PURPOSE

The Missouri 4-H Great Outdoors Photography Contest encourages observation within Natural Resource areas and allows youth to demonstrate their skills in photography. This contest provides an opportunity to showcase the photographic work of all Missouri 4-Hers.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop observation skills to be able to capture the life, action, beauty, diversity, and interactions within our natural resources in Missouri.
- To encourage 4-H members to use photography as a meaningful communication and observation tool in their lives.
- To utilize photographs which can promote and strengthen awareness and conservation of our natural resources.
- To provide a photography project showcase opportunity for all 4-H members interested in Natural Resources projects.
- To continue to share the message of 4-H.

RULES AND PROCEDURES	
Participation Eligibility	Any enrolled 4-H member in all 4-H age divisions (Jr., Int., Sr.) as of September 1, 2025. Participants do not need to be currently or previously active in a particular or any 4-H Natural Resources project area.
Photo Eligibility	Photo must be taken by participants between the dates of February 1 and September 15 2025. Each photo may be submitted only one time and in only one category. All photos must be taken using a digital camera or cellphone.
Photo Format	Must be .jpeg, .jpg, or .png. Contestants may use any file naming structure.
Photo Entries	This is a stand-alone contest and not part of a qualifying contest or any other 4-H contest. There are no county entry restrictions. Individual 4-H member entries are unlimited.
Entry Fee	No fee.
Photo Entry Method	Participants will upload photos in a separate Online system called Qualtrics. The link can be found in the event registration on 4-HOnline.
Deadlines & Entry Period	Registration on 4HOnline and entry to Qualtrics Opens: January 1, 2026 Registration on 4HOnline and access to Qualtrics Closes: September 15, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.
4HOnline Event Name	2026 Missouri 4-H: The Great Outdoors Photography Contest
Ratio and Size	**Size Ratio:** any size ratio, except for panoramic, is acceptable. For this contest, panoramic is defined as a photo with an aspect ratio of 3:1 or 1:3 or wider/taller. **File Size:** Photo must be a minimum of **1MB** and a maximum of **20MB**. **Tips:** Upload the highest resolution possible. Review your photo at 100% size before uploading. Check your photo's file properties and/or metadata to ensure it meets the file size requirements.
Alterations	Color and Black & White photos are allowed in all categories. Although slight computer enhanced photos are allowed, such as cropping, minor adjustment of lighting, and red eye reduction; substantially altered photography, such as applying design styles, or using computer graphics will disqualify an entry.
Text on Photographs	Photographs **must not** contain camera or user placed text. This includes such things as date stamps, comments, watermarks, or titles. Text or wording that is part of the original photograph (i.e. photo of a state or national park sign, etc.) is acceptable.
Original Work of 4-H Member	The entry must be the original photographic work of the 4-H member and not a photo taken by family members, other 4-H members, or secured from any other printed/electronic source. Any photo proven to be found as not original work will result in disqualification of ALL the 4-H member's entries into The Great Outdoors Photography Contest. Additionally, actions may be taken against the 4-H member regarding the Consequences of Misbehavior and Code of Conduct signed by the 4-H member. This action is considered theft, which is a major offense in the Missouri 4-H Rules and Guidelines.

AWARDS, DISPLAY AND JUDGING	
Awards and Recognition	**1. Category Awards:** 30 awards/3 in each category; each of the 10 categories will have a Junior, Intermediate, and Senior winner based on Judging Criteria score <u>and</u> judges' choice (there can be multiple 100 point photos in one age division and category); Plaques for 1st and ribbons for 2nd and 3rd. **2. Best of Category Awards:** 10 awards/1 in each category; judges will choose from the 3 age division winners in each category; Plaques for 1st. **3. Best of Age Division Awards:** 3 awards/1 in each age division; judges will choose from the 10 Category Award winners in each age division. **4. Best of Show Overall:** 1 award; judges will choose from the 3 Best of Age Division winners; Plaque for 1st.
Judging and Results	**Judging will take place in <u>October</u>.** Contest results will be announced following the judging by postings on the Missouri 4-H Natural Resources Web page, Facebook, and Press Release. Contest awardees will be emailed using the email address given on the 4HOnline registration. All photos submitted will be judged and scored independently on qualtrics using the contest judging criteria standards of excellence (see Judging Criteria sheet on page 4).

