

ESSAY CONTEST

The Essay Contest is sponsored by the N.C. Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Eligible Titles:

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

2023-2024	The Living Soil
2024-2025	Wetlands are Wonderful
2025-2026	We all live in a Watershed

Participant Eligibility:

Open to 6th, 7th, 8th and 9-12th (9-12th grade competed together in a single completion) grade students.

Contest Cycle:

Runs concurrently with the school year and takes place in participating Districts. Districts and Areas set their own deadlines for entries.

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: (Next Page)

Student's Name:

Grade:

Student's Address/Parents' Email, Phone:

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 compete in the Area contest.
- District contests may be conducted at any time during the school year provided that District winners are determined before the Area deadline. The original copy of the winning essay from the District must be sent to the Area Chairman.
- Districts may present awards they deem appropriate.
- Each word is counted as a word regardless of number of letters in the word.

Area Contest:

- Each Area Chairman will appoint a judging committee to select the Area winning essay from submitted District entries.
- The winning essay from each Area must be sent to the Division of Soil and Water Conservation on or before **April 20**. Retain a file copy of the winning essay and send the original.
- Areas may present awards 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. Winners will be announced within 20 days.
- State prizes as determined by the Associated will be:
 - First Prize: \$200 cash or check
 - Second Prize: \$100 cash or check
- Certificates will be given to all state-level participants.

**ESSAY CONTEST
N.C. ASSOCIATION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**



JUDGE: _____ GRADE: 6, 7, 8, 9-12

DATE: _____

Essay Entry Number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
CONSERVATION MESSAGE & ORIGINALITY: 50 points Message shows clear understanding of why this natural resource is important & explains how people can & should conserve this natural resource. Entry expresses the contest theme in a fresh, inventive, or novel way of using independent thought and creative imagination, and using the unexpected to full advantage.								
WRITING STYLE: 20 points Innovative style (keeps your interest); correct use of grammar, spelling, punctuation; readability (clear message, easily understood by reader)								
ORGANIZATION: 20 points Proper paragraph transitions; opening-closing tie-in; sticks to theme								
NEATNESS: 10 points								
SUBTOTAL:								
INFRACTIONS:								
PERFECT SCORE: 100 points	TOTAL:							
INFRACTIONS:	INCORRECT LENGTH: 5 POINTS	CURRENT TITLE NOT USED: 5 POINTS	INCORRECT PAPER SIZE: 2 POINTS					

(Adopted January 2014)