2009 Envirothon Current Issue Oral Exam Scenario

In November 2008, the governors of CT and MA announced the $4.4 million joint purchase of 450 acres of prime grassland habitat located in Suffield CT and Southwick MA. The property, formerly used for tobacco farming and located in the CT River valley, will constitute a new Wildlife Management Area (WMA) designed to support and enhance the populations of a group of threatened and endangered grassland species.

❖ Maps and further information are on ctenvirothon.org

The board of directors of this new WMA has engaged your consulting firm to help them develop a management and education plan to facilitate the biodiversity goals of the WMA. You are giving your initial presentation describing the plan to the board.

Your plan should be focused on two major goals:
1. Protect and improve the habitat to support biodiversity.
2. Educate the public (through interpretive signage, displays, or public outreach programs) in order to increase support for the biodiversity aims of the WMA.

Please be sure to address the following in your plan:

1. What is Biodiversity? Why is maintaining biodiversity important?

2. What is the importance of grassland habitat preservation to biodiversity in CT and MA? What are the main species that will benefit from grassland habitat preservation at this WMA?

3. Give a description of the kinds of threats that have put grassland habitats and the species that depend upon them at risk. Discuss the kinds of changes that are likely to pose threats in the future.

4. Discuss some management strategies that could be employed at the WMA to maximize biodiversity.

5. Discuss some education/public outreach strategies that could be used to support the goals of the WMA.