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Memorandum

Date: May 5, 2008

To: 4-H State Directors, Volunteer Leaders, County Agents, and Specialists

From: David Drake
Chair, National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program Committee

Subject: 2008 National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Invitational

This is the official announcement for the 2008 National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (WHEP) event. The event will be conducted July 23 – 27 on the campus of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma (<http://osu.okstate.edu/>).

Oklahoma State University is the state (i.e., land grant) University for Oklahoma. Stillwater, the home of Oklahoma State University, is a city of about 40,000 residents and is located approximately 65 miles from both Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Stillwater is a quintessential University town and will provide a wonderful setting for the 2008 WHEP Invitational. Lodging will be provided for WHEP participants and coaches on campus in their modern and comfortable dormitory housing. More information about the facility will be communicated with the attending teams in June and July.

Your state's WHEP coordinator should notify us of your state's intention to attend by **June 2nd**. You may do this through our website at <http://whep.org/coach/contest08.html> or by contacting Bob Spalding (E-mail: bob@whep.org or Phone: 864-430-0119). If you have questions about the host site, travel plans, or event logistics, please contact Dwayne Elmore (office: 405-744-9636; email: dwayne.elmore@okstate.edu), Wildlife Extension Specialist at Oklahoma State University. Dr. Elmore is the host for the 2008 national contest.

You must register your state team to the national contest no later than June 30, 2008. A state team consists of a maximum of four Senior 4-H contestants and two adult chaperones. Your state team will be able to register online at <http://whep.org/coach/contest08.html> or contact Bob Spalding and he will send you a registration packet. Registration forms, medical release forms, code of conduct forms, special needs forms and media consent forms will be available from the website. More detailed information about registration will be available on the website sometime in mid-May.

Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate non-participants at this event. However, should family members wish to accompany participants, or should the teams wish to arrive earlier than Wednesday July 23rd, many lodging options are available through the Stillwater Visitor and Convention Bureau website (<http://visitstillwater.org/Visitors/Lodging>). **Families are not allowed to participate in any of the Invitational events except for the award banquet on Saturday night.** Family members who wish to attend the banquet can purchase banquet tickets in advance of the event. A form for ordering these tickets will be available at <http://whep.org/coach/contest08.html>.

A registration fee of \$125 per person, including youth and chaperones (i.e., \$750 for a six-member state group), along with registration materials is required by **June 30, 2008**. Travel expenses to Stillwater are the responsibility of each team. Upon arrival at the Invitational, all lodging and meals are provided through your registration fees and generous sponsorships of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oklahoma State University, and other donors. Detailed information regarding submission of registration fees will be available in mid-May.

If your team members are flying to the National Invitational, Tulsa and Oklahoma City both offer airports equidistant from the Oklahoma State campus. However, due to cost and logistical considerations, we are only able to offer free and regular shuttles from the Oklahoma City airport to the campus of Oklahoma State University on July 23rd, and from Oklahoma State to Oklahoma City on July 27th. Please provide your flight information upon registration so we can schedule transportation if you require a shuttle.

Please plan on arriving at Oklahoma State University 1st floor Kerr-Drummond dorms by early afternoon on July 23rd; registration will begin early afternoon, and we will kick off the event with an opening session that evening. A map of parking areas near the Kerr-Drummond Dorm can be found at <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/download/pdf/ParkingMap.pdf>. A detailed agenda for the event will be forwarded to attending teams.

We will be using the newly revised manual and the newly revised contest format. Details on both the new manual and contest format are available electronically at <http://whep.org/coach/manual.html>. The region that will be used for WHEP contest Activities II (wildlife management practices) and III (written wildlife management plan) is the “Great Plains Grassland - Tallgrass / Mixed Prairie”. WHEP contest Activity IA (wildlife identification) will use all wildlife species listed in the “Great Plains Grassland - Tallgrass / Mixed Prairie” and the “Urban” region. Questions for WHEP contest Activity IB (general wildlife knowledge) can be drawn from information presented in the Regions, Species, Foods, and Wildlife Management Practices sections of the manual. If you have questions about the contest portion of the Invitational prior to arrival in Oklahoma, please contact me.

Finally, a special opportunity will exist this year for your 4-H’ers. A supplemental essay contest will be held for attending 4-H’ers. The reading for the essay has yet to be determined, but will be specific to tallgrass prairies. The essay contest is optional and will not influence your team’s WHEP placing, but will offer 4-H’ers the opportunity to compete for an award including cash and other prizes. More details about the essay contest will be forwarded to team chaperones in early June.

I hope this information helps you make your initial plans for the 2008 National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Invitational. Please make your plans today to join us in Oklahoma.

Sincerely,

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