

FFA Leadership Development Program

2010 Soil Stewardship Week Theme:



To prepare for the public speaking contest, students are to consult with their Ag Science teacher and use the Guidelines Packet accessible on the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board's website. The student is also to work with their soil and water conservation district (SWCD) as a local resource. A statement signed by an SWCD representative must be attached to the submitted speech.

If the student needs help finding information on how to locate and contact their soil and water conservation district, the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board will be happy to provide students with the name and address of the SWCD that serves the local school district.

This program is a partnership between the Texas FFA, the Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas, the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, and the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

For more information contact:

Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

P.O. Box 658

Temple, TX 76503

(254) 773-2250 or 800-792-3485

<http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us>



Scholarships Available

There are ten \$500.00 scholarships that will be presented by the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts. One \$500 scholarship will be awarded to the first place winner in each respective FFA Area. The second place winner in each area is not eligible for an area scholarship; however the second place winner is eligible, along with the 10 first place area winners to compete on the state level for the scholarship awarded at that stratum.

One \$1,000.00 scholarship will be awarded to the winner in the state contest. Scholarship money must be used to defray costs of a winner's education at a technical institution, college or university of the winner's choice. All scholarships will be awarded directly to a winner's chosen technical school, college or university in the student's name upon proof of registration as a full-time student at the institution of higher learning.

Expense Paid Trips: The state winner and his or her advisor will receive two expense paid trips under State of Texas travel guidelines to the annual FFA State Convention and the annual meeting of Texas Soil and Water Conservation District Directors.

To Access the Guidelines Packet

1. Click on the Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board's website:
www.tsswcb.state.tx.us
2. Mouse over Program Quick Links and then Mouse over "SWCD Information & Education."
3. Click on "Soil & Water Stewardship Public Speaking Contest"
4. Scroll down and click on "2010 Program Guidelines Packet".

To Get the Student Started

Using the prompt statements or questions noted in the speech outline on page six, the student is to center his/her speech on the theme *"Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats"*. The focus of the speech is to demonstrate knowledge gained as a result of research and personal consultation with the local soil and water conservation district. It is further recommended that the student consult the listed resources that follow to gain a well rounded view of the theme topic. Other resources may also be consulted in addition to the listed references.

Resources to consider in developing the speech

<http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=20692>

The above website will provide insight into what is meant by locally led conservation including the process to accomplish locally led conservation initiatives.

<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/conservation+of+natural+resources>

The above website gives a good definition of the term "Conservation". Because the definition can become broad, limit the term in scope to soil, water, plants, wildlife etc.

<http://www.tutorvista.com/search/define-habitat>

Good source for in depth definitions of various habitats.

<http://www.city-data.com/states/Texas-Flora-and-fauna.html>

Provides general information on the regional diversity of plant and animals in Texas

<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/>

The Handbook of Texas Online is a multidisciplinary encyclopedia of Texas history, geography, and culture sponsored by the Texas State Historical Association. The researcher can usually find specific information about flora and fauna of individual Texas counties. Good resource for opportunities to localizing the speech.

<http://www.texascenter.org/almanac/Land/WILDLIFECH4P1.HTML> (Con't next page)

The noted information in the below outline is what can be explored on this website.

Wildlife and Biodiversity

Endangered Species Act

Critical Habitat Designation Page 1 **Endangered or Threatened**

Wildlife and Habitat Legislation in Texas

Public Opinion: Who is Listening?

Species Designations

Fish and Wildlife Conditions in Texas

Page 2 Pollution Kills

The Loss of Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife Management Areas in Texas

Eco-Location Map Now Available

Wetlands: Critical Habitats

Page 3 Protecting Wetlands in Texas

Bottomland Forested Wetlands

Playa Lakes

Page 4 Wildlife Conservation Activities and Acquisitions

Information and Incentives for Wildlife Habitat Protection

Eco-Tourism Page 5

http://ckwri.tamuk.edu/fileadmin/user_upload/docs/misc_PDF/LastGreatHabitat.pdf

The above website focuses on the region lying south of a line from Port O'Connor to Victoria, northwest to San Antonio and west to Del Rio. This region is known as "South Texas" and is one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world.

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_br_w7000_0306.pdf

This site presents an excellent overview of riparian areas in Texas. Key topics discussed include:

- Definition of a riparian habitat
- Key ecological functions of a riparian habitat
- Benefits of a healthy riparian habitat
- Types of riparian habitats in Texas
- Detecting a degraded riparian habitat
- Land uses of riparian habitats
- Sources for more information

<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/aldrige/forest.html>

The pine forest lands or "Pineywoods" of East Texas extend from the Red River in the northeast corner of the state, southward to the region bordering Galveston Bay, and from the Louisiana border on the east to the Black Prairie region on the west. This area includes all or portions of 44 Texas counties.

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/estuaries/pivot/habitat/problem.htm>

Brief discussion on the causes and effects of habitat destruction.

<http://www.idahoforests.org/health1.htm>

Though the article focuses on Idaho forestry, the basic information can be adapted to Texas with some further local investigation. Topics include:

- Defines what constitutes a healthy forest
- Changing conditions of an ecosystem
- Forest health issues
- Effects of introduced exotic species
- Watershed health
- Wildlife interface development
- Forest growth
- Biological diversity of Idaho's forests (Would need to adapt to Texas)

<http://www.nearctica.com/ecology/habitats/prairie.htm>

http://www.texasprairierivers.com/plains_prairies/story_of_the_plains.php

Both sites offer a good overview of the North American and Texas grasslands. Ecologists prefer to use the term "grasslands" to "prairie". Grasslands are typically areas where either low total annual rainfall (10-20 inches) or uneven seasonal occurrence of rainfall favor grasses and herbaceous plants to trees. Special soil conditions or geology sometimes also favor grasslands over other types of vegetation..... The most obvious example of grasslands in North America are the prairies of the Great Plains region of the continent.

Specific Instructions: The speech must be between *six and eight minutes in length*. For specific rules and requirements relating to the contest, consult the Degree Check Guidelines.

Objective of Speech

The objective of the speech is to demonstrate how, after research, the student has developed a broad knowledge of the diversity of various habitats found in Texas. In addition, the student is expected to demonstrate knowledge on how various environments are being restored to healthy habitats.

Speech Outline

Introduction

- Introduce the theme “Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats.”
- Discuss briefly your visit to you local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to learn about the various types of habitats that can be found in your county. Why the differences?
- Discuss the purposes of the local SWCD and how its mission relates to the theme of “Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats”.

Body of Speech

- State some facts about the historical biodiversity of plants and animals found in your region of Texas. Is their habitat stable or degrading?
- Describe the county in which you live and the benefits of maintaining healthy habitats.
- How is the conservation of soil, water and related resources important to a healthy habitat in your community?
- What is your local SWCD’s role to insure that the county in which you live continues to have healthy habitats for plants, animals and humans?
- What is meant by locally led conservation and cite an example where a conservation or environmental issue is being addressed through a locally led conservation initiative? How were the steps followed in the process?
- What agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs), if any, are being used in your county that establishes healthy habitats?

Conclusion

- What does the theme, “Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats” mean to you?

** It is not required that the above questions be addressed in the speech as chronologically listed. The student has the flexibility to rearrange the prompt questions in a manner that permits smooth delivery flow.*

Soil and Water Conservation District Consultation Affidavit

I certify that _____ consulted with
the _____ Soil and Water Conservation District
in preparation for the 2010 Soil and Water Stewardship Public Speaking Contest.

(Student Signature)

(Date)

(SWCD Representative Signature)

(Date)

(This form should be submitted along with the speech.)