



Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts

8100 Bicentennial Road, North Little Rock, AR 72118

Phone: (501) 734-8133

Website: www.aracd.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Conservation Districts

FROM: John McAlpine, President

DATE: October 25, 2023

SUBJECT: 2023-2024 AACD Dave Ferguson Scholarship Contest

Once again, it is time to get out there and promote the annual AACD Dave Ferguson Scholarship Contest! The topic this year is ***“May the Forest Be With You Always.”***

Scholarships will be awarded for 1st Place - \$1,000; 2nd Place - \$500 by AACD.

Enclosed you will find essential information regarding the 2023-2024 scholarship contest. Each document is designed to be copied and adapted for your own use. You may also download any of these documents from our web site at <http://www.aracd.org>.

- **A suggested letter to inform your community of the availability of the scholarship.** Just fill in the name of your district and phone number, and send entry forms to High School Counselors, 4-H Leaders, FBLA Sponsors, FFA Sponsors, Scout Leaders, and your County Extension Agents. Try to get these to the schools at the very beginning of the year for the best results.
- **A sample for a radio script or newspaper release.** Be sure to fill in the blanks and add a contact person's name, phone number, and the district name at the top. Local radio stations are always looking for this type of information. Go ahead and take a copy by the station. You might be surprised at the results.
- **The entry forms.** The rules of the contest are included in the information the student certifies by signing the entry form. The scholarship applicants must live in the district, have a GPA of at least 2.5, and intend to follow a conservation related major at an Arkansas college or university. With the entry they are required to include two letters of recommendation, a minimum 750-word essay and two photos in support of your essay.
- **A list of frequently asked questions.** Please contact AACD at (501) 734-8133 if you have any additional questions.

2023-2024
Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
Dave Ferguson Scholarship

Important Dates to Remember

February 16, 2024 – Deadline for applications to be received in District Offices

- Student essays should be submitted to their local conservation district.

April 19, 2024 – Deadline for applications to be received by the Area Presidents

- District must choose one winning essay and submit to their Area President

June 14, 2024 – Deadline for Area Winners to be received in the AACD State Office

- Area winners are submitted to AACD – one winner per Area

Mail entries to the following address:

Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
8100 Bicentennial Road
North Little Rock, AR 72118

Or

Area Winners essays can be emailed to debbiepinreal@aol.com

July 2024 – Winners to be judged and announced prior to August 2024



Memo To: **Teachers, Counselors and Youth Leaders**

From: *(District Name)*

Date:

Subject: Conservation Scholarship

Enclosed is information on the 2023-2024 Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts “Dave Ferguson” Scholarship Contest. This contest will give a young person in our county the opportunity to win up to ***(insert amount of district scholarship)*** towards college expenses when they choose a conservation-related course of study at an accredited Arkansas college or university. The winner will also be eligible to compete for scholarship funds at the area and state level contests.

The essay should include all four items of the following components:

2023-2024 Theme & Criteria:

Theme: “*May the Forest Be With You Always*”

- 1) Define the benefits of healthy forestland. Identify the many ways that healthy forests affect the quality of life for people. Discuss the beneficial roles of forests in healthy condition which can be surprisingly far-reaching and enhance ecosystems, economic benefits, and benefits to the landscape.
- 2) Give an overview of activities that can be implemented by landowners, famers, organizations, and others to enhance and improve their forest land management.
- 3) How the conservation district can help landowners address the resource concern that results from the lack of forest management; conservation practices (talk with NRCS Staff if needed)
- 4) Provide an actual example of a landowner/organization who has been helped by the conservation district. (May use photos & videos and district will help locate landowners, if needed)

Note: Resources are listed on the Frequently Asked Questions sheet

AACD Scholarship Awards:

1st Place - \$1,000 (one time award)

2nd Place - \$500 (one time award)

The enclosed information sheet and entry forms should be distributed immediately to any eligible student so they can return their entries by the deadline. The closing date for entries at the district level is February 17, 2023.

For more entry forms, or more information, please contact the ***(District Name)*** at ***(District Phone Number)***.

This is a program sponsored by your local conservation district and the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts in an effort to assist young people interested in careers in the conservation of our natural resources. We hope you will encourage participation by those in your classes or groups.

Sincerely,

Chair
(District Name)

**Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
Conservation Scholarship
Entry Form for the 2023-2024 School Year**

Return this form, your essay and two letters of recommendation by February 16, 2024 to the

_____ *(District Name)*.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____ **Email Address** _____

SCHOOL GRADE: _____ **County** _____

I certify that I am a resident of _____ County, Arkansas, I have a grade point average of at least 2.5, and I have enclosed two letters of recommendation from responsible adults in my community.

