



MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Mallory Maher National WHEP Committee

SUBJECT: 2026 National WHEP Contest

DATE: April 27, 2026

This is the official announcement for the 2026 National 4-H WHEP Invitational, which will be held at the **South Carolina FFA Leadership Center, North Myrtle Beach, SC, July 26th – 29th, 2026.**

CONTEST REGION

The region in which the 2026 contest will be held is the **Southeastern Mixed and Outer Coastal Plain Ecoregion.** We will be using the revised 2026 WHEP manual. The manual can be accessed at www.whep.org.

LOCATION

The national event will take place in North Myrtle Beach, SC. Non-competition elements, meals, and lodging will be at the [South Carolina FFA Leadership Center](#). Competition elements will take place at a nearby Wildlife Management Area.

DATE

The 2026 National 4-H & FFA Wildlife Habitat Education Program Invitational will be held Sunday, July 26th through Wednesday, July 29th. All participants should plan to arrive between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 26th. Participants should plan to depart after breakfast on Wednesday, July 29th.

COST

\$250 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, 2026 (or within 1 week of your state contest, whichever falls later) – State's intention to participate (form link below)
- June 1, 2026 – Online Registration Opens
- July 1, 2026 – Paperwork and payment due (Checks should list **Clemson University** as the payee and list **National WHEP** on the memo line, Online payments are the preferred method of payment and will be collected through the South Carolina 4-H Eventbrite).

INTENTION

Each state WHEP coordinator should notify us of your intention to attend by **June 1** by completing an online form at <https://forms.gle/3zQk4yY8V8Hji8uY8>

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 can register online at 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 collected through Eventbrite and shared closer to the opening of registration. All information must be completed in Eventbrite.

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

ADULT SCREENING & CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

South Carolina 4-H rules require all adult chaperones to be screened and complete Child Protection Training prior to participating in a multiple-day, overnight event. This screening process and training could include those associated with being a 4-H or FFA volunteer, a County Extension Agent or an FFA advisor. You will be required to upload proof of screening and training with registration prior to the event.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have any special needs or require special accommodations, please notify Cassie Young (whep.org@gmail.com) as soon as possible and no later than **July 1**. Special needs include, but are not limited to, mobility, education, dietary, 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 Myrtle Beach International Airport (20 miles), Wilmington, NC (60 miles), or Charleston (120 miles). Columbia, SC and Raleigh, NC, airports are also options, about 3 hours away.

Registration and room check-in will start at 3:00 p.m. (eastern). Specific information will be sent to the coordinating coach after registration. Plan on arriving between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. (eastern) on July 26. Those arriving after 6:00 p.m. cannot be guaranteed supper on July 26. Participants depart after breakfast on Wednesday, July 29.

LODGING

Lodging is available July 26 to July 29st at the [South Carolina FFA Leadership Center, North Myrtle Beach, SC](#). Lodging will be arranged in bunk-style houses with bunk beds. The cabins are equipped with air-conditioning and a split bathroom. Lodging will be in 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 share cabins. **Participants and chaperones must bring their own bed linens, pillows, and towels.** Lodging for parents or chaperones other than the 2 registered 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, July 28th, can purchase tickets (\$25 each) during registration.

There are numerous hotels in North Myrtle Beach or Myrtle Beach for non-participant family members. These often book quickly in the summer, so families are advised to book hotels soon if they intend to join.

COACHES TOUR

The coaches' tour will take place on Tuesday, July 28th. 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. More information will be released soon.

EDUCATIONAL DAY

The Education Day will be on Monday and will involve learning from South Carolina wildlife researchers and managers. The morning session will feature a boat ride exploring South Carolina's coastal waterways. Free time will follow the educational program in the late afternoon and will include several options for on-site activities. 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 and pillow
- 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
- Additional packing recommendations from the FFA Camp can be found [here](#)

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, July 28th. 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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Questions regarding location & local logistics: Mallory Maher (mallord@clemson.edu)