



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

PO Box 129
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

928 638-7779 phone
928 638-7609 fax
www.nps.gov/grca

Grand Canyon News Release

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Contact(s): Shannan Marcak
Phone number: 928-638-7958

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Grand Canyon Hosts a Day of Learning for Envirothon Participants

Grand Canyon, AZ. – On Thursday, July 31, 2008, the National Park Service in Grand Canyon National park hosted a natural resource field trip for competitors in the 2008 Canon Envirothon. For participating high school students, the national Envirothon is the culmination of months of training, team-building and superior performance in envirothons at the local, regional and state/provincial level. It is also an opportunity to compete for thousands of dollars in scholarships.

Envirothon was started in 1979 when the Pennsylvania Soil and Water Conservation Districts created an “Environmental Olympics” as a way to encourage high school students to become interested in natural resource conservation and environmental issues and careers. These Olympics quickly gained popularity; and in 1988, the program changed its name to Envirothon and went national. Today, the event is becoming truly international with regular participation by several Canadian provinces and interest from Mexican states, Turkey, Japan and Australia; and Canon U.S.A., Inc. has become the event’s title sponsor with the program currently operating under the name Canon Envirothon.

Though it is now North America’s largest environmental education competition, Envirothon’s core goals still remain the same: to engender interest in natural resource conservation as well as environmental issues and careers while enhancing a student’s problem solving and critical thinking skills. To the National Park Service, assisting with this event seemed like a perfect fit.

“We were thrilled when we were approached by the Arizona Envirothon planning board to assist with this year’s national competition,” said Steve Martin, Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park. “These young people are the environmental leaders, maybe even the Teddy Roosevelt’s, of the future. If our participation can help develop a sense of environmental stewardship in them now, then we are one step closer to ensuring the preservation of our national parks, and perhaps even our planet, in the years to come.”

Superintendent Martin welcomed the students to Arizona and the 2008 Envirothon at Northern Arizona University on Monday. Park Ranger Jay Johnstone, an Environmental Education Specialist at Grand Canyon National Park, then gave them a presentation on natural resource issues in the park. On Thursday the students, almost 250 of them, walked the rim trail using

study guides prepared by the park's Environmental Education Branch to support Envirothon's goal of having all field trips add to the participant's training and preparation for the final competition.

The competition itself will begin on Friday, August 1. Each member of the top ten teams will receive scholarships ranging from \$1000 to \$5000.

To learn more about Envirothon, visit the program's web site at www.envirothon.org. To learn more about visiting Grand Canyon National Park please call the public information line at 928-638-7888 or visit the park's web site at www.nps.gov/grca.

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