



## West Valley Supports Outdoor Environmental Competition for High School Students



*The 2022 Cattaraugus County Envirothon champions hail from the Allegany-Limestone Central School District in New York state. Pictured, back row, from left, are Dan Waugaman, team advisor; Sughosh Kondur; Jesse Decker; and Megan Boberg with Cattaraugus County Soil and Water Conservation District; front row, from left, are Connor Ellison; Xavier Hilmey; and Andrew Opperman.*

**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – The [EM West Valley Demonstration Project \(WVDP\)](#) cleanup contractor helped sponsor a recent outdoor competition that tests local high school students on their knowledge of the environment while challenging them to work together in teams.

An Allegany-Limestone Central School District team won the Cattaraugus County Envirothon after contending for the title with five other teams from five school districts. The victors advance to the New York State Envirothon, where they vie to become the state's representatives at the North American Envirothon.

Students at the Cattaraugus County Envirothon worked together to finish exams at various outdoor stations that addressed aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife and other topics. They identified species of trees and wildlife, answered questions about habitat and other aspects of the environment and gave presentations on this year's special topic: developing a local comprehensive solid waste management program.

"Competitions like this help engage students' interest in the environment and sciences," [EM WVDP Director Bryan Bower](#) said. "It also encourages students to become more environmentally aware adults."



*Team members from Olean High School gather around the aquatics station as they compete in the recent Cattaraugus County Envirothon.*

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The first Envirothon was held in 1979. It's now the largest conservation education program in North America. The contest begins at the local level, with several schools from each county competing to move on to the statewide, and ultimately, continent-wide event.

The Cattaraugus County Envirothon is organized by the Cattaraugus County Soil and Water Conservation District. [WVDP](#) is located in that county. The competition is supported by local environmental groups, civic organizations and businesses. More than 20 volunteers help carry out the event.

"We are glad to be a part of this environmental learning competition," said John Rendall, president and general manager of [CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley](#). "Friendly competition stimulates learning, which motivates students to become future stewards of our environment."

*Contributor: Joseph Pillittere*