

# Students learn about wildlife, nature at the Envirothon

MICHELLE GANASSI

[michelleg@dailyamerican.com](mailto:michelleg@dailyamerican.com)



Staff photo by Michelle Ganassi

Meyersdale students Karlee Witherite, William Decker, Josh Kretchman, Alyssa Long and Kahylee Shaffer were on the winning team at the 31st Envirothon.

LAUREL HILL — Students from across Somerset County participated in the 31st Envirothon in Somerset County.

A group of students from Meyersdale will keep studying as they prepare for the state competition at the University of Pittsburgh at

Johnstown.

Somerset Conservation District resource specialist Aimee Steele said the Envirothon is an educational competition for high school students. It tests their knowledge, skills and problem-solving capabilities. Eighty students from Berlin, Rockwood, Meyersdale, Somerset, Shanksville, Shade, Windber and the Somerset County Technology Center participated.

“They study all year for this,” Steele said.

She explained that the goal is to motivate students to learn more about the natural world.

“Thereby fostering an increased environmental awareness,” she said.

Students are tested in aquatics, wildlife, forestry, soils and a current issue. This year’s issue was “Agriculture and the Environment: Knowledge and Technology to Feed the World.”

Meyersdale teacher Tom Miller not only participated as a coach for his two teams, but also as a high school student in Bedford County. He said that in a technology-driven world, opportunities to get out and feel, see and hear different things helps kids to learn.

“Hands-on, in my opinion, is so much more educational,” he said.

Miller said he enjoys seeing students come back to help with the competition or administer a test at the event after they leave school.

Rockwood student Brady Pritts said he also enjoys the hands-on learning.

“I like the wildlife station and the aquatics,” he said.

He said that he really enjoys learning about the different animals and fish.

Fellow student Jamie Sarver from Shade said that she also found the wildlife station to be the most interesting.

“You learn about everything going on that you don’t see,” she said.

She said she learned that there are many different varieties of mayflies and ducks.

A team from Rockwood finished second, and a team from Shade finished third.

Assisting with the competition to run the stations were the Bureau of Forestry, Fish & Boat Commission, United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pennsylvania Game Commission and Laurel Hill State Park. Several organizations donated to the event as well.