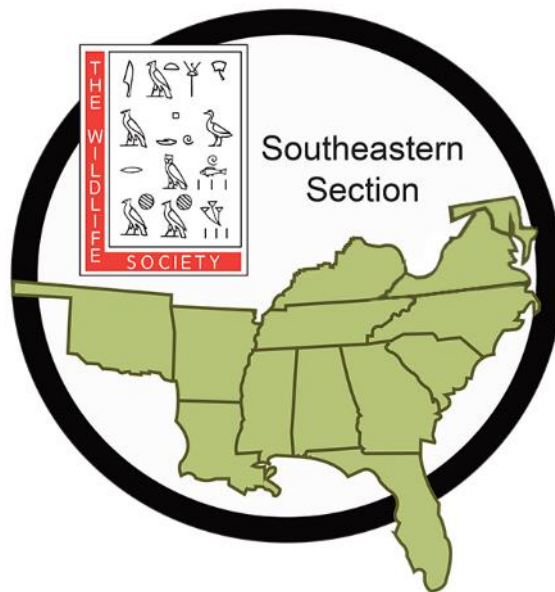


Southeastern Wildlife Student Conclave

A Guide for Host Schools



Southeastern Section, The Wildlife Society

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Introduction

Wildlife Student Conclaves are conferences hosted by Student Chapters of The Wildlife Society, for other Student Chapters within the same Section. Like Forestry Conclaves, Wildlife Conclaves are heavily field-oriented, with competitions, workshops, and social events. The first Southeastern Section Wildlife Student Conclave (hereafter “Conclave”) was in 1972 at the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) Annual Conference (Table 1). Since that first event, Conclave has dramatically expanded and now serves as a model event for other Sections of The Wildlife Society. In 1977, Auburn University hosted Conclave as an event independent of SEAFWA; host schools have followed this tradition since that time, typically during their spring break. The Southeastern Wildlife Student Conclave falls under the “ownership” of the advisors of the participating student chapters.

Choosing Host School

The first step in hosting Conclave is deciding who will host the event. This is an informal process that to date has occurred during a Faculty Advisor’s Meeting held at each Conclave. Very generally, the attending school that has hosted the least recent Conclave is expected to host the next one. At each meeting, the faculty try to get commitments for as many years out as possible (often 2 or 3), and faculty who committed or tentatively committed to upcoming years update their status. During the past 15 or 20 years, the number of participating schools has roughly doubled from around 10 to over 20. New schools are generally given 2 or 3 years to “get a feel” for the event before they are asked to host. Not all Student Chapters of TWS attend Conclave, some attend irregularly, and occasionally 2 schools in relatively close proximity co-host. The current system has worked fairly well for the most part so far, but it is tenuous, and as more schools join in, it may be worth considering a more structured approach in the future. To be fair, any school that regularly or even periodically attends Conclave, is required to host or co-host at some point. Table 2 lists all TWS Student Chapters in the Southeastern Section, and notes which schools have been tentatively identified by general consensus of advisors to host in upcoming years, as of the 2018 Conclave at LSU.

Choosing Venue

Conclave was traditionally held in a natural setting such as a park or 4-H camp; however, growing participation has forced some schools to host on and/or near their campuses, using local hotels for housing. The consensus has been that a natural setting is strongly favored if such a venue is available. Starting in 2012, participation was limited to 20 per school (including advisors); this has fairly effectively limited the overall number to around 400-500, for which some host schools have been able to find natural off-campus venues. If number of participating schools continues to increase, this rule may need to be revisited. An additional consideration is that most schools host during their spring break, when the campus is practically empty, and some schools have excellent campus facilities, natural areas, arboreta, etc.; hosting on campus also simplifies the process of getting supplies, quiz bowl specimens, etc., to the site.

Finally, schools from other sections that are near the host school sometimes request to attend our Conclave, especially if it is closer than their own Section’s conclave. We have generally allowed this, but it could be argued that we shouldn’t as long as we are limiting our own schools to 20 participants each. This is further discussed in a later section, “Eligibility to Attend.”

Funding

It is generally desired to keep prices as low as possible for attendees. For the past several years, registration cost has been around \$125/participant, with all meals provided (this may include hotels with continental breakfasts). Some host schools find the registration fee adequate to cover all expenses; however, most seek additional funding. Funding needs include rental of venues, meals, equipment and supplies, t-shirts and registration material, awards and prizes, etc. The Parent (Wildlife) Society at times has a policy to contribute \$1000 annually to each Section’s conclave. The Southeastern Section has provided \$1000 to each host school in recent years. The host schools’ home State Chapters of The Wildlife

Society often provide contributions as well. Various units within the host Institution often contribute (Department, College, etc.). Most host schools seek additional funding from local or regional units of state and local wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations, and outdoor retailers. Sponsorships can be offered (even platinum, gold, silver, bronze, etc. for different levels of support); you'll need to specify what they'll get for their sponsorship (logo displayed at all evening events, etc.). Some academic units may allow their development officer(s) to assist the student chapter in fund raising. It is always worth asking your Department Head/Dean if this possible as this will significantly reduce the stress and burden of securing additional funds.

Host schools also often seek door prizes from retailers. A general rule of thumb for door prizes: if you ask for a donation for a door prize, expect a hat or a pair of socks. Instead, consider asking for a large amount of cash (\$1000? \$500? \$100?) and offer to use it to purchase your prizes from their establishment. Or if they'd rather donate merchandise, then say something in the value range above would be appreciated. If they then offer you a hat, then ok, take the hat. Also, asking for donations in person (especially wearing chapter shirts or nice clothing) is way more effective than writing letters or emails!

Conclave funds should be kept separately from Student Chapter funds! An Excel spreadsheet of the budget should be carefully created and kept updated by an experienced treasurer.

