



CT Envirothon Alumni Spotlight: Elaina

1. What year, what school were you with, and what was the location where you competed in past CT Envirothons?

I attended Rockville High School and competed in Connecticut Envirothon competitions for RHS in 2011, 2012, and 2013. The CT Envirothon competition in 2011 was held at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme. The 2012 competition was held at the Winding Trails in Farmington. In 2013, the competition was held at Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area.

2. Did you attend any of the workshops? Which one?

I attended all of the workshops available during all three years. These included the forestry, aquatics, and wildlife workshops which were offered during the school year leading up to the competition.

3. How would you rate the workshops you attended? Can you give any specific feedback good or bad?

I thought that the workshops were immersive and informative. The workshop leaders were approachable, and I felt like I could freely ask questions about the subjects we were learning about. I appreciated that the workshops were held by experts in those fields, and I learned so much about the topics by attending these. I thought that the workshops really helped me prepare for the competition.

4. How would you rate the state competition? Can you give any specific feedback good or bad?

I thought that the state competition was very challenging. As much as the workshops prepared me, I had to do additional research and studying on the topics in order to feel confident going into the competitions. I really liked that the competition was as hands-on as it was at the workshops.

5. What college or institution of higher learning did you attend after high school?

I attended the University of North Carolina Wilmington for my undergraduate degree, and I recently finished a master's program from the University of New Haven.

6. What were your areas of study? Your final degree(s)?

I studied marine and environmental science in my undergraduate career and graduated with a bachelor's degree in marine biology from UNCW. From there, I studied forensic science at UNH and graduated with a master's degree in forensic science.



7. What is your current career?

I am currently a forensic scientist working as a DNA technician for the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) in Delaware.

8. Did your experiences with Envirothon have any impact on who you are now as a person? Career wise? Environmentally conscious wise?

Envirothon helped me become who I am today. It was an outlet where I could focus on areas of science that interested me but that were not necessarily taught in classes at school. This led me to follow my passion for the natural sciences. I learned how to work as a team, how to become a better leader, and was afforded the opportunity to develop public speaking skills. Above all else, I learned about our environment and learned to be aware of how we can make better choices in order to preserve our world.