Science Societies

# Results from the 2026 Northeast Regional Soil Judging Contest

**November 13, 2026**



*Individual judging underway at the 2026 Northeast Regional Soil Judging Contest.*

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The 2026 Northeast Regional (Region 1) Soil Judging Contest was held on Friday, September 25 in the vicinity of Waldorf, MD, and was hosted by the University of Maryland (UMD) in College Park. A total of 85 students representing 11 universities participated in the event. The groups spent two full days at practice sites on

Wednesday and Thursday where they examined 11 pits at the William S. Schmidt Outdoor Education Center in Prince Georges County and at the Charles County Soil Conservation District demonstration farm. The contest was held on a private farm in Charles County. During the morning of the contest day, half the students were engaged with describing and interpreting the three “individual” pits, while the other half were completing the “group judging” portion (two additional pits). Then in the afternoon, they traded places to complete the competition.



*Coach Steve Dadio (Delaware Valley University) in the process of bailing one of the practice sites on the floodplain of Zekiah Creek.*

The soils were formed in coastal plain and alluvial sediments, sometimes with a covering of wind-blown loess or human-transported materials. The challenge of the competition was enhanced by the presence of several fragipans in practice and contest sites, common among the soils of southern Maryland. The two inches of rain that fell from Monday night through Wednesday noon before the contest created a few logistical challenges, including the need for periodic bailing at some of the practice sites, but teams rallied to the occasion. By the day of the contest, which was picture perfect with blue skies and temperatures in the low 70s, only one of the pits required some pumping.

Individual judging honors went to Andrew Heffner, UMD (first); Helen McConville, UMD (second); Anya Olson, UMD (third); Jed Dreher, Penn State (fourth); and Adriana Schulman, UMD (fifth).

Group judging honors went to the University of Maryland A team (first), University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown A team (second), University of Rhode Island A team (third), SUNY Fredonia (fourth), and Delaware Valley University A Team (fifth).



*Everyone gathered for the awards presentations at the close of the day.*

The top five teams (overall) who qualified for the national contest next March in Ft. Collins, CO were University of Maryland (first), Penn State University (second), University of Rhode Island (third), University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown (fourth), and Delaware Valley University (fifth).


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