WE ALL LIVE IN A WATERSHED



Cabarrus Soil & Water Conservation District

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Contest Theme from the Division of Soil & Water

2025-2026 Theme: We all Live in a Watershed

Conservation: the wise use and management of natural resources (soil, air, water, plants, and animals) to fulfill human needs now and in the future.

Soil Conservation: to protect soil from erosion, to keep it productive and out of waterways; to use and manage soil wisely now to ensure a rich soil resource for future generations.

Water Conservation: to protect water quality by keeping water clean from sediment, chemicals, oil and animal wastes; to protect water quantity by using smaller amounts of harmful elements; to use and manage water wisely now to ensure good water quality for future generations.

Best Management Practices (BMP): agricultural practices that are suitable for reducing or minimizing the amount of water pollution generated by non-point sources; an engineered structure or management activity, or combination of these, that eliminates or reduces adverse environmental effects of pollutants.

Cabarrus County students can participate in the following:

- 1. Bookmark Contest (Grades K 2)
- 2. Poster Contest (Grades 3 5)
- 3. Essay Contest (Grades 6, 7, 8, and 9 12)
- 4. Computer Designed Slide Show (Grades 6, 7, 8, and 9 12)
- 5. Public Speaking Contest (Grades 6, 7, 8, and 9 12) on February 10, 2026 at 6 p.m.

Awards: Winners receive a cash prize and a certificate - three winners will be selected at each grade (3rd - 8th) and 9 - 12 grade levels in each category. High school (Grades 9 - 12) are considered one grade level for this contest).

First place winners of the Bookmark Contest will receive copies of their bookmark to give out to friends, and a certificate. Second and third place will receive a certificate.

Deadline: Friday, January 30, 2026 at 3:30 p.m. Submit Entries and bring bookmarks and posters to:

Abby Weinshenker
Cabarrus Soil & Water Conservation District
715 Cabarrus Ave W, Room 301
Concord, NC 28027

Email Digital Entries: arweinshenker@cabarruscounty.us
Annual Awards Banquet: Contest winners will be recognized at the annual stewardship celebration on May 6, 2026 from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Entry Form:

Cabarrus Soil & Water Conservation District Contests 2025-2026 Theme: We all Live in a Watershed Entries for contest to be entered at the form at:



https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScsLGfmah_bMzgTNRjtyIEzmTMKUkxR5LYr46FhNIMB 50kkCw/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=109750330757974711406

Student name, Contest name, Grade, Parent/Guardian(s) name, phone, and email, sponsoring teacher's name and email

How many students participated in the contest at your school?

NOTE: For each contest, **three students per grade**, from each school is eligible to enter. **For High School**, 3 students per contest per school can be entered.

Entries due by Friday, January 30, 2026 at 3:30 p.m.

Essay and Computer Designed Slide Show entries must be submitted electronically to the email highlighted below (in PDF, Power Point, or JPG Format) - with the entry form filled out in the Google Form. Please put the contest, student's initials, and school in the file name. For the Public Speaking Contest, only the Google Form entry is required. Third-Fifth Grade Posters and K-2 Bookmarks must be submitted in person at the address listed below. The Google Form entry will also need to be filled out for the contests.

Identifying information should not be included on the front of posters or bookmarks. Name and school can go on the back of the poster, appropriate place on the bookmark entry template, and/or in the file name when sent electronically.

Cabarrus Soil & Water Conservation District

Address: 715 Cabarrus Ave W, Room 301, Concord, NC 28027 (704)-920-3331, arweinshenker@cabarruscounty.us

Grades Pre-K, 1st, & 2nd We all Live in a Watershed Bookmark Contest

Contest Deadline: January 30, 2026 at 3:30 p.m.

Contest Eligibility: Grades K - 2

Contest Specifications:

- Bookmarks must be the original work of the individual student.
- Students should be made aware of the copyright protection.
- · No computer drawings. Hand drawn only.
- Bookmarks should clearly convey the contest theme.
- Entries must be clear and reproducible. Bold colors and distinct lines work best.
- Use the bookmark template for your entry.

