

Preparing for Contests

Participants should read and understand the **Concepts and Terms** section of the manual. Leaders should explain the concepts and terms and provide local examples to clarify any misunderstanding. This section is important because the activities require understanding of these concepts and terms. Students should use these terms and concepts in their presentations during the contest.

Once the concepts are understood, leaders should review the appropriate regional information with participants. Leaders have the flexibility to use any of the information from the **Ecoregions** section they believe is appropriate. Leaders and participants should review plant succession, common plants, wildlife species and wildlife management practices. Specific information about habitat requirements and recommended wildlife management practices are found in the **Wildlife Species** section. Many teams/participants find it helpful to mark those species included in the ecoregion they are judging so the information is more easily found when studying.

Leaders can introduce participants to the contest activities through various exercises. Some make note cards or flash cards to help when studying. Conducting practice sessions at outdoor sites is helpful. Participants should get outside and find examples of the principles and practices discussed in this manual. Habitat requirements available for the species selected should be identified, as well as what features are missing. Leaders may use “quiz bowls” and question-answer sessions to measure learning. Field guides and other teaching materials may be used to further learning. The National WHEP website (www.whep.org), state wildlife agencies, state Extension wildlife specialists, and county Extension offices have information regarding the availability of learning materials. Collecting pictures or specimens of the species from several different sources will help with the identification portion of the test.

Local and state events may use different wildlife species and activities from those recommended in the manual. However, at the national event, all activities and only the wildlife species and wildlife management practices listed in this manual will be used.

Beginning and young participants should not be expected to perform all the activities. Organizers of local and state events may limit activities for junior division participants. Written management plans and oral reasons may not be appropriate for this age group. Participants in the national event will be expected to perform all of the activities in this manual.

General Rules and Guidelines

The national event will comply with all policies and guidelines for national 4-H competitive events.

I. Contestants and eligibility:

A. Each state is allowed to enter only one 4-H team and/or one FFA team. A team will consist of no less than three and no more than four official entrants who are 4-H or FFA members in their state during the current year. If a state is unable to assemble a team, it may send up to two 4-H individual contestants and/or two FFA individual contestants to participate in individual events only.

B. Contestants must have already passed their 14th birthday, and may not have reached their 19th birthday as of January 1 of the year of the Invitational.

C. An individual or team may participate in the National 4-H WHEP Invitational event only once during his/her 4-H or FFA career. A team (or individual) may not compete as a 4-H team (or individual) one year, then come back another year as an FFA team (or individual).

D. The team of contestants must be certified as the official state entry by the state Extension or FFA director, or by a person designated by the director. The individuals or team may be selected by any procedures a state considers appropriate. It is required that each state obtain medical authorizations for participants and accompanying adults.

E. If a participant has an Individual Education Plan, a copy of the IEP and any special accommodations must accompany the official entry for the team. Once the IEP and accommodations are received, they will be reviewed. The National WHEP Committee will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate participants with IEPs.

Contestants in the National 4-H WHEP Invitational must **not** have taken classes or participated in official post-secondary (university, college, junior college, or technical school) competitive events of a similar nature in the same subject matter area. Neither can participants be a member of a post-secondary team undergoing training in preparation for an event. For example, a contestant who has competed in an official collegiate wildlife contest, on or off campus, or taken college courses related to natural resources is ineligible to compete in the National 4-H WHEP Invitational. The state 4-H program leaders are responsible for determining the eligibility for participants in national 4-H competitive events from their respective states.

II. General contest rules and information:

The date, location, and ecoregion for the National Invitational will be announced no later than May 1.

A. State team entries must be submitted through the official entry process.

B. Each team can have no more than two adults serving as coaches or chaperones accompanying the team to the invitational.

C. Although there will be educational opportunities before the contest begins, all contestants should study this manual and be prepared before coming to the national event. Questions will not be allowed during the contest except for those related to contest procedure.

D. A materials packet to supplement this manual may be available for leaders and participants in advance of the national event. The packet may contain information on the ecoregion and wildlife species used in the upcoming event. The materials packet will be supplied by the Extension wildlife specialist, 4-H office, or other qualified personnel from the state hosting the national event.

E. Contestants will be required to adhere to the host state's Code of Conduct. No alcohol, tobacco, or drug use will be allowed during the event.

F. Contestants and coaches/chaperones are required to take part in all phases of the National Invitational, including the opening ceremony, educational program, contest, fun activities, coaches tour, and awards banquet.

On contest day:

A. All contestants must provide their own pencil and clipboard. However, no storage clipboards are allowed.

B. No electronic devices of any kind are allowed at the contest site. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones and iPods/mp3 players. No backpacks are allowed. Bags for medical reasons should be discussed with the National WHEP Committee before contest day.

C. Contestants will work independently on the individual activities. No talking by contestants will be allowed during the individual activities.

D. Anyone caught cheating will be disqualified at the discretion of the National WHEP Committee.

E. All adults, except contest officials, will be separated from contestants at all times while the contest is in

progress. All adults must participate in the designated coaches' activity during contest day.

F. An official committee will score the contest and analyze results. Their decision is final. After the event, individual and team scores will be made available to the teams. Contest score sheets, management plans, and sketches will **not** be distributed after the contest.

G. The team score will be the sum of the three highest scores in the individual activities, plus the team score for the management plan, which will include the top three scores for oral reasons.

H. Distribution of awards is determined by the state host. However, every National Invitational will recognize for 4-H and FFA:

Team awards

First Place

Second Place

Third Place

NOTE: If there are less than 4 teams competing, awards may be limited to the winning team only.

Individual awards

First Place Individual

Second Place Individual

Third Place Individual

NOTE: Individual awards will be determined by Activities I and II.