



## MEMORANDUM

TO: 4-H and FFA Wildlife Habitat Education Program (WHEP) Coaches, State Coordinators, and National WHEP Committee Members

FROM: Adam Janke, National WHEP Committee

SUBJECT: 2023 National WHEP Contest

DATE: May 4th, 2023

This is the official announcement for the 2023 National 4-H WHEP Invitational, which will be held at the **Iowa Lakeside Laboratory in Milford, IA, July 30<sup>th</sup> – Aug 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.**

### CONTEST REGION

The region in which the 2023 contest will be held is **Great Plains Grassland – Tallgrass/Mixed Prairie**. We will be using the revised 2020 WHEP manual. The manual can be accessed at [www.whep.org](http://www.whep.org).

### LOCATION

The national event will take place in Milford, IA. Competition elements and meals will be at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory a field campus of public universities in Iowa (<https://iowalakesidelab.org/>). Participant and chaperones will stay primarily in lodging at the adjoining Lakeshore Center (<https://www.lakeshorecenteratokoboji.org/>), a 10 minute walk or short drive away.

### DATE

The 2023 National 4-H & FFA Wildlife Habitat Education Program Invitational will be held Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup> through Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>. All participants should plan to arrive between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup>. Participants should plan to depart after breakfast on Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## COST

\$200 per person (including chaperones and coaches)

Food and lodging will be provided during the Invitational. Each team is responsible for transportation expenses, liability coverage, etc. to and from the Invitational.

## DEADLINES

- June 1, 2023 – State’s intention to participate (form link below)
- July 1, 2023 – Online Registration
- July 8, 2023 – Paperwork and payment due (Checks should list **Iowa State University** as the payee and list **WHEP** on the memo line)

## INTENTION

Each state WHEP coordinator should notify us of your intention to attend by **June 1** by completing an online form at [https://iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_82BSvNoPdVODQwK](https://iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_82BSvNoPdVODQwK).

## REGISTRATION

Online Registration will open on **June 1** and is due on or before **July 1**. Registration will be limited to the first 96 coaches and youth. A state team consists of either 3 or 4 senior 4-H members or FFA contestants and 1 or 2 adult coaches/chaperones who are certified 4-H/FFA leaders from that state. Only one 4-H team per state and one FFA team per state may attend. Starting June 1, you will be able to register online at [www.whep.org](http://www.whep.org) by completing the appropriate forms. Print the forms using your browser before you submit.

Participants will be expected to have documentation of Health and Permission forms in accordance with their own state 4-H or institutional policies. **Please bring a copy of all youth and adult health forms and any IEP’s with you to the competition.**

Registration will be through Registration Services at Iowa State University. Details about payments and paperwork will be announced around June 1<sup>st</sup> to teams with declared intent.

Incomplete forms and/or lack of payment by deadline may result in an individual or team being disqualified from the Invitational.

## COACH SCREENING

Iowa 4-H rules requires all adult chaperones be screened prior to participating in a 4-H event. This screening process could include those associated with being a 4-H volunteer, FFA advisor, and/or a High School Ag. Teacher. You will be not be required to provide proof of screening with registration, as it will be expected that screening is done by your sponsoring organization (e.g., state 4-H, FFA, school) prior to the event.

## SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have any special needs or require special accommodations, please notify Cassie Young ([whep.org@gmail.com](mailto:whep.org@gmail.com)) as soon as possible and no later than **July 1**. Special needs include, but are not limited to, mobility, education, and lodging requirements. Please list and describe any special needs as best you can. You will be contacted by the contest committee for any clarifications.

## ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

Teams flying to the event have a few different options for nearby airports including Sioux Falls, SD (98 miles), Minneapolis, MN (177 miles), or Des Moines, IA (213 miles).

Registration and room check-in will start at 3:00 p.m. (CST). Specific information will be sent to the coordinating coach after registration. Plan on arriving between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. (CST) on July 30. Those arriving after 6:00 p.m. cannot be guaranteed supper on July 30. Participants depart after breakfast on Wednesday, August 2.

## LODGING

Lodging is available July 30 to August 2nd at the [Lakeshore Center at Okoboji](#). Lodging will be arranged for up to 4 participants and 2 coaches or chaperones per team. Lodging will be cabins with bunk beds. The cabins are equipped with air-conditioning and a split bathroom. Lodging will be assigned by gender. Chaperones will be housed with their team members. Teams from multiple states will have to share cabins. **Participants and chaperones must bring their own bed linens and towels.** Additional lodging for parents or chaperones will be the responsibility of individual attendees at local hotels or campgrounds.

## OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

We cannot accommodate non-participants at this event. **Families and individuals other than the 2 coaches/chaperones are not allowed to participate in any of the Invitational events other than the Banquet and Awards Ceremony.** Any family members who wish to attend the banquet and awards ceremony on Tuesday August 1<sup>st</sup>, can purchase tickets (\$25 each) in advance of the event. Ticket ordering information will be available on the website ([www.whep.org](http://www.whep.org)).

There are numerous hotels in Okoboji for non-participant family members. These often book quickly in the summer, so families are advised to book hotels soon if they intend on joining.

## COACHES TOUR

The coaches' tour will take place on Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. Coaches/chaperones will spend the day visiting nearby attractions. All coaches/chaperones are required to participate in the tour to ensure that in the event of an emergency, coaches/chaperones can be located quickly.

## EDUCATIONAL DAY

The Education Day will be Monday and will involve visits to local area wildlife conservation areas and learning from local wildlife researchers and managers. Some free time will follow the educational program in the late afternoon. Swimming is NOT allowed unless there is a designated lifeguard on duty and swimming permissions have been given.

## THINGS TO BRING

- Your state flag
- Share Fair items (foods, pins, stickers, mementos, unique items from your state, etc.)
- Field clothes and shoes/boots
  - *(This is important! Shorts and open shoes will not be allowed on the educational day or the contest day. Long-sleeved shirts and leather footwear are strongly recommended. This is your responsibility. We will not wait for individuals to go back to their rooms to change clothes.)*
- Bed Linens
- Towels
- Clothing for the awards banquet will be informal (**no formal dress**)
- Swimsuit and beach towel (optional, details on swimming forthcoming)
- Sunscreen, sunglasses, hat
- Insect repellent
- Raincoat
- Clipboard and pencils
- Camera (optional)
- Binocular (optional)
- Medications
- Health forms

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Adult coaches and chaperones are responsible for the actions of their youth and are expected to supervise them at all times except during the contest on Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. Coaches/chaperones will need to have their team members at the appropriate places on time. Please be mindful about gender composition of your team and chaperones to balance housing and supervision. Chaperones are responsible for their state's youth health and well-being during this event. Information regarding local health care options will be provided in coach welcome packets.

## SURROUNDING ATTRACTIONS

Any time block noted as "state delegation time" is time each state delegation may determine what they would like to do as a group. Those activities are not covered by the permissions or waivers provided during registration. There are a number of attractions and sites worth visiting while in Iowa. If you plan to stay longer or arrive before the event, visit <https://www.traveliowa.com/> for site-seeing and tourism opportunities. Information about the Iowa Great Lakes Region where we are hosting the competition is available at this site: <https://vacationokoboji.com/>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Questions regarding registration & contest material: Adam Janke ([ajanke@iastate.edu](mailto:ajanke@iastate.edu)) or Kaycie Waters ([kwaters@iastate.edu](mailto:kwaters@iastate.edu))

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