Contest Judging Criteria:

- Conservation Message 50%
- Visual Effectiveness 25%
- Universal Appeal 10%
- Originality 10%
- Hand-drawn elements 5%

Contest Awards: Each grade level will receive the following - 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place certificates and First Place winners get professionally printed bookmarks to give to friends and family.

We all Live in a Watershed **Bookmark Contest** Draw the artwork in the box provided. Do not go outside the lines - hand drawn pictures only. Be sure to outline artwork - may use adult's help with that part only. Name:_____ School:____ Grade:_____ Parent's email:_____ Parent's phone:_____ Teacher's name and email:_____

Draw inside the bow below. Don't go outside the lines.

K to 2nd Grade Bookmark Contest Judging Criteria

Conservation Message	Bookmark shows the contest theme in easy to understand ways.
Visual Effectiveness	Bold colors, outlined, easy to see design. Will print well as bookmark.

skills--without help from an adult (except out-Bookmark entry shows student thought and Originality

Easily understood by the general public.

Universal Appeal

lining)

Age appropriate neatness.

Hand-drawn elements

Grades 3rd, 4th, & 5th We all Live in a Watershed Poster Contest

Contest Deadline: January 30, 2026 at 3:30 p.m.

Contest Eligibility: Grades 3, 4, and 5

Contest Specifications:

- Posters should be the original work of the individual student. Students should be made aware of the copyright protection. Hand-drawn pictures are preferred over computer-generated drawings.
- Posters should clearly convey the contest theme.
- Posters should be no larger than 24x36 inches.
- Pictures or other materials may be mounted on the posters, if mounted securely. Mounted materials cannot stick out more than ½ inch from the paper.
- Posters should be submitted flat and not rolled.
- Posters must be properly identified on the back using the entry form on the next page.

Contest Judging Criteria:

- Conservation Message 50%
- Visual Effectiveness 25%
- Universal Appeal 10%
- Originality 10%
- Hand-drawn elements 5%

Contest Awards: Each grade level will receive the following - 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place certificates and cash.

Grades 3rd, 4th, & 5th We all Live in a Watershed Poster Contest ENTRY FORM

Cabarrus Soil & Water Conservation District Contest
STUDENT NAME:
SCHOOL:
GRADE:
Administration/Teacher & Subject:
Administration/Teacher Email Address:
Administration/Teacher Work Address:

Please attached a filled-out version of this form to the back of each poster submission.

Poster	Poster Contest Judging Criteria
Conservation Message	Poster shows thorough detailed illustration of the conservation message in the contest theme.
<u>Visual Effectiveness</u>	Exceptionally attractive, showing great effectiveness.
<u>Universal Appeal</u>	Words or illustrations are easy to understand.
<u>Originality</u>	Student used creativity and thought for the presentation.
<u>Hand-drawn Elements</u>	Poster uses clearly understood hand-drawn elements.

Grades 6th, 7th, 8th, & 9-12 We all Live in a Watershed Essay Contest

Contest Deadline: January 30, 2026 at 3:30 p.m.

Contest Eligibility: Grades 6, 7, 8, and 9-12

Contest Specifications:

- Be the original work of the student. No plagiarism. If the student is caught plagiarizing, they will be automatically disqualified.
- Bear the current title of the essay contest.
- Be limited to 300-500 words. All words will be counted to reach the limit.
- Be presented on standard 8.5" x 11" paper.
- Submit as a Word document of PDF. Email essay with entry form to arweinshenker@cabarruscounty.us before the deadline.

Contest Judging Criteria:

- Conservation Message & Originality 50%
- Writing Style 20%
- Organization 20%
- Neatness 10%

Contest Awards: Each grade level will receive the following - 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place certificates and cash.

Essay Contest Pointers

For clarification, the difference between an essay and a report, as applied to this contest, is as follows:

- **Essay** A short composition dealing with a single subject from a personal point of view; facts may be interwoven into the essay, which stimulates thinking.
- Report A formal presentation of facts in a report style.

