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Middle Republican Natural Resources District

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For Immediate Release

Wauneta-Palisade Runners-Up at State Envirothon

Halsey – For a second year running, the Wauneta-Palisade High School Envirothon team finished a very close second place to Norris High School, who will represent Nebraska at the Canon National Envirothon at Southwest Missouri State College in Springfield, Missouri. Students from Wauneta-Palisade were among the 10 teams who took part in the recent Nebraska State Envirothon, held Saturday, May 7th at the State 4-H Camp near Halsey.

The Envirothon is a program for 9th-12th grade students to learn more about our natural environment. Five-member teams compete in seven areas of environmental studies: soil, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, range, and this year's current environmental issue, Managing Cultural Resources. Students compete in regional contests that test their knowledge on a wide array of subjects relating to natural resources and the environment. Wauneta-Palisade's team was the regional champion of the Mid-Plains Regional Contest, which took place at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis earlier this year. The winners of each region and 7 wildcard teams then compete at a state competition. Other regional schools participating in the State Envirothon were Southwest High School and Arapahoe High School, who were both extended Wildcard invitations. Medicine Valley High School and Hayes Center were also invited but were unable to compete.

An oral team presentation is also part of the state contest. This year, teams were required to analyze "Old Baldy" in Boyd County, giving their recommendations on how to protect this area's historical and scenic benefits while considering agriculture and protection for endangered species. Judges were local representatives of the NRCS and Nebraska's NRDs. Wauneta-Palisade's presentation earned them first place in this year's current environmental topic, Managing Cultural Resources. Orals Judge Rob Bozell of the Nebraska State Historical Society complimented the team on their superior

performance. “That was about the most concise and accurate definition of the National Register of Historic Places that I’ve ever heard. I don’t have any questions for you. You’ve covered it all.”

Though students participated earlier this year in an Envirothon Training Session, a pilot program organized by the Middle Republican and Twin Platte Natural Resources Districts, Regional Envirothon Coordinator Kara Gall said that training for an Envirothon Competition takes place mostly on the students’ watch. “The Envirothon covers a broader range of natural resources topics than students are exposed to in a single High School science or VoAg class. In order to do well, there’s a significant amount of learning and preparation that takes place outside of the formal classroom environment. All of our area Envirothon coaches are doing a tremendous job integrating natural resources topics into their curriculum. The extra effort that Wauneta-Palisade coaches Teresa Hayes and Dan Andrews made has obviously paid off. They have a strong team – a young team – with four years of competition ahead of them.”

The Wauneta-Palisade Envirothon Team consists of freshmen Katie Erickson, Brennan Keiser, Jesse Skelton, and James Strand and sophomore Luke Wright.

Sponsors for the Nebraska Envirothon are the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, Nebraska’s Natural Resources Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Society for Range Management, University of Nebraska Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nebraska Forest Service, Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Public Power District, and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

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