Also, please find enclosed my essay on the topic, "**May The Forest Be With You Always**" (Minimum length 750 words).

I understand that if I win this scholarship, I am eligible for the Area Contest where I may have the opportunity to win additional scholarship funds. Furthermore, I agree to represent (District Name) in that contest. I understand that if I win the Area Contest, I agree to represent the Area at the State Contest. I understand that I should immediately contact AACD if I voluntarily withdraw my name from consideration due to a change of plans regarding college.

Signed _____
(Student)

SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED BY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Dated Material for Immediate Release

Contact person: _____

Phone: _____

Could you use some extra money at college next year? Thinking about studying agriculture, environmental science, or conservation? Then listen up!

As part of a statewide education program, _____ Conservation District is offering a (*Amount of District Scholarship*) scholarship for a local high school student, according to (*Chairman Name*), Chairman of the district. As well as receiving the District Scholarship, the winner will be eligible to compete at both the area and state level.

The Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts awards two scholarships (\$1,000 and \$500) based on student's essay.

The rules are simple, and the contest is open to all sophomores, juniors, and seniors with a minimum 2.5 grade point average who are _____ County residents and will follow a conservation related course of study. Contest entries must be submitted by February 16, 2024 to the (*District Name*) at (*District Address*).

High School Counselors, 4-H Leaders, FBLA Sponsors, FFA Sponsors, Scout Leaders, and County Extension Agents have entry forms and rules. They are also available at (*Library Name*) Library and at the Cooperative Extension Service Office. Those interested should call the district office at (*Phone Number*).

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2023-2024
Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
Dave Ferguson Scholarship

Frequently asked questions and answers.

Q – What do I need to cover in my essay?

A – Essay should include all four areas.

- 1) Define the benefits of healthy forestland. Identify the many ways that healthy forests affect the quality of life for people. Discuss the beneficial roles of forests in healthy condition which can be surprisingly far-reaching and enhance ecosystems, economic benefits, and benefits to the landscape.
- 2) Give an overview of activities that can be implemented by landowners, farmers, organizations, and others to enhance and improve their forest land management.
- 3) How the conservation district can help landowners address the resource concern that results from the lack of forest management or desire to improve forest management; conservation practices (talk with NRCS Staff if needed)
- 4) Provide an actual example of a landowner/organization who has been helped by the conservation district (May use photos & videos and district will help locate landowners, if needed)

Q – Who is eligible?

A – District residents who are currently high school sophomores, juniors, or seniors, and who have a grade point average of at least 2.5 are eligible.

Q – What is the prize structure?

A – Each district that has a scholarship program is encouraged to offer a \$250.00 scholarship. Areas are encouraged to offer a \$500.00 scholarship. Scholarships given at the district and area level are solely at the discretion of the conservation district and area leadership. AACD awards one-time scholarships of \$1,000 and \$500.

Q – What are the deadlines?

A – Districts should close their entry period on **February 16, 2024**. Applications should be received in the district offices by that date. Districts will then judge and send in the name of each winner to Area Presidents no later than **April 19, 2024**. Area contests will be decided, and winners' names sent to AACD in Little Rock by **June 14, 2024**. The Area winners will be judged by an independent body of judges with expertise in the subject matter. The State Winners will be notified by mail immediately after judging.

Q – When and how do I get my scholarship?

A – Once a student has registered at the college/university of their choice they ask the Office of Registrar to send a letter directly to AACD stating that they have been accepted for full admission. The funds are sent directly to the college/university as a credit. The funds can be used for room and board, fees & tuition, and books. Please note that we do not accept anything from the students directly. The letter must come from the Office of the Registrar and signed by the Registrar.

• Letters should be mailed to AACD, 8100 Bicentennial Rd., North Little Rock, AR 72118

Q – What can a district do to encourage student participation?

A – Use the enclosed materials to submit a news release to local newspapers and on local radio and cable TV. Contact High School Counselors, 4-H Leaders, FBLA Sponsors, FFA Sponsors, Scout Leaders, and your County Extension Agents. Mail a scholarship packet with a cover letter, flyer, and entry form to all those you contact. Place packets in the library, extension office and anywhere students might have the opportunity to pick them up.

Q – Where can I get more information?

A – There are numerous websites dedicated to watershed planning. Here are a few that might be helpful.

- 1) Natural Resources Conservation Service [Natural Resource Concerns | Natural Resources Conservation Service \(usda.gov\)](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov)
- 2) ADA – Forestry Division [Forestry - Arkansas Department of Agriculture](https://www.ada.ark.gov)
- 3) [Forest Management - Arkansas Forestry Association \(arkforests.org\)](https://www.arkforests.org)