Judging criteria: The Association has adopted a standard score sheet to be used for ALL contest levels. Essays will be judged on content and writing skills as described on the score sheet.

Grades 6th, 7th, 8th, & 9-12 We all Live in a Watershed Computer Slide Show Contest

Contest Deadline: January 30, 2026 at 3:30 p.m.

Contest Eligibility: Grades 6, 7, 8, and 9-12

Contest Specifications:

- The slide show shall contain no more than 15 slides of content. Fewer slides are allowed.
- The slide immediately following the slide show (slide 16 if there are 5 slides) should be blank. The slide following the blank slide (17) should contain identifying information (see next page).
- Slide shows must be created so that they are viewable as a slide show on a PC computer.
- The use of audio (sound) and animations are allowed.
- The use of video is prohibited. Slide shows using video will be disqualified.
- Slide shows shall not exceed a maximum of 5 minutes in length.
- Slide shows will be submitted electronically to arweinshenker@cabarruscounty.us.
- All slide shows will be judged electronically.
- Slide shows must be **original work** of the individual student. Original work is created by the student and shows a fresh, new idea. Students should be made aware of **copyright protection**.

Contest Awards: Each grade level will receive the following - 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place certificates and cash.

Computer Slide Shows must be identified by containing the following information on the final slide of the slide show (put a blank slide in between show and information slide:

Sti	I	l۵r	าt'c	nai	me:
Ju	ıυ	ıCı	IL O	Hai	HC.

Grade:

Slide Show Title:

Slide Show File Name:

Student's Address:

Parents' Email:

Phone:

Teacher's Name:

School:

County: Cabarrus

District: Cabarrus

Entry due date: Friday, January 30, 2026, at 3:30 p.m.

Computer Slide Show Pointers

What makes a good slide show?

- Follow a logical order: start with a title/introductory slide, have the slides
 progress so that they build on previous slides, and end the slide show with
 a conclusion slide.
- A catchy message; use one theme.
- A slogan telling viewers to do something and making them want to do it.
- Good use of colors and backgrounds to get and hold attention.
- Letters large enough to be easily read and words separated enough to make the viewer quickly grasp it.
- · Good use of pictures and illustrations.

Avoid these slide show faults:

- More than one theme.
- Too busy too many and/or too scattered pictures or words.
- Text too small to read easily.
- Text is difficult to read due to not enough color contract with background.
- Material not relevant to the topic.
- Message becomes lost.

Other tips to remember:

- Balance the placement of text and photos/illustrations on the slide.
- Illustrations add emphasis and attract attention.
- Small lettering is hard to read at a distance. Consider the following font sizes for readability from 20 feet.
- Easiest to read: 36 to 44 point font size (Good for titles)
- Easy to read: 28 to 34 point font size.
- Fairly easy to read: 24 to 26 point font size.
- Boldness makes a difference.
- Plain lettering is more readable than fancy lettering.

Computer Slide Show Judging Criteria:

The NCASWCD has adopted a standard slide show score sheet to be used at all contest levels. Slide shows will be judged on the following points (Refer to **Slide Show Pointers** and the score sheet for tips):

- Conservation Message 50%
- Visual Effectiveness 30%
- Universal Appeal 10%
- Originality 10%

Infractions:

Points will be deducted for the following infractions:

- Copyright violations 5 points
- Exceeding the maximum number of slides (15) 5 points
- Exceeding the time limit (5 minutes) 5 points
- Use of video Disqualification

COPYRIGHT:

Copyright is a protection by U.S. laws for the authors and creators of original work. A copyright protects the particular manner of expression of ideas but not the ideas themselves. Original work includes illustrations, computer-generated drawings, photographs, or other artwork created solely by the individual submitting the work. *Example:* You can make a poster using cartoon characters that talk about soil and water conservation in comic-strip fashion if the ideas are yours (this main idea cannot be copyrighted). But if classmates recognize your cartoon characters as popular characters, then your work is copied from the original artists. Remember to use your imagination because your ideas are the BEST!

