



National 4-H Forestry Invitational

July 25, 2025,

NEWS RELEASE

Arkansas Team Earns Top Honors at National 4-H Forestry Invitational

Arkansas placed first among twelve states that competed in the 44th National 4-H Forestry Invitational from Sunday July 20 through Wednesday July 23. Teams from Mississippi and Virginia placed second and third, respectively. Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Utah 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, The Jack Matthews Foundation, Virginia Cooperative Extension, West Virginia University Extension, Southern Regional Extension Forestry, Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Virginia and the Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals,

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 Arkansas team members were Nathaniel Huitt, Eli McDowell, Ariel Murphy, and Serena Grey. The team coach was Ty Huitt.

Arkansas's Serena Gray had the highest overall individual score in the contest. The second-place individual was Brandon Wallace from Virginia and the third-place high score was Nathaniel Huitt from Arkansas.

Mathew Grice of MS, Sarah Patton of NC and Eli McDowell of AR tied for individual high score in Tree ID. Dalton Allen of VA, Serena Gray of AR, and Helena Peterson of FL tied for the highest individual score on the Written Exam. Sarah Patton of NC, Ariel Murphy of AR, Taylor Stevens of AL, Nathaniel Huitt of AR, Brandon Wallace of VA, and Serena Gray of AR tied for individual high score in Forest Health. Brayden Tullos of MS earned the individual high score in Tree Measurement. Rowan Warezak of GA earned the individual high score in Compass & Pacing. Luke Rowan of VA earned the individual high score in Topography Maps. Team North Carolina won the Quiz Bowl competition and Team Mississippi earned the highest score in Forest Evaluation.

The Joe Yeager "Spirit of the Invitational" award winner was Madison Diggs of Oklahoma. This award recognizes an outstanding 4-H contestant at the Invitational who takes initiative, is enthusiastic, and is eager to lead academic and social situations.

The Tommy and Susan Futral Inspiration of the Invitational Award winner was Patrick Lemoine from Mississippi. He has taught youth for over 25 years and coached twelve 4-H forestry teams to the national forestry invitational 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 can invest in the vibrancy of communities throughout rural America. For more information about Farm Credit please visit 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

For more information on the National 4-H Forestry Invitational, go to: <http://4hforestryinvitational.org/>
Contact: William C. Worrell, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Lebanon, VA 24266
(276) 889-8056. bworrell@vt.edu

Arkansas Team



L to R: Front: Serena Gray, Eli McDowell, Ariel Murphy, and Nathaniel Huitt. Back: coach Patrick Huitt.





Johnny King with WV Division of Forestry presents Madison Diggs of Oklahoma with the Joe Yeager “Spirit of the Invitational” award.



Alicia Brents from Oklahoma, a Futral Inspiration of the Invitational Awardee, presents Patrick Lemoine from Mississippi with the 2025 Futral Inspiration of the Invitational Award.