Permissions and Liability

Because hosting Conclave requires a significant investment in University resources and faculty time, faculty advisors should seek permission from their institution before committing to host. Reserving on-campus and/or off-site facilities should be done a year or more in advance if possible (generally, as soon as it is known when spring break will fall). It is always appreciated by other faculty advisors to know your Conclave dates as soon as you know them.

Liability is another area of concern. The host institution and/or venue host may require some form of insurance, host liability waivers, participating school or individual liability waivers, etc. Additional areas of potential liability concern include any shooting or aquatic competitions, field trips, or workshops, as well as workshops that include prescribed burning, explosives (rocket nets, beaver dam removal, etc.) etc. Alcohol is another significant liability concern and is addressed in its own section later. Finally, most host schools utilize vans and drivers of participating schools for field trips and workshops; the host institution may require some sort of insurance or liability waivers for this practice.

Registration

Spring semester begins at most schools in early to mid January and Conclave typically occurs during March, so registration usually has occurred during February, typically during the first 3 weeks. Generally the earlier the better, but this probably will depend at least partly on when Conclave occurs. Opening registration as early as fall semester would be favorable to many attending schools.

Due to the complexity and diversity of events occurring at Conclave, a good bit of information may be needed by the host schools from participants; that said, the registration process should be kept as simple as possible. A single registration form from each participating school works best. A well-thought-out and organized registration form is invaluable. In addition to names, t-shirt sizes, diet restrictions (allergies, vegan, etc.), and top 3 field trip preferences (typically) for all attendees, the form should specify the faculty advisor(s), how many and what size vehicles the school is bringing, and which participants are qualified to drive those vehicles (for field trips). Some host schools also ask for a listing of who will compete in each event, but it should be noted that this frequently changes. See Appendix 1 for an example registration form.

A fairly simple registration process involves emailing a PDF file of the registration form and accompanying information (field trip descriptions, etc.) to each participating school and having them complete and return the form with a check by

a deadline. Some schools have used online registration services such as EventBrite, which may add on a \$5 or so fee per registrant, and some institutions have their own online payment systems; these may also entail additional fees.

Events

Overview

For many years, Conclave has begun with an afternoon/evening check-in and run through the following two days, most often from Thursday evening through Saturday night.

A traditional schedule follows:

Thursday	1:00 – 6:00 p.m. – Check-in
	6:00 – 9:00 p.m. – Welcome, Dinner, and Calling Competitions
Friday	8:00 – noon – Quiz Bowl
	Noon – 1:00 p.m. – Lunch
	1:00 – 3:30 p.m. – Team Competition
	3:30 – 6:00 p.m. – Individual Competitions
	6:00 – 9:00 p.m. – Dinner and Entertainment
Saturday	8:00 – noon – Quiz Bowl Completion
	Noon – 1:00 p.m. – Lunch
	1:00 – 5:00 p.m. – Field Trips/Workshops
	6:00 – 9:00 p.m. – Dinner and Awards

The schedule above is not required, but major deviations should be carefully considered; this general model has been found successful against several alternatives. More specific information on each activity is provided below.

Check-In

Participating schools typically check into their hotels (if not at a camp, etc.), then into Conclave. Since there may be multiple schools congregated at the check-in area simultaneously, it helps if it is a fairly large, open area (under a roof, preferably indoors).

Often, each participant receives a bag with a name tag, t-shirt, any paperwork such as schedule and maps, and sometimes goodies such as a water bottle, a snack, etc. Name tags often include assigned field trip, raffle tickets, and/or other information. Host schools often have a box or boxes with this material for each participating school.

If alcohol is to be served, students can be carded by an appropriate authority and issued wrist bands at this time.

Also at check-in, students turn in art contest submissions, and usually any weapons to be used in competitions such as shotguns, rifles and bows.

If not provided on the registration form, schools may be asked at check-in to specify names of students competing in each competition, any dietary restrictions, number and size of vans, names of van drivers, etc. (any of this information that can be gathered beforehand from the registration is preferable, although schools often do not properly complete registration forms without clear instructions and multiple reminders, etc.).

Sometimes a group photograph is taken of each school at check-in. Since most schools are traveling from some distance, many may show up late in the day, sometimes even during or after the dinner.

Meals and Entertainment

Because the schedule is always tight, all meals are usually provided. If hotels are used, it is greatly preferred to use ones that have continental breakfasts.

Any served meals should include vegan options. The registration forms should ask for dietary limitations such as this or any others. Participants should be asked to only choose vegan meals if they checked this option on the registration form (vegan meals have often been taken before all of the vegans get to them).

Lunches are often boxed (sandwich, fruit, cookie, drink, etc.); these are not as favorable as hot meals, but they are simple and relatively inexpensive, and importantly, they are fast, which is very helpful! Boxes can simply be stacked on tables and students can pick them up as they show up. A large, open indoor area adjacent to a roomy outdoor plaza area is optimal so students can choose where to eat based on weather, etc. Remember to provide plenty of trash cans.

Dinners vary but often involve something with local flavor. Host schools often employ volunteers from the state wildlife agency, alumni, or others for some of these meals. Keep in mind that wildlife students eat more than the average caterer is used to. Dinner venues should be able to comfortably seat all attendees.

For both served lunches and dinners, long lines can cause significant schedule delays. At least 4 lines (2 tables with lines down both sides of each works fine) should be employed to get folks through in a timely manner (having 6 lines makes it quite speedy; for a single line, expect an hour or more (sometimes much more) to get everyone through).

Since there is a good deal of communication at the dinners, **a good sound system is important** (be sure to test it).

The first dinner will include a welcome, often a roll-call of participating schools, and introductory information/instructions. The President of the Southeastern Section of TWS, another TWS/SE-TWS/host state TWS officer, or host school/college/department administrator may provide a few words. Door prizes may be given out. There also may be a speaker at the opening or another dinner. (S)he should be dynamic and brief (15-20 minutes is plenty)!

Wildlife calling competitions typically follow the first dinner; sometimes this competition is split between the first and second evening, and sometimes it is all the first evening, but split into 2 or more rooms to save time, although nobody can see all of the competitions that way (more information on calling competitions later). A lot of time and hassle can be saved if the calling competitions can be in the same location as the dinner. Good acoustics are important here.

