

# ESSAY CONTEST

The Essay Contest is sponsored by the N.C. Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (NCASWCD), which also sets the rules.

## **Eligible Titles:**

A set of five titles has been selected by the Association's Education Committee and adopted by the Association. The approved titles and their rotation schedule is as follows:

2005 - 2006	Water..... the Cycle of Life
2006 - 2007	Wetlands are Wonderful
2007 - 2008	We all Live in a Watershed
2008 - 2009	Soil & Water.....Yours for Life
2009 - 2010	The Living Soil
2010 - 2011	Water---the Cycle of Life

## **Participant Eligibility:**

Open to 6th-grade students.

## **Contest Cycle:**

Runs concurrently with the school year and takes place in participating Districts.

**Contest Procedure:** District First Place winner in local contests will be eligible to enter the Area contest. Each Area First Place winner will be eligible to enter the State contest. Each contest coordinator shall see that contestants and judges have a copy of the rules and shall urge them to study these rules, especially the sections on content, specifications and judging criteria.

All essays entered into District sponsored competitions become the property of the respective District. These entities are entitled to use these essays for promotion of the Conservation District essay program.

For clarification, the difference between an essay and a report, as applied to this contest, is as follows:

Essay - A short composition dealing with a single subject from a personal point of view; facts may be interwoven into the essay, which stimulates thinking.

Report - A formal presentation of facts in a report style.

## **Judging Criteria:**

The Association has adopted a standard score sheet to be used for all contest levels. Essays will be judged on content and writing skills as described on the score sheet.

- Essays must be the work of the individual student.
- Essays may be either handwritten or typed on the computer.

**Specifications:**

Essays must:

- Bear the current title of the essay contest.
- Be limited to 300 – 500 words. All words will be counted to reach the limit.
- Be presented on standard 8 ½” X 11” paper.
- Be properly identified on the back using the following format:

Student’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

**Infractions:**

Points will be deducted for the following infractions:

- Incorrect Length                      5 points
- Current title not on essay        5 points
- Wrong paper size                      2 points

**Conservation District Contest:**

- Teachers will ask students to prepare an essay on the current topic.
- According to the local District’s guidelines, each school will select one or more winning essays to represent the school at the District’s Annual Essay Contest.
- The District will select one winner to complete in the Area contest.
- District contests may be conducted at any time during the school year provided that District winners are determined before March 1. The original copy of the winning essay from the District must be sent to the Area Chairperson on or before March 7.
- District may present awards, as they deem appropriate.
- Each word is counted as a word regardless of number of letters in the word.

**Area Contest:**

- Each Area Chairperson will appoint a judging committee to select the winning essay from submitted entries.
- The winning essay from each Area must be sent to the Division of Soil and Water Conservation on or before April 1. Retain a file copy of the essay and send the original to the Division.
- Areas may present awards, as they deem appropriate.

**State Contest:**

- The Association, with assistance from the Division will select a date and place for the State Contest.
- The State contest will be held no later than May 15.
- State prizes as determined by the Association will be:
  - First Prize: \$200 cash or check
  - Second Prize: \$100 cash or check
- Certificates will be given to all state-level participants.
- State winners will be announced within 20 days after state judging.