



## Eco-Meet History and Background



- Imagine a competition where knowledge of Illinois wildlife and plants is the key to success! Eco-Meets offer a chance for the most *naturally-qualified* students to show what they know and win recognition for their school.
- Eco-Meet is sponsored by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Lake Shelbyville Corps manages Junior Varsity (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade) and Varsity (9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade). The Douglas-Hart Nature Center is host to the Middle School division of Eco-Meet for grades 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
- The first Eco-Meet was held by the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1976. Eco-Meet competitions are still being held there and the concept has spread to Illinois, Georgia, Maryland and Kansas.

### Eco-Meet Rules

- Each school may send one team per division. For the middle school competition teams will be made up of 4 team members and must be in grades 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>.
- There is a \$25 registration fee for each team. This can be mailed to the Douglas-Hart Nature Center, 2204 Dewitt Ave E, Mattoon, IL 61938, or it can be paid the day of the event. We accept cash, credit, debit, or check.
- Please submit your team registration form at least one week prior to the event date.
- You do not need to submit team member names with registration if you have yet to determine them. Team member names must be submitted at least one week prior to the event date.
- Each team must have a designated team coach, who must accompany the team to the competition. A coach may serve more than one team. A coach does not necessarily need to be a teacher. It could be a parent, volunteer, athletic coach, or anyone approved by the school district to represent the team.
- A team may be comprised of a maximum of four students from the same school. A team can compete with only three students if desired. During each test, only three students may compete. The fourth student will serve as an alternate. A different alternate can be chosen for each event.
- In order to ensure fairness in competition, only schools that have at least three students on their team may compete.
- Each team must have a team captain.
- Each team member will compete independently, but scores will be compiled (see scoring below).
- All team coaches will be made aware of any changes in the rules prior to the competition. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that the team members are aware of any changes in the rules.
- During the competition the team members involved cannot be wearing a hat or sunglasses. No electronic devices. Other test taking etiquette apply: no talking, no cheating, etc.

- Once the competition has started the coach or team mates cannot help their team in any way while they are competing in the events. They cannot interfere with a judge or competition. Any violation of this rule will disqualify the team from that event competition.
- Team members cannot use any study guides or notes during the event.
- Team members must use a pencil to take the test. All event questions will be taken from the study guide materials provided by the Douglas-Hart Nature Center. The question format can be true or false, multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, short answer or identification.
- This event will be held indoors and/or outdoors at the Douglas-Hart Nature Center. Traditionally, the tests may be outdoors with the use of clipboards, or in the Visitor Center. Students should be prepared for either option.
- Things that may be used in the identification portion of the events may include, but are not limited to: mounted, preserved, or live animals, live or preserved plants, color pictures, or man-made materials.
- Study guide materials will be available on the Douglas-Hart Nature Center website at <http://www.dhnature.org/eco-meet-school-competition.html>.
- Test taking is limited to approximately 40 minutes.
- Coaches are responsible for making copies of the materials for their team members.
- Judges and score keepers may include: Douglas-Hart Nature Center staff, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel, Personnel from other agencies, and volunteers.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Douglas-Hart Nature Center holds the right to change these rules as they see fit.
- Team scores may be disqualified for infractions of these rules.

### **Eco-Meet Scoring**

- After each event, the three team members' scores will be added together for a team raw score.
- The team with the highest raw score receives a number one standing. Second place receives a number two standing, third receives a number three standing, and so on.
- There will be different standings calculated for each test.
- If teams tie in a test with the same raw score, the teams involved will receive the same standing.
- After the last test, each team's standings will be added. The team that receives the lowest amount after the standings are added up will be the winner. This method of scoring effectively weights each team's raw score per subject, guarding participants from penalization for lower scores on more difficult tests.
- If there is a tie in the top three place standings after they are added, the team with the most first place events will finish higher in the standings. In the event that a tie still exists, team placement will be decided by the highest raw score value. In the event that a tie still exists, the captains of the teams involved will be asked tiebreaker questions until a winner is determined. The tiebreaker questions will pertain to the Eco-Meet events.

- All judges' decisions are final.
- The standings and raw scores will be placed on a scoreboard after each event. The scoreboard will be placed in an area where everyone has access to it. The coaches will be provided a score sheet before the event, so that they can keep track of the standings.
- The top three standings will receive plaques. All team members and coaches will receive an Eco-Meet patch and certificate.

### **Helpful Hints**

- Directions to the Douglas-Hart Nature Center: Northwest side of the corner of DeWitt Avenue and Lerna Road. Exit IL-16 from I-57 towards Charleston, turn north on Lerna road. Look for the windmill. There will be directional signs on the day of the event.
- Upon arrival, we encourage all teams to find a "base camp" on our grounds, so after completing a test, team members know where to go to find their coach and other team members.
- Lunch will be provided for teams. A campfire will be going for teams to use to roast hotdogs and marshmallows for s'mores. Chips will also be available. In the event of inclement weather, hotdogs will be preheated for all to enjoy. Individuals with dietary restrictions are responsible for bringing an alternative lunch.
- There will be coffee available for teachers only.
- Dress appropriately for outdoor activities and elements of the weather.
- Team members should bring a clipboard and pencils with them.
- Feel free to bring activities for free time such as frisbees or games.
- After each test, the other team members are free to leave once they are finished. It is completely up to the coach the freedom of your students, but generally coaches do allow the students to look around the Nature Center, walk the trails, roast marshmallows at the fire, or sit in your "base camp." However, please discuss "leave no trace," picking up their trash, respect of the site and staff prior to arrival.
- A finalized schedule of the day will be emailed to you one week before the event as a final check in.
- The 2023-24 Eco-Meet is planned to be held outdoors. In the event of inclement weather, this event will be held indoors.

Please contact Abby deBuhr, Education Director at 217-235-4644 or email [programs@dhnature.org](mailto:programs@dhnature.org) for any questions, concerns about the annual Eco-Meet.