

General Rules and Regulations

I. Contestants and Eligibility

- A. A county Junior or Senior team consists of no less than three and no more than four official entrants who are 4-H members in their county during the current year.
- B. Competing individuals must be official entrants who are 4-H members in their county during the current year. An individual participant may also be a member of the county team.
- C. All individual and team members must be bona fide 4-H Club members who are actively enrolled in a 4-H project or activity. 4-H membership must be through one of the Cooperative Extension Service's 75 county 4-H programs in Arkansas. A youth becomes a 4-H club member when he/she completes an individual enrollment form, CES-617, which must be on file in the county extension office.
- D. Age requirements:
 - a. Senior individuals or team members are youth who in the contest year are age 14 as of January 1 until December 31 of the year they celebrate their 19th birthday.
 - b. Junior individuals or team members are youth who in the contest year are age 9 as of January 1 until December 31 of the year they celebrate their 14th birthday.
- E. All individual and team members must declare a "home county" for membership in order to qualify for competition. Members cannot compete for awards in more than one county during the contest year.

II. Registration

- A. County entries must be submitted to the state 4-H office on an official entry form (FY4-H-636) by the specified due date (typically the first day of the month before the contest). Entries received after the deadline will be charged a late fee.
 - a. Counties should collect in advance and deposit all monies from individuals required for registering for the event. A bill will be issued to the county after the event.
 - b. An original form must be submitted to the state 4-H office. Faxed registrations (fax: 501-671-2028) will assist with planning and organization, but the original form will serve as the official entry and be used for calculating registration fees.
 - c. One check per county will be due upon receipt payable to the "Arkansas 4-H Foundation."
 - d. The refund policy is as follows: 100 percent refund for 15 or more working days before the contest, 50 percent refund for 7 to 14 working days before the contest, and no refund for cancellation from 0 to 6 working days before the contest, except for personal or family illness, or death in the immediate family.
 - e. No switching of team members 14 days prior to contest.

- B. Every person who attends a 4-H WHEP state practice session or contest must be listed on the official entry form prior to the event. This includes 4-H'ers, coaches, parents, siblings, and county extension agents. No "walk-up" registrations are accepted.
- C. Official entry forms are available to 4-H youth and leaders through county extension offices. A county agent must sign the registration form to be valid.

III. General Contest Rules

- A. Only contestants and designated officials shall be within the perimeter of an activity. All adults, except contest officials, will be separated from the contestants at all times while the contest is in progress.
- B. Contestants compete in individual and team activities. Those who sign up as a team are also competing as individuals. Individuals who sign up without a team can also compete. Seniors who enter as individuals and whose county does not have enough participation to support a team will be grouped with individuals from other counties so that they may also compete in Activities IV and V.
- C. Senior contestants work independently on Activities I (Wildlife Identification), II (General Wildlife Knowledge), III (On Site Recommendation of Wildlife Management Practices) and V (Oral Defense). No talking is allowed.
- D. Senior contestants working as teams on Activity IV (Written Wildlife Management Plan) will be allowed to talk with team members.
- E. All contestants must provide their own pencils and clipboards. Extra pencils or pencil sharpeners will not be available at the contest. Contestants are not allowed to have any electronic devices including cell phones, PalmPilots, BlackBerries, MP3 players, etc. with them.
- F. Contestants are encouraged to wear field clothing and heavy shoes, as the contest will be held outside.
- G. The contest will not be canceled because of inclement weather, unless lightning or heavy thunderstorms are in the immediate area. Contestants should come prepared. Bring rain gear and plastic to cover the clipboard.
- H. Each year, a region is selected for the contest and announced well in advance of the contest date. Regions found in Arkansas are eastern deciduous forest, southeast mixed and outer coastal plain forest, wetlands, tallgrass prairie, and urban. Only those species which occur within the selected region are used in the contest. An exception is species listed for the urban region which are always included in Activity 1 (Wildlife Identification).
- I. An official committee scores the contest and tabulates the results. All decisions of the scoring committee are final. Interference with the scoring committee by contestants, parents, leaders, coaches or others associated with a team or individual will result in disqualification of that team or individual.

- J. The team coach is the only individual who can issue protests about the contest. All protests must be made to the contest coordinator (protest judge) at any time prior to the awards ceremony the day of the contest. Protests disregarding these procedures will not be considered. Protests and challenges will be decided by a review board appointed by the protest judge. Their decisions are final.
- K. A signed code of conduct form must be on file in the county extension office prior to participation and will be used as the official document for dealing with infractions by 4-H members. If a 4-H member is found in violation of the code of conduct and receives discipline issued by a review board, his/her parents will be notified, and the 4-H member may be sent home immediately at the parents' expense and may be suspended from participating in future 4-H activities.