Some host schools choose offsite locations for the second and/or third (final) dinner, which can be nice, but can complicate travel, since participants are typically gradually returning from the field competitions and/or field trips and needing showers, etc. Regardless, dinner may need to be a little late. There may be a band after the second dinner, and awards are given after the third dinner.

Quiz Bowl

Quiz bowl is an academic competition with a rich history as the “main event” of Conclave. As such, it is taken quite seriously by many schools. The Southeastern Section Quiz Bowl format and rules have been shaped over many years of experimentation and discussion to what the advisors generally believe is a good compromise; it has served as the model for quiz bowls in other sections and even at the parent society’s annual conference. Rules should be followed carefully; if the host school wishes to consider deviating from a rule, all attending advisors **must** approve first. The greatest problems with Conclaves often involve lax attention to rules or details in Quiz Bowl – this cannot be overemphasized!

Southeastern Section, The Wildlife Society
Southeastern Wildlife Student Conclave
Quiz Bowl Rules
Last Updated March 2014

Quiz bowl will consist of a double elimination tournament in which teams gain points by answering questions asked by a moderator. After successfully answering a “toss-up” question, the team will be given a multi-part “bonus” question. Toss-up and bonus questions will cover material relevant to natural resource management.

1. Each team (one team/school) may consist of up to five players with no more than four participating at once (i.e., one team member will be an alternate). There may be no more than 1 graduate student per team. A graduate student is defined as a person that already holds a 4-year degree or is enrolled in a Master’s program. However, Ph.D. students are not eligible to compete in Quiz Bowl.
2. Team pairings will be chosen at random for the first match. Pairings in subsequent matches will be determined by a team’s ability to win. If a team advances to the final match unbeaten, the challenging team (i.e., winner from the loser’s bracket) must beat the undefeated team in two consecutive matches to win first place.
3. Matches will last 10 minutes, except for the final match, which will last 15 minutes.
4. On all questions, the first answer given will be the one accepted (i.e., there will be no second thoughts). The moderator reserves the right to ask the respondent to “be more specific.”
5. If the pronunciation of the answer is unclear to the moderator, the respondent may be asked to spell the answer. If spelled incorrectly, the answer will be considered incorrect.
6. When the final bell rings, the match is over. If the match ends while a question is being asked, the match ends at that point. If the final bell rings while a toss-up or bonus question is being answered, the match ends after the allotted time for the answer has expired. For the purpose of this rule, players who have signaled, but have not been acknowledged, will be allowed to answer. Should time expire while a toss-up question is being answered correctly, there will be a bonus question awarded if it has bearing on the outcome of the match.
7. If the score is tied at the end of the match, the match will be extended an additional 5 minutes. If after the additional 5 minutes, the score is still tied, a sudden-death round will be held in which the first team to correctly answer a question wins.
8. A judging committee of the host school faculty members, professional wildlife biologists, etc., will be the referees of any challenge that may arise.

Specific Rules for Toss-up Questions

1. Matches begin with a toss-up question open to both teams. Each toss-up question is worth 10 points.
2. Following the reading of a toss-up question, 5 seconds will be allowed for a team to signal for an answer. A team member signals to answer by pressing a button that activates a buzzer and light. Only one person may answer a toss-up question. The first team member to respond is indicated by their individual light.
3. If no one signals within the allotted time, the moderator will give the answer and the next question will be asked.
4. The moderator will acknowledge the signal by verbally announcing the team member’s school and number of the player. If the player answers before being acknowledged, the moderator will state the answer cannot be accepted and the opposing team will be given a chance to signal (5 seconds), be verbally acknowledged, and answer. This rule applies irrespective of whether the unaccepted answer given is correct or incorrect!

5. The team member acknowledged has 10 seconds to answer the question. If the answer is heard from the audience, the question will be discarded. If any discussion occurs between members of a team on a toss-up question, that team forfeits the right to gain points and the other team gets a chance to answer after being acknowledged. This applies regardless if an answer was heard or not.
6. Should a team member give a wrong answer to a toss-up question, the opposing team has 5 seconds in which to signal after the moderator announces that the answer is incorrect. The team member will then be verbally acknowledged and allowed 10 seconds to answer the question. No points are lost for incorrect answers.
7. A team member may signal to answer a toss-up question as it is being asked. When this occurs, the moderator stops reading at that point. If, after being acknowledged, the answer given is wrong, the entire question is repeated for the opposing team. As in all toss-up questions, a team member must signal and be acknowledged before answering the question. In the event that a member of the opposing team signals before the question has been repeated or repeated completely, the moderator stops reading the question and acknowledges that team member for an answer. Once the question is read completely, it is not repeated.

Specific Rules for Bonus Questions

1. A bonus question consists of 4 parts with the rare exception of those consisting of 2 parts. Bonus questions are worth a total of 20 points with points divided equally among the parts. Points are earned for each part answered correctly according to the value of the part. No points are lost for incorrect answers.
2. Bonus questions are a team effort, but the answer decided upon for each part can only be accepted from the team captain. The team will have a total of 30 seconds in which to answer all parts after the question is completely read.
3. Answers can be given for any part of the question in any order at any time, even while the team members continue to discuss other parts.
4. All bonus questions will be oral, audio, video/slide, or carry-on specimen(s).

Challenges

If an answer to a toss-up question ruled incorrect is believed to be correct by the answering team, the player can challenge the moderator's ruling by appealing to the judging committee. However, challenges can be made only after the opposing team has had an opportunity to answer. Also, if a member of the opposing team believes an answer ruled correct is incorrect, a challenge to the judging committee may be made. To challenge, a team member should activate the buzzer/light and wait to be verbally recognized. When a challenge is made, the clock will stop until the judges have made a decision. Challenges to toss-up questions must be made before the bonus or next toss-up question is read. Bonus questions may also be challenged before the next toss-up question is read. In all cases, the decision of the judges is final!

