



## 2008 Wisconsin Envirothon Oral Topic

### Recreational Impacts upon Natural Resources

#### The Team Oral Competition:

The oral presentation segment contains twice as many points as the individual testing stations. Maps and other visuals shall be no larger than 22" x 28" on poster or tag board or equivalent material. There is no access to electronic media. All five members of the team must verbally participate in the oral presentation. Your team will have ten minutes to present your Recreational Impacts Report.

You may cite outside reference materials and sources. The score sheet to be used by the judges is attached.

*Recreation, whether active or passive, is vitally important to everyone and offers physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits. The amount of time and money people spend on recreation is rising, along with the diversity of recreational opportunities. No matter the form of recreation, humans are consumers and leave behind some trace upon the earth. This 'trace' often grows considerably as the number of people using that resource increases and can negatively impact vital natural resources. In addition, outdoor recreation in Wisconsin is quickly approaching a user compatibility crossroads. Motorized users that favor the use of ATVs, dirtbikes, and snowmobiles are increasingly at odds with hikers, bicyclists, cross country skiers and wildlife watchers. As the number of different recreational activities increases and new recreational technologies are developed, public lands are facing pressure from an increasing number of different user groups. Interactions between these groups are frequently marked by competition over land use, access, and environmental impact.*

#### Your project:

The 55 miles of Gandy-Dancer Trail between St. Croix Falls and Danbury is a State-owned, locally maintained multiple use recreational trail. It represents an example of a linear public park that supports seasonally segregated recreational uses. In the summer, the trail is closed to motorized vehicles and is used by bicyclists, hikers, runners, and wildlife watchers. During winter periods with sufficient snow cover, snowmobilers are also allowed to use the trail.

Assume that you are an outside consultant team that has recently been hired by the local units of government charged with trail maintenance and management, while at the same time forwarding your own interests in preserving the natural and cultural resources of the area. Your task is to provide outreach education and practical suggestions to help manage recreational use conflict and minimize environmental impacts along the trail while increasing overall trail usage.

**In your presentation, you will want to:**

1. Compare and contrast alternative recreational trail uses with respect to the surrounding set of natural resources, focusing on their environmental implications. Examine land usage and soil patterns; trail surface maintenance concerns, current and predicted water quality and quantity issues; wildlife needs and concerns; and relationships between native and non-native vegetation of an area.
2. Discuss the social, cultural, and economic elements that help explain both motorized and non-motorized user behavior and attitudes. In particular, what elements of competitive, antagonistic, and complementary behavior could provide recreation managers an ability to manage recreation for multiple uses?
3. Examine unique challenges for recreation and natural resource managers in Northwestern Wisconsin, focusing on management concerns in the face of increasing recreational use pressures. Be able to evaluate data to estimate and recommend a future management plan for a selected site.
4. Identify key stakeholders in the business of recreation and tourism, including values and positions each holds toward outdoor recreation, natural resources conservation, and alternative recreational user groups.
5. Describe technological aspects of new and alternative forms of outdoor leisure demands with respect to the impact of mass recreation and commercial tourism on land and associated natural resources.

**Relevant resources:**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – Bureau of Parks & Recreation:

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/>

Wisconsin 2005-2010 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/planning/scorp/>

Gandy Dancer Trail:

<http://www.polkcourtytourism.com/gandydancer.html>

<http://www.burnettcounty.com/tourism/trail.html>

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/specific/gandydancer/index.html>

Rails to Trails Conservancy:

<http://www.railtrails.org/index.html>

Any literature on integrative tourism planning.