Science Societies

Results of the Region 5 Collegiate Soil-Judging Contest

By Kerry Clark

November 19, 2020



The winning team from the University of Minnesota; l to r: Hannah Anderson, Willa Nagel, Christina Berg (kneeling in front), Zack Pederson, Nic Jelinski (coach), Abbie Clapp, Geneva Nunes, Anjel Chavez, and Chris Macke. Not pictured: Aaron Hyams (could not participate due to COVID contact).

The Region 5 Collegiate Soil-Judging Contest took place during the week of 4–10 October and was hosted by the University of Missouri and the Missouri Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The COVID-19 pandemic prevented an in-person contest, so cores of 10 Missouri soils were collected in plastic liners by NRCS lead Mark Abney and his staff using a Giddings probe and then delivered to the participating schools: the University of Missouri, Iowa State University, the University of Minnesota, South Dakota State University, Kansas State University, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, and the University of Nebraska–Omaha.



Kansas State University student Jagger Borth examines a soil core for the Region 5 Soil-Judging Contest.

Contestants were able to use the cores to determine all contest properties except for landform, landscape position, and slope. Participants at each school judged two individual and three group soil cores while using social distancing and other COVID-19 precautions such as masks, hand washing, and working outside.

The University of Minnesota was the big winner, finishing in first overall and first for group judging. Additionally, Minnesota students took home awards for the top four individual places with Geneva Nunes earning first, Abbie Clapp second, Hannah Anderson third, and Anjel Chavez fourth.

Fifth place for individual judging went to Katie Fross from Kansas State University. The Iowa State University team finished second for group judging, and the Kansas State University team finished second overall. The University of Missouri team was awarded

third place for both group judging and for the overall contest. Overall scores are a combination of group and individual scores.

All Region 5 teams are hoping for a national contest to be held in spring of 2021! The fall 2021 Region 5 contest will be hosted by the University of Minnesota and is open to any institution of higher education in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, or Minnesota. Please contact Nic Jelinski at the University of Minnesota for information on joining the 2021 Region 5 contest. Region 5 coaches would be happy to work with schools new to soil judging to help build your teams. It is not necessary that students be from agricultural schools. The University of Nebraska–Omaha has made a great addition to Region 5 with a team of geologists. We all share a common love and respect for soil, the world's greatest natural resource.

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BULLETIN SERIES OF PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES, 10.51889/2959-5762.2024.84.4.037, **84**, 4, (2024).

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