RELEASES	
Content	Photos that are deemed obscene, vulgar, sexually oriented, hateful, threatening, or otherwise violate any decency standards or laws are strictly prohibited. The Missouri 4-H Youth Development Program reserves the right to determine and refuse inappropriate or unsuitable entries.
Copyright	The Missouri 4-H Youth Development Program respects the rights related to copyright laws and intellectual property. All photos must be the participant's own original work. Use of a photo from other sources/people without permission is not allowed.
Display and Future Usage Rights	By entry, the participant grants permission to the Missouri 4-H Youth Development Program, University of Missouri Extension, and any other public or private agency authorized by the Missouri 4-H Youth Development Program, the use, and rights associated to the use of the photographic likeness, in promotional publications, and other media, without compensation. Certain photos may be used for 4-H program and marketing uses.
Model and Property Releases	It is required that each participant have sufficient permission granted to both them and the Missouri 4-H Youth Development Program to publish and use as needed any photo showing recognizable locations or people which may be restricted. Documentation should be retained by the participant and be available upon request from the Missouri 4-H Youth Development Program.

DISQUALIFICATION	
Reasons for disqualification *Disqualification for any reason will forfeit all photos entered in the contest.*	• Broken content rule. This includes inappropriate or unsuitable content. • Broken copyright rule. A photo is not the work of the 4-H member. This action is considered theft, which is a major offense in the Missouri 4-H Rules and Guidelines. • Broken display and future rights usage rule. • Broken model and property release rule. • Category: Does not meet Category criteria, rules, or guidelines. (See Category descriptions) • Category: Same photo entered into multiple categories. • Manipulation of a photo beyond what is allowed. • Extremely poor quality and/or low resolution, causing the photo subject matter to be unrecognizable.

Missouri 4-H: The Great Outdoors Photography Contest 2024-2025 CATEGORIES

AQUATIC SCIENCE
Photos capturing the life or the study of life in the water. Photos could include:
- Any life in a water body such as fish, insects, other invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, mammals that live predominately in the water, and aquatic vegetation.
- Any person actively studying the aquatic life or equipment of aquatic study.
- Education of persons in aquatic science.
- Aquatic habitats.

Does not include photos of fishing or fish and other aquatic organisms being caught with fishing equipment.

ENTOMOLOGY
Photos capturing the life or the insects in any habitat or environment. Photos could include:
- Any insect life or habitat.
- Any person actively studying insect life or equipment of entomology study.
- Education of persons in entomology.

FORESTRY
Photos capturing the life of trees, the study of forestry, or the forestry industry. Photos could include:
- Any tree life in the form of a whole tree or any parts, such as buds, leaves, blooms, fruit, bark, etc.
- Any persons actively studying forestry or equipment used in this study.
- Education of people in forestry.
- Any person actively working in the forestry industry or equipment used in this industry.
- Forest habitats.

Can include photos of wildlife using forest habitats in a specific way as long as the forest is the major focus of the photo and not the wildlife.

HUNTING
Photos capturing the life or the activity of hunting. Photos could include:
- Any activity involved in legal hunting, and must include a firearm, bow, or other legal hunting equipment in the photo. Could be a hunting camp scene with firearms safely in place.
- Any person actively hunting pictured with the equipment of hunting including hunting dogs.
- Any photo of game killed in a hunt must include the hunter with the animal in an ethical, respectful pose, cleaned of any and all blood, with no internal parts visible including the tongue, and showing only the bag limit of the hunter or hunters pictured.
- Education of persons in hunting.

All photos with firearms must depict safe, legal, and ethical portrayals of hunting, otherwise they will be disqualified.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION
Photos capturing the wide variety of activity taking place in the outdoors specifically beyond the concrete boundaries of any size town. Photos could include:
- Any form of an outdoor activity involving camping, outdoor cooking, hiking, rock-climbing, off-road biking, paddling, swimming, star gazing, fire building, first aid, or knot tying.
- Any person actively pursuing any of those outdoor activities. Photos of any type of habitats or vista should include some type of activity equipment such as a tent, climbing gear, campfire, backpack, etc.
- Education of persons in outdoor education activities.

