



CT Envirothon Alumni Spotlight: Mackenzie

1. What inspired you to participate in Envirothon?

I've always been a nature nerd and grew up hiking, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors. When I first heard about Envirothon, I thought it would be a great way to learn more about CT wildlife and habitats, grow my understanding of the natural world, and meet others who shared similar passions.

2. What year and what school did you attend when you participated?

I participated in the 2010 and 2011 Envirothon and attended Coginchaug Regional High School.

3. What were your areas of focus in Envirothon?

Aquatics and wildlife

4. Which workshops did you attend – and can you give any specific feedback on them? For example – did you learn any skills that you currently use?

All of them! I found the workshops held at UConn Avery Point and Sessions Woods to be most memorable. The workshop experience offered by Envirothon introduced me to aspects of the natural world I didn't normally interact with or think of – like ecosystems within tidal marshes, or soil horizons, or how to use a Biltmore stick. Sure, I was familiar with the woods in my backyard or the lakes I'd fish, but Envirothon helped me gain a better understanding and appreciation of the broader natural world in Connecticut. I still carry that appreciation with me today.

5. What college or institution of higher learning did you, or are you attending, and the area(s) of study?

Southern Connecticut State University: English major, journalism minor.

6. What degree(s) do you hold?

Bachelor's

7. What is your current career?

Digital Strategies Manager for Covenant Living Communities and Services

8. How did your CT Envirothon experiences impact your life? (Career wise, Environmental Awareness or some other way?)

CT Envirothon helped me gain a better appreciation of the natural world and the many different ecosystems and habitats we have in our state. Much of what I learned continues to inform my day-to-day life—whether it is identifying a bird I see out the window at work, or a cool seedpod I find on a hike. My experience also impacts how I live and maintain my home. I remember one of the years I attended, we were tasked with coming up with a watershed plan to prevent runoff and pollution. I learned about the dangers of fertilizer and runoff, and the ways we can help prevent watershed pollution by planting certain plants, studying the pitch of our yard for creating a rain garden, and greatly considering the chemicals and fertilizers we use. I feel like I am more environmentally conscious and responsible thanks to what I learned as a part of Envirothon.