Computer Slide Show Judging Criteria

Conservation Message	Shows clear understanding of why this natural
	resource is important AND explains how peo- ple can and should conserve this natural re-
	source.
Visual Effectiveness	Exceptionally attractive, showing great
	effectiveness.
<u>Universal Appeal</u>	Words or illustrations are easy to understand.
<u>Originality</u>	Expresses the contest theme in a fresh inventive or novel way. Uses independent thought and creativity to use the unexpected to full advantage.

Grades 6th, 7th, 8th, & 9-12 We all Live in a Watershed Public Speaking Contest

- The contest will take place on February 10, 2026 at 6 p.m. at our office. Winners go to area and state competitions.
- The speech is limited from 4 to 6 minutes. Visual aids may not be used.
- Use of note cards is acceptable for backup.
- Contestants shall identify themselves by their assigned number only or not at all. Personal information such as name, school, and hometown can't be given.
- Teachers are asked to submit the names of participating students and parent contact information to the following email address by January 30:
 - arweinshenker@cabarruscounty.us

Contest Judging Criteria:

- Conservation Message 20%
- Organization 15%
- Originality 5%
- Skillful Use of Facts, Examples, Descriptions, and Analogies -10%

Public Speaking Contest Pointers:

- Don't go under 4 minutes or over 6 minutes in time.
- Don't reveal your name, school or any such identification.
- Become familiar with the judging criteria on the Public Speaking Contest Score Sheet.
- Memorize your speech. Use of notecards is acceptable for backup. No visual aids may be used.
- Dress appropriately no costumes, logos, or anything that would identify your school, hometown, or county.
- Arrive early so that you can relax and be comfortable in the contest surroundings.
- Make eye contact with your audience during your speech.
- Be sure to stay in range of the microphone on the podium.
- Speeches will be videotaped and may be put on the county, area, or state's online media. Your parent will be asked to sign a permission form for this purpose.

PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST

North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

 ∞ yours for Life *A timekeeper will inform the judges of the 9 GRADE: 6, 7, 8, 9-12 contestants' official time. 2 4 3 2 DATE: *Perfect Score = 100 points (Total of CONTENT + SPEAKING SKILLS) orderly flow of thoughts, uses good transitions between thoughts Good choice of material, makes sense, factual, accurate, quotes Entry expresses the contest theme in a fresh, inventive, or novel way of using independent thought and creative imagination, and 15 Points Presented in meaningful order, shows continuity of ideas, uses 10 Points Facts, examples, descriptions and analogies add to the quality Outside the 4-6 minute time limit: minus 5 points 20 Points 5 Points together well and contribute to the quality of the presentation. resource is important & explains how people can & should Gives personal identification: minus 5 points are correct and appropriate. Elements of the speech flow Message shows clear understanding of why this natural Use of visual aids: minus 5 points D. SKILLFUL USE OF FACTS, EXAMPLES, CONTENT CRITERIA **DESCRIPTIONS AND ANALOGIES** using the unexpected to full advantage. TITLE A. CONSERVATION MESSAGE: conserve this natural resource. of the presented message CONTENT SUB-TOTAL B. ORGANIZATION C. ORIGINALITY January 2014 *Infractions: JUDGE

PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST (Page 2 or 2)

North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

- yours for Life GRADE: 6,7,8,9-12 *A timekeeper will inform the judges of the

*Students and judges should be informed of the judging criteria before the contest begins DATE: *Perfect Score = 100 points (Total of CONTENT + SPEAKING SKILLS) TITLE JUDGE:

Outside the 4-6 minute time limit: minus 5 points *Infractions:

contestants' official time. Gives personal identification: minus 5 points Use of visual aids: minus 5 points

