

To: 4-H Agents, Program Assistants, Coaches, and Volunteers  
From: Martha Monroe, School of Forest Resources and Conservation  
Re: 2017 4-H Forest Ecology Contest

The 2017 4-H Forest Ecology Contest will be held at the Austin Cary Forest Learning Center off Waldo Road north of Gainesville Florida on April 8, 2017. Please register your contestants through 4-H Online before March 24, 2017 to avoid the late fee of \$30.00. Registration will take place through 4-H Online: <https://florida.4honline.com/>. Contact Ben Knowles (brk09@ufl.edu) if you have questions about registration or Tara Mercurio if you have special circumstances that delay your ability to identify contestants at the State 4-H office ([tarasmercurio@ufl.edu](mailto:tarasmercurio@ufl.edu)). There is a charge of \$5.00 per competing youth for registration, insurance, and snacks. All adults and youth observers must also register, but do not need to pay. **Advanced registration for all is mandatory.** No substitutions on competing teams will be allowed. Unregistered youth will not be allowed to compete on the day of the contest. Please designate the youth who require reading or writing assistance on the registration form and bring an adult to provide this service for a contestant in another county.

The purpose of the contest is to challenge youth to learn more about Florida's forests, to feel more comfortable outdoors, and to enjoy the varied and complex world of nature. Please see [http://sfrc.ufl.edu/extension/4h/contest\\_home.html](http://sfrc.ufl.edu/extension/4h/contest_home.html). This year all contestants will also be able to enter the Florida Nature Poetry Contest; please see the website for details: <http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/extension/4h/poetry/index.html>.

Check-in will be from 8:30 to 9:00 AM in the building lobby; the contest will begin promptly at 9:00 AM on the back deck. Youth will be assigned to a group to complete each of six stations. Each competitor should bring a clipboard, a pencil, a lunch, water bottle, and all their forest identification skills. A hat, sunscreen, and insect repellent are also recommended. Seniors should bring their own Biltmore stick.

Observers will be encouraged to hike a trail or wait on the deck while the contest is underway. When it has concluded, a station coordinator will be available to introduce each station to observers. Identification stations will be open for competitors to ask questions at this time. Counties are encouraged to bring non-competing youth to learn more about the Forest Ecology contest. Please register these youth by completing their registration as observers.

Like previous years, the bulk of the Forest Ecology contest will be testing identification skills. Youth will be asked to identify trees and non-woody plants from sample leaves and fruits, insects and diseases from damage, wildlife, and evidence of forest health. A map and compass section will test map symbols and compass and pacing skills. A multiple-choice portion of the contest will cover two ecosystems: upland hardwoods and mangrove forests. Juniors will learn about the ecosystems from adventure stories while Intermediates will read the standard text. For the identification stations, Juniors and Intermediates will be given a list of species from which they will copy the appropriate number -- they will not have to spell common names or know Latin names. Senior quiz sheets will have the list of common names, and youth will be asked to write the them. There will be from 10 to 25 questions on each of the six sections. Seniors will take a forest management quiz over information that

is also tested in the Quiz Bowl, instead of the ecosystem quiz. Information on the details of each component of the contest can be found at [http://sfrc.ufl.edu/extension/4h/contest\\_stations.html](http://sfrc.ufl.edu/extension/4h/contest_stations.html).

Seniors will also compete in the tree measurement station and Quiz Bowl. Clarifying information on both of these stations is available on the website.

Three age groups will follow the Florida 4-H categories. Youth will compete in teams of up to 4 individuals at the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior levels. **Juniors** are youth between the ages of 8 and 10 years; **Intermediates** are youth between the ages of 11 and 13; and **Seniors** are between the ages of 14-18 as of **September 1 of the current 4-H program year**. Youth are required to be registered and compete in their age category. Each county can register up to 24 youth in 2 Junior, Intermediate, and Senior teams and an additional 2 youth in each category as individuals, for a total of 30 youth. Individual youth may compete if there are not enough to form a team. Teams of a minimum of 3 youth may be registered, since the three highest scores from a 4-person team are used in competition. To help distribute the awards given to Senior individual and team winners, 4-H Senior individuals can take first place only once in the individual competition, but can return to compete in subsequent years to continue to test their skills. Winning Senior teams earn the opportunity to attend the National Forestry Invitational and members will not be eligible to compete in subsequent state contests.

A \$500 scholarship from the University of Florida's School of Forest Resources and Conservation will be offered to the high-scoring Senior Individual of the 4-H Forest Ecology Contest if he or she chooses to enroll at the University of Florida and declare a major in the School of Forest Resources and Conservation. The scholarship will be renewed for up to 3 additional years if a grade point average of 3.0 is maintained.

An award will be given to the highest scoring team from a county that has not participated in the Forest Ecology Contest in the last 2 years at any age level. Point values for each section may not be equal. Ties will be broken by using, the Tree Identification score first, Plant ID second, Ecosystem Quiz third, then Insect/Disease Identification, field quiz, and Map and Compass scores.

The Awards Ceremony will be held after lunch when all scoring is concluded. We anticipate this will be between 12:30 and 1:30 PM. Outdoor activities will be offered between the conclusion of the competition and the awards ceremony.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Martha Monroe at [mcmmonroe@ufl.edu](mailto:mcmmonroe@ufl.edu). Best wishes for your success, and I look forward to seeing you in April.

Most sincerely,



Martha Monroe

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