



## 2006 Alabama Pilot Program for Forestry & Wildlife Judging Contests New Team Rules

Field Staff, State Staff and Volunteers had several meetings in 2005, to discuss issues associated with the previous "one judging team per county" rule. There are advantages and disadvantages to this policy and some people involved with the program wanted to discuss this policy and possibly develop a new, more inclusive policy that is more appropriate given the organization's move to regional programming. **We will put the changes into effect for the 2006 program year as a pilot.** The committee will meet soon after completion of 2006 Forestry Judging and Wildlife Judging to assess the pilot and make changes if needed.

### Situation:

All 4-H youth with an interest in Natural Resources should have the opportunity to be a part of a judging team if they so desire. Under our current policy, a county can only bring one 4-member team which must be designated prior to the state event. Any participants from that county beyond the 4-member team could only compete as individuals. This put coaches in the position of saying who could be on the team and who could not.

### The Accepted Recommendation/Criteria for the 2006 Pilot Program:

- A county or club may bring as many participants as they choose.
- The 4-member team will not be designated prior to the state event, all would compete equally.
- At the end of the first day, scores will be tabulated and the top four overall scoring individuals from each county or club will be determined and these four individuals will comprise the "official team" for that county or club.
- The team events will be conducted the second day with the top 4 scoring individuals from the previous day making up the "official team". Others can also participate in team events but the County can have only one official team. (Forestry knowledge bowl and site evaluation will be held the second day)
- The "official team" will have one drop score per event.
- A county or club could only win one placing (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th) with their "official team". All others may receive individual awards.

In short, a county could train all the 4-H'ers from their county who have an interest in Forestry or Wildlife Judging. The 4-H members *themselves* will decide who is on the "official team" by how well they

score at the state event. This process will encourage every club member to work hard right up to the state contest and not "slack off" because they did not "make the team". Coaches will not be put in the position of having to say who can be on the "official team".

### Clear Expectations for Pilot Program:

One point to consider is the possibility that a county may have two or more 4-H NREE (natural resources/environmental education) clubs within a county, led by two or more different 4-H Volunteers. This might *appear* to present a loophole so that a county could bring two teams. Therefore, the rule for this situation is that a County may bring more than one team only if the two groups conduct all practices, meetings, etc., totally separately – they are two totally different clubs.

In this situation, each club could bring all their participants have an "official team". Teams should be listed by the club name -- not the County name. (For example, Lee County could have two teams, but they might be called the Opelika Forestry Team and the Notasulga Forestry Team.)

*The rule stating that these must be totally separate clubs with different club leaders, and that the clubs may not practice together at the same time and location will be strictly enforced. Practicing together will constitute one County club – and thus only one official team for the entire County will be recognized at State contest.*

This process gives all 4-Hers the opportunity to be on a team, but also avoids the possibility of a county winning multiple team placings.

### Note from Dr. Lamar Nichols, State 4-H Leader:

*"This recommendation has the added benefit of moving us along the continuum toward more volunteer led programming where programming is designed around interests and needs for specific groups of youth with less emphasis on geographical boundaries. Some volunteers will be very happy to be general club leaders with members scattered across the opportunities in 4-H while others will be very focused on specific programming areas like natural resources or livestock or horse. We are already allowing programming across traditional geographical boundaries and I do not see this trend changing in the future because it offers more learning opportunities to youth."*

### Who Can Participate

Any Alabama young person may participate in any 4-H event. However, you must be a member of a chartered Alabama 4-H Club. It's easy and quick to join – just call or e-mail your county Alabama Cooperative Extension System Office for information (for contact information, go to [www.aces.edu/counties](http://www.aces.edu/counties)).

### **Who Can Participate, c'td.**

If you and your friends are interested, you might wish to start a 4-H Project Club that focuses on Forestry, Wildlife or Natural Resources. For more information, see **Starting a 4-H Club** ([www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/V/VOL-0004/](http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/V/VOL-0004/)). The **Forestry and Wildlife Judging Contests** are for Junior and Senior level 4-Hers. Your local Extension Office has information on all local and regional 4-H activities.

### **Levels of Competition**

For details on eligibility, see the [General Contest Policy](#).

- **Juniors:** 9 – 13 Years Old. Must be 9, 10, 11, 12, or 13 years old on January 1 of the current 4-H year. (Compete only at local and regional level).
- **Senior – Level I:** 14 – 15 Years Old. Must be 14 or 15 years old on January 1 of the current 4-H year.
- **Senior – Level II:** 16 – 18 Years Old. Must be 16, 17, or 18 years old on January 1 of the current 4-H year. Cannot compete after his or her year of graduation or completion of the GED, although a spring graduate may compete in summer regional or state events.

One Senior-level team in each event will represent Alabama at the respective National Contests.

### **2006 Contest Dates**

Due to scheduling challenges and changes to accommodate the pilot program, **please note that the weeks for this year's contests are different from the past!**

- Forestry Contest: June 1-2, 2006 (*Knowledge Bowl moved to June 2*)
- Wildlife Contest: June 20-21 (WMP's moved to June 20; Urban Plan moved to June 21; Field Trip added June 21).

### **For Specific Contest Rules, Go To:**

<http://www.aces.edu/fourh/NaturalResourcesandEnvironmentalEducationEducation.php> and scroll down the page to the "4-H Natural Resources Events & Adult Leader Trainings" section. You'll see the links for the *Forestry Invitational (Forestry Judging)* and the *Wildlife Habitat Invitational (Wildlife Judging) Contest*.

### **Parents' and Volunteers' Guide**

Like all 4-H projects, this activity is just for young people. It is expected that the young person create an original presentation. The role of adult helper is to support and encourage youth in their efforts, to ask and answer questions about the project, and to help youth learn specific techniques that they might use in their project.

### **Above and Beyond**

All 4-H projects can be taken "above and beyond" just being a short-term activity. Awards and recognition throughout Alabama 4-H are not based on how well you do in competitive events; they are based on your all-round community service, leadership, and project work. It is important to keep a record of your accomplishments and activities in 4-H.

- Put together a portfolio of ideas on how to communicate an important natural resources issue.
- Give a presentation of some aspect of Forestry or Wildlife.
- Take "magazine" photographs of nature, to include trees, and wildlife.
- Create a graphic novel confronting an environmental issue.
- Write a "point of view article" for a 4-H newsletter or your local paper.
- Turn that critical eye on your own project work to date. What keeps you interested in the topic? What are the strong points of your 4-H project work? Are you doing any service, leadership, or citizenship work in this area? Discuss with your parents or another adult or friend what new opportunities you could possibly explore in this area.
- Keep a field journal. Start by going to a park, arboretum, or wooded area. Take a field guide or two, and make some time to observe your surroundings. Take notes about the animals you see, the plants, time of day, weather conditions (sunny, windy, temperature), time of year, and how you felt that day. Every time you go to a similar setting, make entries in your field journal, and compare your experiences to previous ones.



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