SPEAKING SKILLS CRITERIA	_	2	က	4	5	9	7	∞
A. VOICE AND DICTION Quality and variety (not monotone), inflection, enunciation, pronunciation, proper emphasis, projection and control, appropriate volume								
B. STYLE Rapport with the audience, word selection, no distracting mannerisms, appealing presentation								
C. BODY LANGUAGE Eye contact, posture and poise, hand gestures used with restraint and good taste								
SPEAKING SKILLS SUB-TOTAL STUDENT'S OFFICIAL TIME (must be within 4-6 minutes)								
FINAL SCORING SECTION	DRING SE	CTION						
= TOTAL								
- INFRACTIONS (if any, subtract points) = FINAL TOTAL								
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January 2014

Resource Conservation Workshop (RCW)

(Scholarship for High School Rising Juniors and Seniors)

The Resource Conservation Workshop (RCS) is sponsored by N.C. Assocation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in conjunction with the Division of Soil & Water Conservation and the Soil Science Department of NC State University. For detailed information visit the website http://ncagr.gov/SWC/educational/RCW.html.

Workshop Description:

The RCW is a weeklong and involves study and hands on participation in a wide range of conservation topics. Students are housed at NC State University campus dormitories under the guidance of live-in counselors. In order to achieve success, students should come prepared to meet the primary objective of the workshop - learning about natural resources and their management in today's global environment. Awards and scholarships can be won and are presented to students under several awards programs.

Workshop Dates:

The RCW is usually held during one of the last two weeks in June. The RCW Planning Committee will issue the upcoming workshop dates and registration materials no later than October 1st. **Student registration begins November 1st.**

Participants:

The RCW is designed to accommodate up to 104 students. The student slots will be filled on a first come first serve basis as registrations will specific student names are received.

Participant Eligibility:

Students who have demonstrated an interest in natural resource conservation and are nominated by their local soil and water conservation districts are eligible. **High school graduates are not eligible to attend.** The District will give priority to rising juniors and seniors. Students may participate only one time in the workshop.

If a student wishes to participate in this opportunity, have them send their application as soon as possible to arweinshenker@cabarruscounty.us.

Classroom Grant

The Auxiliary - Classroom Grant is sponsored by the Noth Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Auxiliary. The purpose of the grant is to provide funding to classroom teachers for projects to enhance learning using conservation and environmental practices. Grants of up to \$500 are awarded.

Rules for Procedures

- Eligible educators include teachers and principals in North Carolina schools serving grades K - 12.
- Applications will be accepted for specific projects to enhance learning, using conservation and environmental practices.
- Application limit: One proposal per educator. An applicant for an individual grant may not apply as the leader for the project, and vice versa. However, an applicant for an individual grant may be part of a team project for which another educator is applying.
- Grants will not be awarded for educator salaries, time, or expenses.
- Proposals may be approved for partial funding when the applicant's budget summary includes a figure for the minimum grant required to conduct the project of a smaller scale.

Selection Criteria:

PROJECT MUST:

- Directly involve students.
- Use innovative and creative teaching methods.
- Seek to achieve clearly defined goals and learning objectives.
- Provide ongoing benefits to students.
- Be completed during the current school year.
- Feature measurable results that can be evaluated upon completion.
- Use the grant as a supplement to state and local funding.
- Be unavailable to students without funding from private sources.
- Be in keeping with school's overall objective.

HOW TO APPLY:

Visit the NCASWCD website, Auxiliary page, to obtain an application form and instructions; the direct link to the Auxiliary page is: http://ncaswcd.org/?page_id=516.

Deadline:

The application is due by December 1st to the Auxiliary President. It may be mailed either by a local Soil and Water Conservation office or by the schools.

ENVIROTHON PROGRAM

The Envirothon program is sponsored by the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. There is both a state middle and state high school competition.

Participant Eligibility:

Open to teams of students in grades 9 - 12 for high school and in grades 5 - 8 for middle schools. Teams consist of 5 members. Each team must have an adult advisor, and the team may have alternates if you feel that your team may have a chance to win first place at the state competition. **See website www.ncenvirothon.org for official rules.**

Public schools, private schools, home school groups, school clubs, FFA groups, etc. are all eligible to participate in the Envirothon Program.

Team Sponsorship:

Teams must be sponsored by a Soil and Water Conservation District.

