

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **News Release**

Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
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### **Augusta County 4H Homeschool Team wins state environmental contest**

The Augusta County 4H Homeschool Team beat numerous high schools to represent Augusta County and the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District at Virginia's Envirothon, a natural resources competition. Team members are Josh Salatin, Shayne Robaker, Ryan Bourgeois, Juliana Heerschap, Jill Bourgeois, Leigh Robaker, Lee Kelley and Nate Salatin.

Coached by Jennifer Mercer (Augusta County Extension Agent) and Al Bourgeois (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries) and sponsored by the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District, the team advanced and won the state competition May 16-17 at James Madison University in Harrisonburg.

Envirothon features five "in-the-field" test stations – soils, wildlife, aquatics, forestry and current environmental issue – where teams answer questions in both written and hands-on formats. During an oral presentation teams propose a management solution related to the current environmental issue to a panel of judges consisting of industry and natural resource professionals. This year's issue is "natural resource management in the urban environment."

"The intense study required for this contest helps prepare students for college entrance exams, as well as possible careers in field associated with natural resources," said Greg Evans, president of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

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As the state competition winner the team will travel to Wesleyan College in West Virginia to battle it out at the National Envirothon, sponsored by Canon. During 2003, Fort Defiance High School represented the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District at nationals and received 12<sup>th</sup> place overall.

The Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation District would like to express gratitude to its sponsors: Virginia Manufacturers Association Outreach Group, Titmus Foundation, Philip Morris, Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, Virginia Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, Virginia Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America and Canon.

If you can help or would like more information on starting an Envirothon team at your high school through 4-H, FFA, Ecology Club or home school group, contact your local soil and water conservation district or the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts at (804) 559-0324 or [dana.roberts@vaswcd.org](mailto:dana.roberts@vaswcd.org)