KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Agriculture
Department of Horticulture
and Natural Resources

February 27, 2026

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 Contest – March 24, 2026 at Milford Wildlife Area, Clay Center, KS

The 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 35 years, Kansas has held state wildlife habitat evaluation contests in which the winning team was eligible to advance to the national contest. The contest focuses on teaching young people about wildlife, the needs of wildlife, and their habitat.

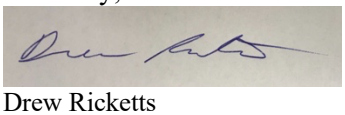
There are two age groups in the competition: 9-13 and 14-18 years of age. You can enter as a member of a team, such as your 4-H group, FFA group, or any group of 3-4 individuals. Alternatively, you can enter the contest as an individual. The major objectives are for youth to gain an understanding of 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 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 Woodland Ecoregion section of the manual. The WHEP Manual and study resources are available online at www.whep.org. The 2024 Edition of the manual can be accessed here. We will meet and complete all activities at Milford Wildlife Area, 1782 10th Rd. Clay Center, KS 67432.

If you are interested in participating as a member of a team or as an individual in the 2024 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 March 20, 2026. A $5 donation/fee is requested from each person to help defray lunch expenses. As always, I would be happy to visit with any coaches that have an interest or questions about the program.

Sincerely,



Drew Ricketts
Extension Wildlife Specialist
Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources
Kansas State University
2021 Throckmorton Hall
1712 Claflin Rd.
Manhattan, KS 66506
785-532-1949
arickett@ksu.edu