Contest Cycle:

The Envirothon begins at the start of the new school year. There are eight area Envirothons in the Spring. A team must qualify at an Area Envirothon to advance to the State Envirothon. By August 31, the State Envirothon Committee will set the date for the State Competition.

Contest Procedure:

The state Envirothon is held on a Friday and Saturday. Friday is a training day with teams registering and picking up their registration packets. Friday is also the day for the high school oral presentation. The oral presentation is conducted during the station rotation on Friday afternoon.

On Friday afternoon, there are seven high school resource stations set up. One for each of the five subject areas and one for each of the oral preparation and presentation components. The teams rotate from station to station and attend training sessions held by resource professionals at each station.

ENVIROTHON PROGRAM (cont.)

The contest consists of five subject area resource stations:

- **Wildlife:** challenges teams on habitat knowledge, identification, foods, rules and regulations, birdcalls, diseases, management, and animal signs.
- Aquatic Ecology: ecology of water, non-point source pollution, wetlands, stream buffers, water chemistry, plants and animals living in or around water, pollution, conservation, macro invertebrate ID, and erosion problems.
- **Forestry:** tree identification, timber stand improvement, forest ecology, insects, diseases, forest management, forest measurement, and functions of trees.
- Soil/land use: soil classification, erosion, soil surveys, site suitability, current issues, soil profiles, soil characteristics, Best Management Practices, and erosion.
- Current Environmental Issues: any current or newsworthy environmental issue.

Teams will visit each resource station and be given a written test. Questions are answered as a team. After finishing one station, and at a set time, teams will rotate to the next station.

Test answers are graded and scores tallied to select the winner. The high school team with the highest score will be declared the state winner and will be eligible to compete in the North American Competition.

The teams must prepare a write up of their project and give a fifteen-minute oral presentation and send it with the written report to the State Envirothon Coordinator by March 1. See the website www.ncenvirothon.org for more information.

ENVIROTHON PROGRAM (cont.)

Competition Preparation:

Once a team has pre-registered for the Area Envirothon, information will be sent by the sponsoring District to each advisor listing the source materials that will be needed to study. The resource study guide materials can be found on the Envirothon website (www.ncenvirothon.org). Questions will be developed from resource materials or from information supplied during the events' station training.

Area Competition:

Each of the eight Areas of the NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts holds an Area Envirothon Competition. This is to give the teachers an opportunity to evaluate the progress of their team's study efforts and to get a feel as to how the State Envirothon operates.

These Area Envirothons are qualifying events. The top seven scoring teams from the Area Envirothons, in both middle school and high school divisions, are eligible to attend the State Envirothon Competition. The highest scoring FFA team is also eligible to go to the State Envirothon Competition, even if they are not part of the top seven teams. The FFA uses the NC Envirothon as the state qualifying event for the National FFA Environmental Awareness event. All competing FFA teams must have FFA in their team's name.

Community Service-Learning Projects:

The State Envirothon Committee sponsors a voluntary Community Service-Learning Project competition for the teams. This project can be a data sharing project, a physical project or a service project. The project is a team effort, voluntary, and a great opportunity for the Envirothon team to show what they have learned about our natural resources from studying the Envirothon resource materials.

District Support:

For teachers interested in starting a team, there is a week-long training in June that will be paid for by the District. There are supplies to check out and experts can be arranged to visit the teams or field trips arranged for preparation. Contact Abby Weinshenker at arweinshenker@cabarruscounty.us to arrange.

Classroom Programs

Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District provides free programs to all grade levels, Pre-K to 12th.

Topics are on nature, conservation, and incorporate NC Science and NC Social Studies Essential Standards in all classes and include 21st Century Learner and ELA and Math Standards in some classes.

We can meet virtually, come to your school or meet your class at a park to do the program.

We also provide curriculum training in Project Learning Tree, Project Wet, Project Food Land and People, and Leopold Education Project upon request for a group of educators.

Call Abby Weinshenker at 704-920-3331 or email arweinshenker@cabarruscounty.us to explore the ways we can collaborate.