Taxonomic References for Quiz Bowl, provided by host school

Quiz Bowl considerations for host school:

- Begin writing questions **far** in advance of Conclave (beginning a year or more in advance is not unrealistic).
- **Do not** use a question more than once (duplicate questions have been used in quiz bowl matches occurring in 2 or more rooms; this must be avoided). **At least** 1,000 toss-up questions and 400 bonus questions should be prepared for the event. Too many is much better than too few. Old questions from past quiz bowls should **not** be used – some students memorize these.

- **No** toss-up questions may have only 2 possible answers (e.g. true or false questions, a question with an answer of “male” or “female,” etc. This is a rule, voted on by advisors.
- Bonus questions often include 2 or 3 taxonomic questions and 1 or 2 life history or other questions related to the specimen. Bonus questions should have 4 parts; they may very occasionally have 2 parts if these parts require additional time to answer.
- Every question should be carefully proofed prior to the event; very careful wording that only allows for a specific answer is critical (no subjective or vague questions/answers). Having to “discard” poorly-worded questions during actual matches has been a common problem.
- Questions should be well randomized, so that each match includes a wide range of topics rather than several questions on similar topics. Do not assume that a randomizing program will do this well; someone should review the questions to ensure that they are well-mixed.
- The venue must be sufficient in size to allow the contestants not competing to attend as spectators. On day 1 of Quiz Bowl, this typically means 2 rooms, each capable of holding at least 200 individuals. On day 2, 1 room holding at least 400 is needed for the final round(s).
- Each room should have a judges committee consisting of at least 2 and preferably 3 qualified members to handle challenges.
- Quiz Bowl answers must align with the taxonomic sources provided by the host institution. Taxonomic references should be widely accepted scientific sources.
- Competing schools should somehow be indicated for the audience (sign on table, written on board, etc.).
- Most rooms will require microphones, at least for the moderator, and perhaps for the competing teams (1-4 microphones per team). Some rooms have great acoustics and will not require this. It should be checked, with a full room if possible, and mics provided so that folks in the back can hear everything.
- Some host schools require that the team captains sit in specific seats (typically at the ends of the tables nearest the moderator). This is not a formal rule; if the host school plans to do this, it should be specifically communicated to attending schools before the event (team captains with hearing challenges may prefer other seats so as to most effectively hear her/his team members).
- SE-TWS owns 2 buzzer systems for quiz bowl. These are typically passed from the host school to the following year’s host school at the end of Conclave. Host schools are responsible for the upkeep of these systems and should purchase minor replacement parts, etc. as needed. SE-TWS may be contacted to request financial assistance with major purchases related to the buzzer systems if needed.
- Score should be visually displayed for the contestants and audience, either electronically or in writing (large enough for all to see!)
- Most bonus questions originally were based on specimens (e.g. museum mounts, skulls, wings, etc.) brought out to the team to view. To allow the audience to see what the team was seeing, host schools then began projecting images of the specimens as well, which was more work but a great improvement. To avoid the complexity of managing actual specimens, some host schools have recently begun using slides instead of specimens, for both audience and competitors. This is generally understandable, but it should be realized that actual specimens (with accompanying slides) are generally much more favorable.
- The host should be sure they are fairly administering the double-elimination brackets, which can be complex. The brackets should be updated in real time in a common area outside the rooms where matches are held. Posters or projectors have been used, but realize that sometimes large crowds will necessitate a large size and high display point.
- All involved in the Quiz Bowl must carefully read and have an exact understanding of all of the rules! Because of the complexity of Quiz Bowl, all involved should hold at least one practice round (including challenges and answers requiring judges) to prepare and work out the kinks. It can be challenging to find a time that works for everyone, but doing so may be invaluable in avoiding real problems. Consider, the following people are needed for each round:

- 1 moderator
- 1-3 buzzer resetter/time-keepers (for questions, and rounds)
- 1 score-keeper
- 3 judges
- 1-2 bonus specimen presenter(s)

Team Competition

This event was added to Conclave by Clemson University in 1996 and has become widely popular, partly because all participants can compete (each attending school is a team). Each team starts at a station, with stations roughly 100 meters apart in a loop. When a horn sounds, each team has 5 minutes to run to the next station and answer questions or complete challenges.

Efficiency is critical in running this event. There is a station for each team, and 5 minutes per station, so for example 24 teams (a reasonable number to expect) would require 2 hours to complete the course. It takes several minutes to get teams to their initial stations, and for teams to return to the staging area for individual field competitions afterward, so around 2 ½ hours is a realistic goal for completing this event. Demand for manpower is also high for this event. An attendant is needed at each station, plus at least one coordinator/timekeeper/horn blower.

Stations should have enough questions to prevent multiple ties for high scores; better to have many unanswered questions from all teams, than all questions answered correctly by many teams. Including multiple simultaneous question sets or challenges at each station engages more students than a single set of topical questions that one or 2 experts in the group may answer.

Examples of question categories may include (but are certainly not limited to):

- Duck wings, bird mounts, mammal skulls or pelts, tracks, scats, fish or herpetological samples
- Frog or bird call IDs (audio)
- Invertebrate IDs
- Trap sets and IDs
- Mechanical (tractor, ATV, boat, etc.) – identify parts or purpose
- Knots
- Deer aging based on tooth replacement and wear and/or scoring antlers
- Telemetry
- Silviculture or mensuration
- Plant and/or seed ID
- Wetland characteristics
- Vertebrate anatomy
- Soils/Geology
- GIS/GPS

A Team Competition Chair or Coordinator should oversee formation of this event, starting early in fall semester. At least one student is needed to run each station, so at least 2 dozen people should be expected on the Team Competition Committee. Stations will require tables, chairs (for attendees, not participants), clipboards with pencils/pens and answer sheets, and any required specimens, equipment, etc. Securing the equipment is a chore, and developing a good set of unambiguous questions/problems is a chore. The Chair/coordinator should expect to be involved in these.

