



# National 4-H Forestry Invitational

July 25, 2024

NEWS RELEASE

## Mississippi Team Earns Top Honors at National 4-H Forestry Invitational

Mississippi placed first among 10 states that competed in the 44<sup>th</sup> annual National 4-H Forestry Invitational from Sunday July 21 through Wednesday July 24. Teams from Indiana and Tennessee placed second and third, respectively. Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Utah, and Virginia also competed in this year's Invitational.

The invitational was held at West Virginia University Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp and Conference Center near Weston, West Virginia. The event is sponsored by Farm Credit, Green Diamond Resource Company, Society of American Foresters, Southern Regional Extension Forestry, F and W Forestry, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and West Virginia University Extension.

While at the Invitational 4-H members competed for overall team and individual awards in several categories. Events included tree identification, tree measurement, compass and pacing, insect and disease identification, topographic map use, forest evaluation, the forestry bowl and a written forestry exam.

The Mississippi team members were Samuel Davidson, John Clayton Kitchens, Joy Kitchens, and Josie Thompson. The team coach was Ray Henderson with assistant coaches Jennifer Henderson and Ashlyn Henderson.

Indiana's Clark Showalter had the highest overall individual score in the contest. The second-place individual was Lane Taylor from Florida and the third-place high score was a tie with Jose Thompson from Mississippi and Maegan Metzger from Indiana.

The Joe Yeager "Spirit of the Invitational" award was presented to Holt Sapp from Georgia. This award recognizes an outstanding 4-H contestant at the Invitational. It is presented to the individual who takes initiative, is enthusiastic, and is eager to lead academic and social situations.

The Tommy and Susan Futral Inspiration of the Invitational Award was presented to Ray Henderson from Mississippi. He has been a 4-H volunteer leader and coach for many years. Coaching multiple 4-H forestry teams to the forestry invitational and other competitive events over the years.

4-H is a youth education program operated by the Cooperative Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the state land grant universities. More than six million youth, 540,000 volunteers, and 3,500 professionals participate in 4-H nationwide, and nearly 100,000 are part of the 4-H Forestry Program.

The event would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors:

Farm Credit supports rural communities and agriculture with reliable, consistent credit and financial services, today and tomorrow. Farm Credit has been fulfilling its mission of helping these areas grow and thrive for a century by providing farmers with the capital they need to make their businesses successful and by financing vital infrastructure and communication services. Because a steady flow of capital means more jobs and economic growth, Farm Credit is able to invest in the vibrancy of communities throughout rural America. For more information about Farm Credit please visit [farmcredit.com](http://farmcredit.com).

Green Diamond Resource Company is a privately held forest products company with roots dating back to 1890. Today, the company owns working forest lands in Washington, Oregon, Montana, and California. A subsidiary, Green Diamond Management Company, provides forest management services in the U.S. South and West. All 2.2 million acres owned

and/or managed by Green Diamond are independently audited and certified for sustainable forest management. More information about Green Diamond's environmental leadership may be found at [www.greendiamond.com](http://www.greendiamond.com).

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. Founded in 1900, SAF is the largest professional society for foresters in the world. The mission of the Society of American Foresters is to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry. To find out more about SAF visit [www.eforester.org](http://www.eforester.org).

F&W Forestry is an international forest resource management and consulting firm dedicated to helping landowners gain the most value and enjoyment from their forestland. F&W believes that environmentally viable timberland is economically viable timberland. F&W is a privately owned forestry company headquartered in Albany, Georgia. Learn more at [www.fwforestry.com](http://www.fwforestry.com)

The Southern Regional Extension Forestry office serves as a liaison between the USDA Forest Service and the thirteen Extension Forest Resources units in the South providing regional programming, representation, promotion, and communication within the forestry and natural resource communities regionally and nationally. The SREF Office facilitates programming among professionals who work on numerous issues and opportunities facing the forestry and natural resources communities in the southern United States. To find out more about SREF visit [www.sref.info](http://www.sref.info).

Virginia Cooperative Extension was established in 1914 and is a partnership between Virginia's two land grant universities: Virginia Tech and Virginia State University. Today, Extension operates out of 107 offices, 11 Agricultural Research and Extension centers, and six 4-H centers across the commonwealth. Their agents, specialists, and volunteers work to assist farmers, empower youth, guide responsible resource management, and advance the wellbeing of all Virginians. To learn more about Virginia Cooperative Extension visit [www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu).

West Virginia University (WVU) Extension Service educators and volunteers build and sustain partnerships with people and organizations in West Virginia, to improve their lives and communities. WVU's programs and services strengthen individuals of all ages. We develop and teach best practices for sustainable agriculture, for responsible use of renewable resources, and stewardship of natural resources. We work to improve our state's communities, workforce, and the economy. To find out more about WVU Extension Service visit [www.extension.wvu.edu](http://www.extension.wvu.edu).

For more information on the National 4-H Forestry Invitational, go to: <http://4hforestryinvitational.org/>.

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### **Event Social media accounts:**

- FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/N4HFI>
- Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/4h\\_forestry/](https://www.instagram.com/4h_forestry/). 4H\_forestry
- Twitter/X: [https://x.com/4h\\_forestry](https://x.com/4h_forestry)

### **Event Hashtag for social media:**

- #4HForestryNatl2024

**Mississippi Team**



L to R: Front: Samuel Davidson, Joy Kitchens, Josie Thompson. Back: John Clayton Kitchens, Ray Henderson (coach)





L to R: Ray Henderson(coach), John Clayton Kitchens, Samuel Davidson, Joy Kitchens, Josie Thompson, Ashlyn Henderson (assistant coach)



Johnny King with WV Division of Forestry presents Ray Henderson with the Tommy and Susan Futral Inspiration of the Invitational Award.





Johnny King with WV Division of Forestry presents Holt Sapp from Georgia with the Joe Yeager “Spirit of the Invitational” award.