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Gatton Academy students take first at Kentucky Envirothon

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From left are Gatton Academy students Nishu Anekere, Dunil Kasturiratna, Marcus Negron, Aidan Kash and Keegan Congleton.

Five students from the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science took first place at the Kentucky Envirothon Competition on May 18-19 at North Central 4-H Camp in Carlisle.

The team, sponsored and coached by the Warren County Conservation District, will now compete at the North American Envirothon at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, in late July.

Penny Warwick, district technician with the conservation district and coach of the winning team, said Envirothon is North America's largest environmental education competition for high school students.



This year's team, Nishu Anekere, Dunil Kasturiratna, Marcus Negron, Aidan Kash and Keegan Congleton, defeated almost 30 high school teams from across the state.

"They were very excited to win this year's competition," she said. "One team member in particular was on cloud nine. He was disappointed they didn't win last year, but was so happy to get the win this year."

Warwick said students who wish to compete in Envirothon begin preparing at the beginning of the school year.

"We give the students about a month to settle in to the Gatton Academy," she said. "Then a member from the previous year will set up an Envirothon Club. The

students will come to practices and meet once a week.”

They participate in hands-on training, compete at the regional level and then move on to the state level in May, she said.

The competition tests the students’ knowledge of soils, aquatics, wildlife, forestry and a current issue, which was “Waste to Resources” this year.

She said that during the competition, students completed one test in each topic and worked together to answer questions.

They complete hands-on experiments, use critical thinking and analysis and are judged on an oral presentation and responses to questions posed by a panel of judges.

Members of the team are currently preparing for the North American Envirothon.

“These kids are so smart that they are getting ready for the competition on their own during their summer vacations,” Warwick said. “I will stay in contact with them over the summer and they will study on their own.”

She said this is the second time a team from Gatton Academy has won first place in the state competition, with the last win being in 2017. They had placed second every year since then.

Warwick has been pleased with the success of this year’s team.

“They are just so bright and so awesome to work with,” she said.

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