcase Nebraska’s unique NRD system and how we manage our natural resources for future generations.
NCF-Envirothon and its annual international competition is supported by corporations, nonprofit organizations, higher education institutions, government agencies, conservation associations and others who share the goal of educating students about the environment and conservation of natural resources through hands-on outdoor experiences, academic study and collaborative competitions. Partners and sponsors recognize that participating in NCF-Envirothon and its natural resource conservation education opportunities promotes a lifelong commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability, equips students with the knowledge needed to educate others and inspire action in their local communities, and is a key avenue of the workforce recruitment pipeline, as it fosters early interest in natural resource careers which may shape participants’ college experiences and interests.

NCF extends a special thank you to our loyal sponsors and donors for their support over the years. In 2021, the following sponsors contributed to support NCF-Envirothon and the 2021 NCF-Envirothon Nebraska Competition:

In addition, NCF would like to thank the following partner Envirothon programs for contributing additional financial support to NCF-Envirothon in 2021: Colorado Envirothon, Connecticut Envirothon, Delaware Envirothon, Indiana Envirothon, Missouri Envirothon, Ohio Envirothon, South Dakota Envirothon, Utah Envirothon, Washington State Envirothon and West Virginia Envirothon.
LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022

After a two-year hiatus, the 2022 NCF-Envirothon Annual Competition will once again be held in-person from July 24-30, 2022. Hosted by the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the 2022 NCF-Envirothon Ohio Competition will be housed on the Miami University campus in Oxford, Ohio. Throughout the week, teams from across the U.S., Canada and China will test their knowledge and understanding of aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, and wildlife while competing for thousands of dollars in awards and scholarships.

In addition, students will be tested on the 2022 current issue topic of ‘Waste to Resources’. The topic, chosen by the 2022 Ohio Host committee, is an issue that communities across the world face and a particular challenge for Ohio’s residents as outlined in the 2022 Current Issue overview:

“Ohio is one of the most densely populated states in the United States, with just over 11.6 million people calling it home. Like many populous areas, Ohio is tasked with servicing its residents while also sustaining its natural resources across diverse geographic regions.

As a by-product of its robust population, the state is faced with the responsibility of managing different types of waste generated by individuals, households, communities, businesses, manufacturing, agriculture, and industry. Waste of all kinds has the potential to affect the environment and our natural resources. From the water we drink to the land we live on, our decisions about how to manage waste impact our communities and the world around us. How can we make responsible choices about our waste? How can we manage our growth in a way that is sustainable? How can we turn our waste into resources?

These challenges make Ohio well positioned to enact innovative and creative solutions for managing its waste regeneratively, turning it into resources through restoration, repurposing, and recycling for the benefit of the natural environment and future generations.

Students will learn the concepts of different waste streams and the impacts of waste generation and disposal on natural resources and society. Students will also learn effective ways to manage waste regeneratively; as well as the social, economic, and political impacts of turning waste products and degraded lands into resources.”

Connect with us @ncfenvirothon
Formally launched in August of 2019, the Next Generation Leadership Institute (NGLI) was created in response to a high demand for leadership instruction for conservation district leaders facing the challenges of a changing world. NGLI was established as a year-long program that provides conservation professionals with the tools to become national leaders through personal, civic, and organizational leadership development.
TIMELINE FOR NEXT APPLICATION PERIOD:

- **July 1, 2022**
  Application period opens

- **September 30, 2022**
  Application closes

- **December 2022**
  Announcement of 2023 Cohort

- **February 2023**
  First session at NACD's 2023 Annual Meeting

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more - you are a leader."

- John Quincy Adams
THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 NGLI SPONSORS:
The inaugural NGLI cohort met for their first session at the NACD Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, NV in February of 2020 and faced challenges immediately thereafter as a result of COVID-19. Most of the cohort’s learning was conducted virtually throughout 2020. They resumed in-person learning at the NACD Summer Meeting in Chicago, IL in July of 2021, and were able to complete their leadership journey and graduation at the NACD Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL in February of 2022.