Does not include photos of fishing, hunting, or other activities described by another category including the gear used in those activities.

SHOOTING SPORTS
Photos capturing the activity of shooting firearms and archer equipment outside of a hunting scenario. Photos could include:
- Any safe shooting activity involving an individual or a group. All shooters and persons pictured must be practicing firearm and range safety while wearing proper safety equipment. The activity must be portrayed with no safety infractions.
- Education of persons in shooting sports.
- Any equipment used in shooting sports such as a focus on a firearm, ammo, shooting vest, target, etc.

Does not include photos of hunting or live wildlife being hunted or killed game. All photos with firearms must depict safe, legal, and ethical portrayals of shooting sports, otherwise they will be disqualified.

SPORTFISHING
Photos capturing the life or the activity of sportfishing. Photos could include:
- Any activity involved in legal fishing, and must include a rod and reel, bow, or other legal fishing equipment in the photo. Could be a fishing camp, shoreline scene, or boating scene with equipment placed to keep it and the anglers safe.
- Any equipment used in sportfishing such as a focus on a rod, reel, lures, fishing vest, tackle box, etc.
- Any person actively fishing pictured with the fishing equipment, or a single fish caught with a lure or complete rod and reel in the photo.
- Any photo of fish being held by the angler must show the fish being handled in an ethical, respectful way and showing only the bag limit of the angler or anglers pictured.
- Education of people in sportfishing.

All photos must depict safe, legal, and ethical portrayals of fishing and boating, otherwise they will be disqualified.

RANGE SCIENCE
Photos capturing the study of and management of rangelands. Photos could include:
- The native vegetation within a rangeland in the form of a whole plant or plants or any parts, such as buds, leaves, blooms, fruit, etc.
- Any persons actively studying rangeland or equipment used in this study.
- Any persons actively working in the range science industry or equipment used in this industry.
- Education of persons in range science.
- Rangeland habitats

Can include photos of wildlife using rangeland habitats in a specific way as long as the rangeland is the major focus of the photo and not the wildlife.

WATER CONSERVATION & EDUCATION
Photos capturing study of water use and conservation, the education of water conservation, and the process of water use and conservation industry. Photos could include:
- Any use of water depicting conservation of the resource.
- Any persons actively studying the water use and conservation or equipment of that study.
- Any persons testing water quality, or the equipment used in testing.
- Natural water resources available in Missouri.
- Education of persons in water conservation and use.
- Active work in the water conservation industry and the equipment used.

WILDLIFE & FISHERIES
Photos capturing the life, the study of life, and the management of wildlife in Missouri. Photos could include:
- Any wildlife species found in Missouri including fish, insects, other invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, birds, etc.
- Any persons actively studying wildlife or equipment of that study.
- Any person actively managing wildlife or equipment of management.
- Education of persons in wildlife & fisheries or management of these species.
- Wildlife habitats.

Does not include photos of wildlife not found wild in Missouri during some part of the year.

Missouri 4-H: The Great Outdoors Photography Contest Judging Criteria

The initial judging of each photo is determined by the standards of excellence outlined below, not by comparison with other photos. Before preparing your entry for submission please carefully review the judging criteria.

CRITERIA	STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE	POINT RANGE
Impact (Max Points: 15)	Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion. There can be impact in any of the judging elements.	**0-15**
Creativity (Max Points: 15)	Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought.	**0-15**
Technical (Max Points: 25)	Technical is the quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing, which includes the following aspects: • allowable amounts of retouching and adjustments (removal of red eye, cropping, minor straightening) • sharpness and correct color balance. • lighting, which includes the use and control of light. The use of lighting whether natural or man-made and its proper use to enhance the image. • posing and capturing of the image.	**0-25**
Composition (Max Points: 20)	Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker.	**0-20**
Subject Matter (Max Points: 15)	Subject Matter should always be appropriate to the story being told in an image (i.e., category in which the photo is entered). Subject matter also includes the center of interest for the photograph or where the maker wants the viewer to stop, and they view the image.	**0-15**
Story Telling (Max Points: 10)	Story Telling refers to the image's ability to evoke imagination or emotion. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his/her own message or read her own story in an image.	**0-10**