

## Maryland Soil Judgers Head to the Nationals

The Maryland soil judgers placed 3<sup>rd</sup> overall among a field of 13 teams from nine universities at the NE regional soil judging competition this past Friday September 29, 2023. This qualified the University of Maryland (UMD) to represent the NE region at the 62<sup>nd</sup> National Soil Judging Competition to be hosted by Iowa State University next April. This year's UMD squad of judgers included five veterans and 10 brand new judgers. Maryland had four individuals among the top 10 (Alex Quigley – 4<sup>th</sup>; Andrew Weiss – 6<sup>th</sup>; David Hutch – 8<sup>th</sup>; Jason Manzon – 9<sup>th</sup>) and another 3 among the top 15 (Gina Jacob – 11<sup>th</sup>; Gabe Acevedo – 12<sup>th</sup>; Ellie Rogers – 15<sup>th</sup>) which helped UMD move ahead of the Univ. of Rhode Island (4<sup>th</sup> place) and qualify for the national competition. The Univ. of Delaware finished in 1<sup>st</sup> place with Delaware Valley Univ. close behind in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Also participating were Bloomsburg Univ., Univ. of Pittsburgh Johnstown, Penn State Univ., Brooklyn College and Alfred Univ.

This year's contest (hosted by Penn State Univ.) was held in the vicinity of Clearfield, PA where soils were mostly formed in such parent materials as shale and sandstone residuum and colluvium, but also included anthropogenic soils formed in strip mine spoil (human transported materials). In the field, students mostly saw Ultisols and Entisols, and fragipans were an ever-present challenge. A soil with a shallow, intact coal seam was a surprise and interesting twist in one of the practice pits. The contest itself was held at Simon B. Elliot State Park.

Other top 10 individual finishers included representatives from the Univ. of Rhode Island (1<sup>st</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>), Univ. of Delaware (2<sup>nd</sup>), Penn State Univ. (3<sup>rd</sup>), and Delaware Valley Univ. (5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>) with individual scores tightly grouped. In the end, the group judging portion seemed to separate the top teams. This year's team was coached by Dr. Martin Rabenhorst (ENST) with assistant coaches: Grace Bodine (ENST, MS student) and Jocelyn Wardrup (ENST PhD student).

The 62<sup>nd</sup> (2024) National competition will be hosted by Iowa State Univ. and will be held the week of April 21-26 in the vicinity of Ames, Iowa. The Terrapin Judgers will take a little time off this fall before they jump back into preparations for the Mollisols of Iowa in an attempt to defend their reign as 2023 National Champions. UMD extends a special thanks to Dr. Drohan (Penn State Univ.), Soil Hub (Michael Callahan) and the PA Association of Professional Soil Scientists (PAPSS) for making this regional contest possible.



Terrapin soil judgers qualify for the nationals – heading to Iowa. Front Row: Jocelyn Wardrup (Asst. Coach), Alex Quigley (4<sup>th</sup>), Nicko Kioutas, Jason Manzon (9<sup>th</sup>); Middle Row: Grace Bodine (Asst. Coach), Samantha Chang, Rachel Hillman, Violet O'Neil, Gina Jacob (11<sup>th</sup>), Cole Chapman, Ellie Rogers (15<sup>th</sup>), Spencer Goldberg; Back Row: Kelsey Genovese, Kate Latham, Gabe Acevedo (12<sup>th</sup>) Andrew Weiss (6<sup>th</sup>), Martin Rabenhorst (Coach), David Hutch (8<sup>th</sup>).