Finally, scoring should be carefully considered. All schools must be ranked at every station. Most host schools include the Team Competition ranks at each station in the Excel Spreadsheet used for scoring all competitions, so that Excel can be used to sum the station scores and determine overall ranks for the event. It is strongly recommended that correct answers for all stations are posted after the competition.

Some additional considerations:

- The idea for the original Team Competition at Clemson University in 1996 was to integrate the “exam” into the surrounding environment (e.g., estimate the number of birds you see; what’s this plant; what left this sign; etc.), but the event has partially devolved to written questions and museum specimens stacked on tables. The best Team Competitions will be those that most creatively link to the elements along the route.
- Faculty advisors may be invited to participate collectively as their own team.
- Some faculty advisors will go with their own students. This should be allowed due to the opportunity for taking outstanding photos of students in action, that may be used to encourage university administrators back home to provide financial support for travel to Conclave. Advisors must be prohibited from providing answers, hints or help to students; a rule may be useful that advisors may not communicate with their students during team competition.
- Some schools provide at least 2 “break” stations, with water and sometimes a fun activity that does not count toward the score. This is considered important by some, but detracting by others.
- To date, no rules have been created regarding participation of graduate students in team competition. This may be worthy of consideration in the future. Some TWS Student Chapters may be composed primarily of graduate students; prohibiting or limiting their participation would penalize them, but not doing so may penalize other schools. A compromise may be limiting it to no more than 2 graduate students pursuing M.S. degrees.

Field Competitions

Considerations

- Field competitions can be grouped into physical (e.g. obstacle course, canoeing, rifle, shotgun, archery, casting, fly casting), artistic (e.g. field photography), and academic (e.g. orienteering, radio telemetry, dendrology, lab practicum). General consensus holds that while many students enjoy the physical and artistic competitions, efforts should be made to try to keep academic competitions as heavily-represented. It may be appropriate to replace one or 2 physical competitions with academic ones in the future.
- Number of students that can compete per school during concurrent field competitions must be taken into consideration. If the maximum number of Conclave participants per school is 20 including advisor(s), there can be between 1 and 19 students in attendance from each school. It is generally considered best to have 19 potential spots for concurrent competitors from each school, than fewer spots, which would benefit schools with fewer participants.
- Because overall ranks are provided for every school, every competitor must be ranked in all competitions.
- Multiple people should carefully consider any possible way that participants might “game” the rules to their benefit, and try to eliminate these possibilities. If a work-around is available, they will find it! Additionally, students who participate first in order often are penalized as later participants strategize based on their observations; any potential advantage of this sort should be considered and avoided if possible.

Obstacle Course

This **physical** field competition involves a team of 4 students from each school. Some hosts have required each team to include at least 1 or 2 females, and some have held separate obstacle course competitions for male and female teams from each school. Participants navigate a course and overcome obstacles; fastest team wins.

A common issue with obstacle course has been that teams sometimes are forced to wait for other teams to complete obstacles. If teams take turns running with a wait between each team (for example 5 minutes), the wait should be long enough that a fast team will not catch up with and have to wait on a slower team. Since team speed is unknown, this is best remedied by providing multiple obstacles or setting them up in such a way that multiple teams can complete them

simultaneously. Likewise if multiple teams run concurrently. Importantly, if starts are staggered, obstacles must not be viewable by waiting teams, in which case teams that go first are penalized because they are not allowed the benefit of learning from the observed mistakes of other teams. Solutions include a shotgun start or a starting position that is hidden from all obstacles.

Time required for this event should be considered carefully, including travel time to and from site. If 24 teams compete, and run sequentially, for example, with 5 minutes between starts, it would take slightly longer than 2 hours to complete, including initial instructions (and not including travel time).

Conflicts have resulted at times from some schools wishing to run with fewer than 4 participants. This may be because a school only has 3 students available. However, a school could take advantage of this allowance if they could run 4 students but choose to only run the 3 fastest. This cannot be permitted.

Participants in this event frequently finish muddy and/or wet. If this is anticipated, participants should be forewarned and encouraged to bring towels, dry clothes, etc.

Canoeing

A boat race is a mainstay of the **physical** field competitions. Canoes are usually used, although rowboats and pirogues also have been used. So far, it has always involved 2 participants per school, but the number of participants that is allowed (e.g. either 1 or 2; only 2; etc.) must be clearly stated in the rules, and the rules must be followed. This is typically a fairly straightforward course (out and back or a loop), but sometimes challenges are included such as carrying the boat to or from the water, removing or placing items on buoys, etc.). Time penalties for missing obstacles or failing to complete a task must be greater than the time gained by bypassing the obstacle. Otherwise, teams will strategize to an unfair advantage against teams that go first or teams that appropriately navigate obstacles. Participants should be warned prior to the event that they may get wet, so towels and dry clothes are recommended. Running multiple boats simultaneously saves time but introduces risk of conflicts among boats/boaters. Remember life jackets!

Shooting Competitions

Rifle (or sometimes pistol) and archery have long been **physical** field competition events; shotgun was added in 2008. Special consideration must be given regarding weapons. Some considerations:

- The host school or venue may require some sort of insurance or participant liability waiver.
- Participants have provided their own weapons, host schools have provided firearm ammunition.
- If on campus, get campus security/police involved.
- Host schools typically require shooting competitors check in their weapons during registration. They are stored and made available at competition time, then stored again until the end of Conclave. Participants have been allowed to pick them up after the last dinner or the next morning.

Rifle

This competition depends on a safe facility and appropriate oversight. A range with a certified range instructor makes this event easy to conduct. Without these, careful planning for safety and logistics is critical. Students provide their own rifles (or pistols) and the host provides ammunition and regulation targets. Since up to 2 dozen participants will be involved, a range that allows for at least 6 concurrent shooters moves the process along in a timely manner. Scoring rules and equipment regulations (e.g., bolt actions and/or semi-autos) must be posted ahead of time and adhered to carefully.