IV. Awards

- A. Every contestant receives a certificate of participation in the state contest. Typically these are dispatched to the county office after the state contest is held.
- B. Senior **individuals** achieving the highest accumulative score for Activities I, II and III are recognized. First, second, third, fourth and fifth places will be awarded. In case of a tie, the individual with the highest score in Activity III will be declared the winner. If a tie remains, the individual with the highest score in Activity II will be declared the winner. If a tie remains, the individual with the highest score in Activity I will be declared the winner. If the tie cannot be broken, both will be declared winners.
- C. Senior **teams** with the highest overall score are recognized. First, second, third, fourth and fifth places will be awarded. The Senior team score will be the sum of the three highest individual scores on the team plus the team score for Activity IV (Wildlife Management Plan) and Activity V (Oral Defense). If a team has a fourth member, the lowest accumulative individual score will be dropped. In case of a tie, the team with the highest score in Activity IV will be declared the winner. If a tie remains, the team with the highest accumulative individual scores in Activity III will be declared the winner. If a tie remains, the team with the highest accumulative individual scores in Activity II will be declared the winner, and so on, until the tie is broken. If the tie cannot be broken for the Senior teams, a coin toss will be used to determine the winner.
- D. The Senior team with the highest overall team score that meets the following eligibility requirements will be offered the opportunity to represent Arkansas at the National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Invitational.
- Contestant must not have reached his or her 19th birthday as of January 1 of the year in which the National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Invitational is held.
 - All contestants must be members of Arkansas 4-H during the year in which the National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Invitational is held.
 - The team must be certified as the official state entry by the assistant director – 4-H youth development or by a person designated by the state 4-H leader.

- The contestant, his or her county 4-H staff member, and the assistant director – 4-H youth development must certify as follows on the application form:

"The contestant has not participated in post-secondary coursework in judging or selection in the subject area of their national 4-H competition, nor have they participated in training for a post-secondary judging team in the subject area of their national 4-H competition."

Violation will result in forfeiture of any awards or recognition that have been won in the National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Invitational.

- To remain eligible to compete in a national 4-H competitive event, a 4-H member MAY NOT a) work out with a collegiate judging team; and/or b) enroll in college coursework.
- The rules of the National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Invitational allow team members to enter only once. Therefore, a team member who has previously entered and won "first place - Senior team" at the Arkansas 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education contest cannot re-enter the Arkansas state contest again.
- To be named a state winner, in any category which provides a national trip, a 4-H member must sign a written agreement or contract agreeing to attend the national competition as a member of the Arkansas 4-H delegation. Specifically, 4-H members winning the state 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Contest must agree to participate in the national event as an Arkansas 4-H delegate and must not have competed in a prior 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Invitational. If the 4-H member signs the agreement but does not attend, he/she will be expected to reimburse 4-H for any cost incurred.
- In the event a team of three individuals wins the Arkansas contest or a fourth team member is unable to participate, the team coach can request that the state WHEP coordinator seek a fourth team member. The state WHEP coordinator will review the list of individuals who placed in the state contest. The state coordinator will contact the county agent of the Senior 4-H'er with the highest ranking and who either participated as an individual (i.e., not affiliated with a team) or participated in WHEP for the last time (i.e., graduating from high school). If the county agent is agreeable, the Senior contestant will be contacted and offered the opportunity to become a fourth member of the team. If that person refuses, invitations will continue until the list of eligible Seniors is exhausted. 4-H'ers who have the opportunity to participate on a county WHEP team are ineligible to become a fourth team member.
- The team coach and a member of the Arkansas 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Program Committee will accompany the winning Senior team to the Invitational, unless the committee forfeits this option. In that instance, the team coach selects an assistant coach who will attend the contest.
- Coaches and assistant coaches must either be an employee of the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service or have a current 4-H Volunteer Application Form, CES-643 on file in the county extension office and qualify under the CES Youth Protection Policy. Coaches and assistant coaches (extension employees excluded)

must be age 25 before chaperoning an out-of-state 4-H trip. Extension employees must have prior approval from their supervisor before attending.

- State contest funds, when available, are used to pay registration costs, including all meals and lodging at the Invitational. The team is responsible for travel expenses to and from the contest location and any extra expenses associated with registration fees. Many “fun-day” activities associated with the contest are part of the registration fee, but some activities (e.g., whitewater rafting) may require an extra charge. The Arkansas 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Program Committee reserves the right not to pay extra activity fees.
- The team coach must notify the 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Program Coordinator in writing within seven days after winning the contest of the team’s intention to attend the Invitational. If the winning team is ineligible, unable to attend, or no notification is received, the second place team will be given the opportunity to represent Arkansas at the Invitational. After being notified, this team will have seven days to notify the 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Program coordinator of the team’s intention to attend the Invitational. If the second place team is ineligible, unable to attend, or no notification received in 7 days, the third place team will be offered the opportunity, and so on, until a team agrees to attend the Invitational.
- Members of the winning Senior team are invited to continue participating in the 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Program as a student leader. Responsibilities include assisting with the practice session, state contest, and training the new state-winning Senior team.

V. On Contest Day

- A. All contestants must provide their own pen or pencil and clipboard.
- B. No electronic devices of any kind are allowed at the contest site. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones.
- C. Absolutely no talking by contestants will be allowed during the contest, except when working on designated team activities.
- D. Anyone caught cheating will be disqualified.
- E. Scorecards must be turned into an official judge immediately after each event.
- F. An official committee will score the contest and analyze results. Their decision is final.