

SPEECH CONTEST RULES



ELIGIBILITY

The contest is open to public, private, parochial, charter, or home school students from 6th through 12th grade who live within a Florida Soil & Water Conservation District.

SPEECH PREPARATION & PRESENTATION

Participants may choose any subject within the National Association of Conservation District's (NACD) current, stewardship theme. This theme is available on the NACD website: <https://www.nacdnet.org/general-resources/stewardship-program/> Speeches must be original, not previously used, and created by the contestant. Official judges of this Contest shall disqualify a participant if he or she speaks on another subject or plagiarizes his or her speech.

MANUSCRIPTS

Participants must submit their manuscripts to their designated District by that District's set deadline. Late or lost manuscripts may disqualify a participant. The SWCD, FCDEA or AFCD are not responsible for any late or lost manuscripts. In addition, a mandatory signed release form must accompany the manuscript to qualify for entry into the Contest.

Manuscript requirements:

- Formatted to 8 1/2" x 11" double spaced with a 1" margin
- Cover page must include the speech title, participant's name, parent or guardian's name, email, home address, phone number, grade level, and school name.
- Font size must be 12 point using a serif (Times New Roman, Cambria, etc.) or sans serif font (Arial, Calibri, etc.)
- A complete and accurate reference list should be included at the end of the manuscript. (All participants should give credit to others where any direct quotes, phrases, etc. are used in their manuscript, in order not to be guilty of plagiarism.)

Penalties will be assessed for manuscripts not meeting these guidelines. Content and composition of all manuscripts will be scored by qualified individual(s) and recorded on the official score sheet.

TIME LIMIT

Speeches must be five to seven minutes in length. Time under or over these limits will result in a 2 point deduction for each 15 second increment or part thereof, with a maximum 10 point deduction. Deductions will be taken off the cumulative score. No time warnings will be given.

PRESENTATION

The speaking order will be randomly determined by event officials. The program chairman shall introduce each participant by their contestant number during the Contest, and then, he or she will formally introduce all contestants after all speeches have been given. Contestants must not give their name or introduce themselves in their speech, or wear any attire that identifies them with any organization, such as 4-H, school logos, and/or FFA. A participant will be permitted to use notes while speaking, but deductions in scoring may be made for this practice if it detracts from the effectiveness of the overall presentation. No props, audio or visuals are to be used. Applause shall be withheld until all participants have spoken.

JUDGING

A standard score sheet, the official rubric, will be used for all contestants. Three judges and one timekeeper will be used at the district, area, and state competitions. A qualified judge should be experienced in public speaking and should not be elected SWCD supervisors, district staff, and/or affiliated with any contestant.

Prior to the event, the manuscripts will be scored for content and composition, by the judge(s) using the official rubric. At the time of the event, the three judges, who were provided with copies of the manuscripts, will use this rubric to score each participant on the delivery of their speech. After the oral presentation, both the manuscript and presentation scores, along with any deductions, will be tallied to determine a winner. The highest overall score will be the first place winner. Judge(s) comments, if applicable, will be presented to the participants after the event.

The winner of the district competition will compete in their area competition (multiple SWCDs), with the overall area winner advancing to the state competition. Winners cannot advance without competing in the prior competition. If the overall winner for that particular event cannot compete in the next level; then, the runner up can take that individual's place.