Since being accepted to the program and their graduation, cohort members have achieved substantial accomplishments, including:

- Serves on the NACD Public Lands Resource Policy Group
- Nominated for the NC Urban Ag & Innovative Production Committee
- Completing his term as President of the Missouri Association of Conservation Districts
- NACD Board Member
- Serves on the NACD Legislative Committee and the NACD Climate Action Task Force
PHIL CAMPBELL
OKLAHOMA COUNTY CD
LUTHER, OK

- Elected to Chair to the Oklahoma Conservation Commission
- Serves on the NACD Awards Committee and the NACD Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force
- Serves on the NACD Policy Book Review Work Group and the NACD District Operations Committee
- NACD Board Member Alternate

JOE CAUGHLIN
KAY COUNTY CD
TONKAWA, OK

- Elected President of Georgia Association of Conservation Districts
- Chair of the NACD Groundwater Task Force
- Serves on the NACD District Operations Committee and the NACD Audit Committee

MARK MASTERS
LOWER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER CD
DAWSON, GA

- Serves on the NACD Policy Book Review Work Group and the NACD District Operations Committee
- Elected to Chair to the Oklahoma Conservation Commission
- Serves on the NACD Awards Committee and the NACD Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force
2020/2021 COHORT UPDATES

CASSIUS SPEARS
SOUTHERN RHODE ISLAND CD
ASHWAY, RI

- President of the Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts
- Serves on the NACD Awards Committee and the NACD Tribal Outreach and Partnership RPG
- Serves on the NRCS Regional Tribal Policy Group

SAM STEINER
WARREN COUNTY SWCD
FRANKLIN, OH

- Elected Second Vice President of the Ohio Federation of Conservation Districts
- Serves on the NACD Farm Bill Task Force
- Serves on the State Association Agriculture Committee

This cohort has completed exit interviews and their feedback will be used to strengthen the program for those to follow and are committed to furthering NGLI in an advisory capacity. As a testament to their confidence, commitment, and appreciation in the NGLI program, this cohort gifted the program with a double tuition payment. We are very proud of their accomplishments and excited to see where their futures take them.
Applications for the 2022 NGLI program were accepted from July 23 – September 4, 2021. The ranking of applications yielded two candidates for interviews from the seven regions, with interviews conducted from October 11-22, 2021. Evaluation of interview ranking occurred on October 27, 2021 and committee selection was completed on October 29, 2021.

Acceptance offers were made to candidates on November 1, 2021 with acceptance into the program confirmed on December 1, 2021.

NGLI is proud to announce the selection of the following cohort for 2022:

Laura Boyd - Cincinnati, OH
Jennifer Casey - Jacksonville, FL
Jamie Irving - Meredith, NH
Vaughn T. Poe - Sawyerville, AL
Terri Preeg Riggsby - Portland, OR
Josh Smith - Mesilla Park, NM
Grant Victor - Afton, OK

This cohort had their first session at the NACD Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL. They continue to learn virtually while awaiting their next in-person session at the NACD Summer Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico in July 2022.
The National Conservation Foundation’s 2021 campaign was one for the books. This annual initiative plays an integral role in funding the NCF and its education and leadership programs. The revenue resulting from the campaign ensures the NCF-Envirothon and the Next Generation Leadership Institute will continue to thrive in 2022 and beyond.

2021 NCF FALL CAMPAIGN

THANKS TO OUR CAMPAIGN DONORS, NCF WAS ABLE TO PROUDLY RAISE OVER $30,000!

To learn more, visit NationalConservationFoundation.org
Thank you for your support

The National Conservation Foundation is raising conservation leaders of tomorrow. Thank you for your support of NCF over the years. Considering providing a monetary gift to NCF to support its programs? Please visit www.NationalConservationFoundation.org.

Did you know you can support NCF by using AmazonSmile? AmazonSmile has the same products, prices and services as Amazon, but with an extra bonus—you can earn money for NCF! Here's how:

2. Make sure that “National Conservation Foundation” is designated as the charity of your choice.
3. Purchase products with the “Eligible for Amazon Smile donation” designation.
4. Then shop 'til your heart’s content.

National Conservation Foundation

Next Generation Leadership Institute