



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2010

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**100 Area High School Students Compete at Southwestern
Maine Envirothon Hosted by Poland Spring**
Sustainable Groundwater Use is the Focus of the Competition

POLAND SPRING, MAINE – Poland Spring hosted 100 high school students and 30 volunteers at the 2010 Southwestern Maine Envirothon competition on Wednesday. The event was held on the grounds of historic Poland Spring Museum/Environmental Education Center and Preservation Park. The day's competition was planned and coordinated by a team of partners from Androscoggin Valley, Cumberland, Franklin, Oxford and York County Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Participants included 17 teams of young people from the following 10 high schools across southern and central Maine: Jay, Lewiston, Bonny Eagle, Greely, Mt. Ararat, Westbrook, Lake Region, Dirigo, Lisbon, and Casco Bay High Schools as well as the Science Explorer Post #897 (Farmington) and Boghaunter Home School (Casco and Gray).

Envirothon, the largest high school environmental education program in North America, is a natural resource problem solving competition for student in grades 9 through 12. In the outdoor setting at Preservation Park, student teams were tested in five natural resource areas: aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a current national environmental issue.

This year's national environmental issue – protecting groundwater through urban, agricultural, and environmental planning – was a perfect opportunity for Poland Spring to increase their involvement and build on their previous support of the Envirothon program.

Tish Carr, state Envirothon Coordinator, lauded Poland Spring for its commitment to sustainable groundwater use and support for environmental education. “We are proud to have a strong partnership with Poland Spring, a company that has focused on good natural resource stewardship here in our state for more than 165 years. Poland Spring's commitment to Envirothon helps to ensure the continued value of Maine's natural resources and the interconnectedness of all life systems.”

“Poland Spring’s business depends on ensuring Maine’s groundwater resources stay clean, pristine, and sustainable for the long term,” said Heather McBean, Poland Spring’s Environmental Education Programs Manager. “We are proud to be part of programs like Envirothon that teach Maine’s young people about water quality, conservation, and the environment. This helps to ensure that the next generation will have the knowledge and skills to protect water resources in the future.”

Poland Spring has played a prominent role in educating young people to appreciate and conserve Maine’s water resources through its own hands-on education programs including *Trout in the Classroom/Brookie Buddies*, “*Make a Splash*,” and other statewide water festivals. Poland Spring also provides major funding to environmental stewardship and sustainability programs like the Gulf of Maine Research Center’s *LabVenture* program and to Ferry Beach Ecology School.

In addition to being Envirothon’s host and a major corporate sponsor, Poland Spring also offered a guided tour of the Poland Spring Museum for adult advisors and volunteers, and provided lunch for students, volunteers, and adult advisors. Heather McBean is also just one of the natural resource management professionals who volunteered their time today to work directly with student participants at the competition.

The top four winning teams at the Southwestern Maine competition were: First place – Boghaunter Home School, a home school team out of Casco and Gray, Maine; Second Place – Mt. Ararat High School, team one; Third Place – Jay High School, team two; Fourth Place – Lisbon High School. These four teams will go on to compete in the State competition at Husson University in Bangor on May 27. The winning team at the State competition will then head to the North American competition in California in early August.

ABOUT POLAND SPRING’S EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES: Poland Spring is playing a prominent hands-on role in teaching Maine students to appreciate and conserve water resources. Poland Spring’s water education team teaches awareness and stewardship in a variety of settings across Maine including:

- In the company’s *Trout in the Classroom/Brookie Buddies* grade school program
- With visiting groups of students, teachers and parents who tour the Poland Spring Museum in Poland
- At children’s water festivals held at the University of Maine in Orono and Portland
- At Poland Spring’s two annual “Make A Splash” festivals where 300 grade school students participate in hands-on water education activities
- Upon request from teachers statewide

Poland Spring financially supports a number of environmental education programs statewide, some including:

- Providing major funding for the Gulf of Maine Research Institute that enables fifth and sixth graders from every community in Maine to travel to Portland and learn about natural resources in the Gulf of Maine.
- Providing funding to ensure that every sixth grader in Poland, Mechanic Falls, and Minot to attend a three-day residential training at Ferry Beach Ecology School
- Distributing Project WET water education kits on World Water Day to every fourth grade student in the communities of Hollis, Buxton, Standish and Limington.

For more information about Poland Spring in Maine visit <http://www.PolandSpringWorksforMaine.com>.