

March 8, 2021

TO: County 4-H and Ag Agents  
Past Coaches and Leaders  
FFA Advisors  
Biology Teachers

FROM: Drew Ricketts, Extension Wildlife Specialist, Dept. of Horticulture and Natural Resources

RE: Wildlife Habitat Education Program Virtual Contest – May, 2021

The 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Program is well established in Kansas and has over 10,000 participants nationwide. We have good participation from high schools, FFA groups and some 4-H clubs. For the past 30 years, Kansas has held state wildlife habitat evaluation contests in which the winning team was eligible to advance to the national contest. The contest is about teaching young people about wildlife, the needs of wildlife, and their habitat.

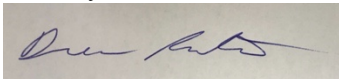
There are two age groups in the competition: 9-13 and 14-18 years of age. You can enter as a member of a team, such as your 4-H group, FFA group, or any group of 3-4 individuals. Alternatively, you can enter the contest as an individual. The major objectives are for youth to gain an understanding of wildlife management including ecological principles, basic life history of a variety of species, use of management techniques to enhance habitats, and for participants to develop leadership skills.

There are five parts to the contest: (1) wildlife identification; (2) general wildlife knowledge; (3) on-site recommendation of wildlife management practices; (4) writing a one-page management plan for a rural setting and; (5) defending that plan in an oral interview. The written management plan is a team activity. However, all team members will be expected to participate in the oral interviews.

All of the information needed to compete in the contest is contained in the National Wildlife Habitat Education Program Manual, 5th Edition/2020 Revision. The manual covers most regions of the United States. For this year's contest we will be using the "Eastern Deciduous Forest" section of the manual. The manual is available on line at [www.whep.org](http://www.whep.org). The Pandemic has forced many organizations to rethink how to safely host learning events and competitions during this trying time. The National WHEP Committee has decided to host a virtual competition during 2021, and KS WHEP will follow suit to provide a safe and consistent environment for our competition. To provide flexibility for completing the virtual competition, Wildlife Challenge (includes Parts 1 & 2), Management Recommendations, and Management Plan sections of the competition will be available for completion during May 1-7. Oral Reasons interviews will be conducted via Zoom on May 10 & 11. We are still finalizing a platform for the contest, and will ensure that it is accessible to all.

If you are interested in participating as a member of a team or as an individual in the 2021 contest, please contact Drew Ricketts, Extension Specialist, Wildlife, Room 2021 Throckmorton Hall, 1712 Claflin Road, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, or call me at (785) 532-1949 by April 15, 2021. As always, I would be happy to visit with any coaches that have an interest or questions about the program.

Sincerely,



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