



Soil and Plant Science Division

Technical Soil Services

North Central Soil Survey Region



Northeastern Minnesota Regional Envirothon Competition

Duluth, Minnesota, Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Soil Survey Office (SSO)

Purpose

On May 4, 2026, Duluth MLRA SSO staff assisted with the Northeastern Minnesota Regional Envirothon Competition at the request of the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District. Approximately 25 teams, with 4 students per team, gathered at the Cloquet Forestry Center, near Cloquet, Minnesota, to compete, and the two highest placing teams advanced to the Minnesota State Envirothon Competition.

Background

Each team completed exams in five categories—aquatics, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife, and the 2026 current issue scenario. The students prepared for the first four stations using the study guides available on the [Minnesota Envirothon web page](#), and for the fifth station, this year's current issue scenario was Non-Point Source Pollution: It begins at home! The scenario focused on Little Elk Lake, its water quality and algal bloom conditions, and other problems. Each team created an oral presentation to address the scenario for that portion of the competition.

Duluth MLRA SSO staff created a soils exam based on the study materials the Minnesota State Envirothon officials provided to the students and proctored the soils portion of the competition. As the students rotated through the exam sites, they provided directions and rules for the exam and reminded students of how much time remained to complete the exam (fig. 1). At the end of each rotation, Duluth MLRA SSO staff graded exams and then sent them to the scoring station officials.



Figure 1.—Ecological Site Specialist Kade Anderson and Soil Scientist Alena Wallin prepare exams and explain the rules for completing the soils exam.

Key Outcomes

By studying for the competition, the students gained a higher level of understanding of conservation and natural resources and how they affect the environment where the students live. The competition provided students with an opportunity to interact with students who share similar interests as well as adults in different career fields in conservation or natural resources.

Congratulations to the two highest placing teams, Cook County School District and Moose Lake School District, and good luck at the Minnesota State Envirothon Competition! The team from Rock Ridge School District received the Team Spirit award for their enthusiasm and positive approach to the competition.