Shotgun

Shotgun involves competitive shooting at clay targets. Like with rifle, a range and certified instructor greatly simplifies the process. Participants bring shotguns, host provides clays and ammunition. The host school should recognize the following distinctions:

- Trap: targets are launched from a single "house" or machine, generally away from the shooter.
- Skeet: targets are launched from 2 "houses" in somewhat "sideways" paths that intersect in front of the shooter.
- Sporting Clays: a more complex course, with many launch points.

Any of these may be conducted, but the host school should clearly state what the event will be. A simple mechanical thrower next to the shooter may be used, but many students are very competitive shooters with formal training and professional experience. Hosts should not use manual hand throwers, and they definitely should not throw clays by hand! This event should not be offered if appropriate venue, or at least appropriate equipment and space, is not available. Like with rifle, time for up to 2 dozen participants should be considered.

Archery

As with the firearms competitions, safety first here! Archers bring their own bows and arrows. 3-D targets in vegetation and on slopes add to the challenge. A dozen targets with 2 shooters shooting 3 arrows per target works well.

Casting/Flycasting

Hosts have included one, both, and neither of these **physical** competitions. Students bring their own rods. Plugs/flyies can be provided by students, or by the host (if by students, the host should have some in case students show up without). These are usually done on land, although flycasting has been done from a dock into water. The contest can require a certain amount of time or casts to place the plug/fly inside a ring (hula hoop, etc.), or can have 1-3 chances to get as close to a pin/flag as possible – this may be easier to score (closest wins, next closest 2nd, etc.). Like archery, there could be a course with a dozen stations and 2 competitors per station. Trees or other obstacles are often at some stations, others may be longer distances, etc.

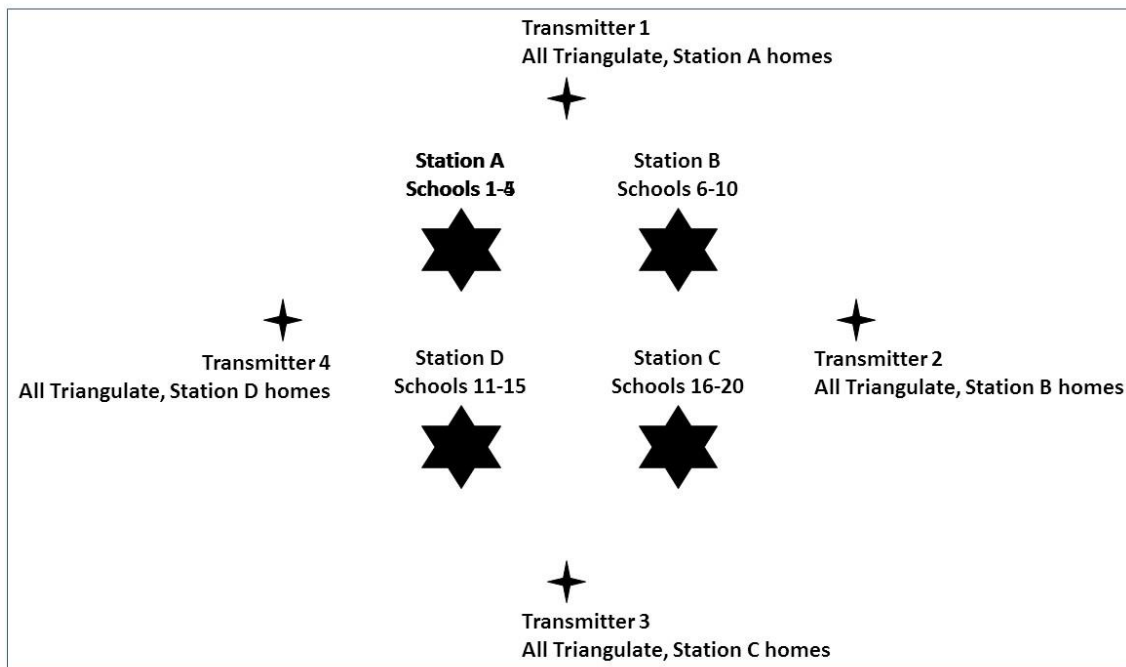
Radio Telemetry

This is an excellent **academic** field competition, but it can be challenging to conduct fairly. Also, some schools may not have adequate equipment (adequate equipment means that sufficient numbers of identical receivers and transmitters are available to all teams so that no team(s) has an unfair advantage based on the quality of the equipment). Finally, this competition can be quite timely if not carefully planned. The competition may involve triangulation (based on accuracy), homing (based on time), or both. Each is discussed here, with an example of how it might be organized. No doubt other viable ways exist, but they should be carefully considered and tested. As in canoeing, the rules should clearly specify how many may participate per team (e.g. only 1; only 2; 1 or 2; etc.) and these rules must be enforced. If there are 2, it must be specified if they work as a team or independently. If independently, the best score can count for the team, providing a valid advantage to teams able to place more students in the competition.

Triangulation may be conducted fairly simply in the following manner. Four receiving stations are set up, each 100-300 yards apart, with 5-6 schools per station (numbers of stations and schools may be adjusted; see figure below). Each school takes turns with the other schools taking azimuths on 3 or 4 transmitters from each station (schools should not be allowed to observe other schools as they take bearings, which could provide an advantage to later teams). Each

group of schools rotates to every station and repeats, on the same 3 or 4 transmitters. To score, simply add up the degrees error for each school on each transmitter from each station. The least overall error wins, etc.

