

2022 Lebanon County Envirothon Soils Training  
Submitted by Stephanie Harmon, Watershed Specialist



## LEBANON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT ENVIROTHON SOILS TRAINING

On March 22, 2022, an unseasonably pleasant day, with hints of spring, nearly one hundred energetic middle and high school Envirothon students from Lebanon County school districts, including ELCO, Northern Lebanon, and Palmyra got their hands dirty at an Envirothon Soils Training held at the Lebanon Expo Center.

The training was hosted by the Lebanon County Conservation District and coordinated by Watershed Specialist and Lebanon County Envirothon Coordinator, Stephanie Harmon. Special guest instructors included, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) - Resource Soils Scientist, Keith Shadle (Bloomsburg), and Heather Stellabott, Soil Conservationist (Lebanon County).

The training began with a presentation on the basics of soils components, understanding maps, surveys, and landforms, land use, decision making, protection and the importance of understanding soils. Keith shared with students **the varied importance's of soils characteristics and features.**

After the presentation, students rotated through two stations where they (literally) got their hands dirty by practicing **the "Soil Texture by Feel" method** and reading a soil textural triangle to determine the classification of two different soil samples. Additionally, students reviewed differences in soil colors,

textures, and structures. Thus, demonstrating how different soil characteristics can help show the divides between the soil horizons (i.e. top-soils, subsoil, and parent materials). Finally, students were provided an introduction and history of topographical maps. They practiced reading and measuring contour lines and gained an understanding of the many different features of topographical maps. Students were able to observe the differences in soil profiles, and how differences in topography have a major impact on soil development.