Due to radio signal and equipment variation, the difficulty of homing can vary greatly among participants. This can be remedied by having all schools home on the same radio in the same location, in groups or sequentially, but this is timely, more equipment is needed, and paths become worn for upcoming groups which creates bias. If homing is going to be a part of the telemetry competition, it may be conducted after triangulation in a similar manner. Start with the same configuration of schools at stations (figure below). Have one transmitter (it can be one used in triangulation above) a specific distance from each station. On a signal, one school from each station homes on that transmitter. Remaining schools rotate to the next station and the next school homes on the designated transmitter at that station (same distance as prior transmitter from its station). Continue until all schools have competed. Fastest wins, etc. Transmitters used for homing should be similarly visible, and placed in locations to minimize disturbance (so that later competing teams cannot easily follow paths of prior teams).



Orienteering

This is another excellent **academic** field competition, also with great potential for issues. Number of participants per school, as in canoeing and telemetry, has typically been 2, but must be specified. Team have been lost, and this event has often taken much longer than expected (finishing well after dark at times) - careful planning and testing is crucial. Teams are usually told beforehand to bring their own compasses. Declination should be provided, or everyone should be instructed to set to zero!

There are numerous potential variations, but participants typically are given a list with, say, 10 coordinates and distances (may be in feet, yards, meters, or mixed units) and then navigate the course from a given starting point (e.g. travel 145 meters at 30 degrees, then from there 280 feet at 264 degrees, then...etc.), placing a provided marker in the location they believe to be the end point. Closest wins, etc. Time may be incorporated (e.g. add an inch for every minute slower than the fastest time, etc.). A problem with this basic approach is that later teams may simply put their markers near other teams' markers; this can be addressed by pulling each team's marker after it's location has been noted. However, some teams are faster than others and may note a prior team's marker location before it is pulled.

Alternatively, each team may be given a slightly different set of tasks so the finishing points are never the same. This entails more work up front but is much easier and fair to run in real time.

As another alternative, orienteering flags may be at each end-point; teams punch their sheets with the pin-punch on each flag to ensure they navigated in the correct order. Score here is based entirely on time. Teams in this scenario typically go with a few minutes (~5-15) between; this takes a long time, and later schools can usually follow paths from earlier schools...some schools will also invariably just follow right behind others. Multiple courses could be set up to run simultaneously, but parity is a challenge here. Perhaps the most fair and timely way to use orienteering flags is to have a circuit with the same number of flags as schools, and each school starting at a different flag (like the team competition). At a horn blast, all go at once. It would be important that adjacent flags are not visible to each other. This still isn't perfect – trails will still be worn, and some schools will still just fall in behind and follow others. To prevent this, each school could be given a different course. For example, Team A: flag 1, 2, 3; Team B: flag 1, 3, 2; Team C: flag 2, 1, 3; etc.). It would be important that overall distance is the same for each team. Also, it should be carefully considered how to penalize for flags visited out of order (disqualify? Add 5 minutes/flag? Etc.).

A time-efficient test of orienteering skills may follow: create several stations, with several teams/station, like in the telemetry illustration above. Each school is given a list of 3 or 4 directions and distances to travel from each station, and a flag for each. All schools at each station start at the same time and place their flags, then all rotate stations and repeat, continuing until finished. To score, simply add up the distances that each team is off from the correct point for all of their flags; the team with the shortest overall distance off wins, etc. Note: this can take some time to measure and score.

Dendrology

This **academic** field competition is held every year, usually with one participant per school. This is a simple contest and does not take long. The host usually uses live trees, although deciduous species are seldom in leaf during Conclave. Some hosts use herbarium specimens, or combinations of these and live trees; it is highly desired to keep it in the field with live specimens as much as possible. Each participant is provided an answer sheet, and all are taken at once to the first tree; they move on when all have answered or after a specified time has elapsed. If herbarium specimens are used, they are spread around an area and each participant starts at a specimen and rotates at a call. Considerations for improvement on past dendrology competitions:

1-Include more questions. Hosts often limit the competition to 20-25 trees. Since there is usually plenty of time to complete this competition, there could easily be more; say, 50.

2-Consider expanding to other plants (shrubs, forbs, grasses, lianas, etc.)

Lab Practicum

This **academic** field competition is often but not always held. Like the team competition, it involves answering a variety of questions at stations, but only for one participant per team, and without the great distances between stations (typically this is in a single room). Given the similarities to Team Competition, some feel that this competition is redundant, whereas others feel that lab practicum has value because it alone focuses on knowledge of a single individual. Station content can vary widely, with some stations in this event requiring working equations, etc. (logistic growth, Shannon-Weiner, etc.), but stations typically focus on natural history.

Field Photography

This **artistic** event has been included in the field competitions for several years now. Contestants (1 per school) are taken to a natural area, provided the boundaries, and given a set amount of time (typically 1 hour) to take photographs. At the end of the set time, each chooses her/his best photo(s) and provides it/them to the host. Two considerations:

1 – Since this is an artistic competition, it is appropriate to have a qualified artist or artists as judge to avoid the suspicion of bias in this relatively subjective contest. It would be wise to specify beforehand exactly what criteria will be considered in judging and ranking the photographs.

2 – It should be worked out and communicated beforehand how photos will be transmitted from contestants' cameras to the judge's laptop. With a couple of dozen participants, this can take several minutes. If all contestants have SD cards, then they could be provided with blank cards and asked to erase all except one photo. Some may have other types of storage (micro sd, etc.), so a multi-format card reader should be ready to hand. Also, there should be a way to ensure that provided photos were actually taken during the contest (time stamp, etc.).

Additional Competitions

Wildlife Calling

These competitions traditionally have been held during the first evening after dinner (or occasionally split between the first and second evenings). They are usually held sequentially, but due partly to the growing number of participating schools, they have become somewhat lengthy, so some hosts have split the competitions into 2 concurrent sessions, which saves time but disallows anyone from viewing all competitions and precludes any one individual from competing in two concurrent competitions. Having a single venue for all may be favorable, as long as contestants can be moved through in a timely manner (most folks will not have patience to view these competitions for more than a couple of hours). Consider: If 24 participants have ½ minute to practice and 2 minutes to call, that's 1 hour of call time per category. If, however, they have no practice time and ½ minute to call, that's 12 minutes per category, or 1 minute to call = 24 minutes/category. A call time of 45 seconds may be a fair compromise. With multiple categories and a great deal of time for transitions and such, keeping it under 2 hours can be a challenge.

Wildlife Calling Categories have included:

- Waterfowl (this can be ducks, geese, both combined, or both separate)
- Wild Turkey
- Cervid
- Other

Some host schools have included the calling competition as a small percentage of the artistic competition category score (more on scoring later). However, the advisors voted in 2012 that this event should not be included in overall scoring.

Some participants have fun with this event, and some take it quite seriously. The host should be clear how this event will be judged (professional competition rules? Realistic ability for field? Diversity of repertoire? Extra points for "mouth calling" (no artificial calls)? Etc.

It would be prudent to confer with potential judges in determining categories and how each will be judged. It can be very difficult, and potentially arbitrary, for example, to compare ducks to geese, or even Canada to white-fronted geese, or deer to elk. The "Other" category has great potential but can be especially challenging. Some contestants show great skill imitating a large variety of species, which could actually be considered a valuable professional academic skill, whereas others have imitated a variety of domestic animals (this can be quite popular, but is probably of no academic value here).

So, careful consideration should be given regarding (1) timing of event, (2) categories, (3) judging criteria, and (4) how this event fits into overall scoring.

Artistic Submissions

This popular category represents most of the "artistic" points in the overall scoring. Students bring wildlife-themed artwork and submit it during registration. It is typically available for viewing throughout Conclave, and is judged during

this time, and students pick up their submissions after the final dinner or the next morning. Since there is no way to know that the submissions are the work of the submitters, this event depends on the honor system.

Submission categories have included:

- Drawing
- Painting
- Free form (typically anything 3-dimensional – sculpture, carving, taxidermy, etc.)
- Photography (several categories have been used, including
 - Color (this is sometimes divided into non-manipulated and manipulated)
 - Black and white (often not included)
 - Landscapes (often not included)
 - Trail Camera (included more recently)

It should be realized that, since artistic competitions represent a limited percentage of the overall score, the more categories there are, the less each one counts. This may not be a bad thing, given that not everyone may comply with the honor system (above).

Some common rules:

- Must have wildlife theme
- Must be the sole work of the submitter (who must be in attendance)
- Must have been done within the past year
- The submitted artwork must not have won any awards elsewhere
- Drawings, paintings, and photos must be at least 8x12", matted and/or framed (unless on canvas)
- No more than one submission per category per school (some hosts say one per attendee)

A final recommendation: During the awards ceremony, an image of each winning submission (1st – 3rd) should be projected for attendees when the awards are given! This has often been neglected, which the audience finds very frustrating.

Essay Submission

Like the artistic submissions, essays have been submitted at check-in during past years. Participating schools are given a topic and guidelines (length, citations, etc.) a few weeks prior to Conclave; typically no more than one submission was allowed per school. On at least one occasion, a poetry competition was held instead of an essay; the essay is preferable. This event was scored as an academic competition, but has not been conducted in recent years, perhaps due partly to the likelihood that submissions were treated to a wide variety of editorial assistance/input prior to submission.

Because communication is such a critical aspect of our profession, it may be useful to consider ways to continue inclusion of the essay competition. A potential alternative would be to have essays written or typed on-site during the field competitions (one participant per school). Scoring would be a chore, so the works may need to be brief, such as one page maximum. Scoring must be done by well-qualified judges!

During some Conclaves, the winner of the essay competition read her/his essay to the assembly; this was a nice touch, that was a little lengthy, but may be easily feasible with a 1-page limit.

Workshops

Workshops/field trips have been found to work very well during the afternoon of the second full day. A balance between a diversity of workshops, and keeping them of high quality, is important. Consider: 400 students and 10 workshops = 40/workshop. Twenty workshops = 20/workshop. Thirty workshops = 13-14/workshop. Some workshops

can easily accommodate large crowds, but most are best with a much smaller group. Also, some may be effective on site, but most are usually offsite.

Typically, participants are asked on the registration form to list their first, second, and third choice for workshops. Workshops are usually assigned as registration forms are received by the host, so registering earlier increases chances of students from that school getting their first choices. If none of the choices remain available for a student, it is much better for the host to ask for additional preferences, than to randomly assign students to workshops! This takes more work for the workshop coordinator, but is important.

Host schools usually write the workshop name and number on each student's name tag. If the host wishes to allow students to trade workshops, it would make sense to put each student's workshop name and number on a card behind the name tag instead of on the tag itself, but allowing trading of workshops could cause confusion and challenges.

Success of this component of Conclave depends especially on workshop location/subject and how dynamic the leader is, but also on timing and coordination. The host school should consider what habitats, species, and resources they have access to which may be new to participants. The host school should also consider wildlife or professionals they know who are particularly dynamic and engaging! It is quite common for some workshops to involve a good deal of lecture standing beside the van, or even a 1- to 2-hour PowerPoint lecture in a dark room as the entire afternoon event – nobody wants this! Keep it hands-on and engaging! Examples of successful workshops include (but are not limited to):

- Prescribed burning
- Trapping / capture / mistnetting, etc.
- Electrofishing / fish seining, etc.
- Birding and/or herping in habitat endemic to the region
- GIS/GPS
- Photography/Trail cameras
- Use of drones
- Necropsy
- Acoustic monitoring
- Cover letter, resume, and interview preparation
- Woodworking for wildlife (nesting box construction, etc.)
- Waterfowl wing id
- Wildcrafting/camp &/or game cooking

Workshop transportation is one of the most complicated logistical challenges of Conclave. Many vans will be needed (e.g. 400 participants / 12 per van = 33 12-passenger vans). Most host schools reserve all available vans from their motor pools as soon as they know the dates of Conclave. Even this, though, is usually not enough. Some schools have used a local transportation service and claimed that it was a tremendous benefit and well worth the cost. Most schools ask participating schools to help drive to workshops. This is the cheapest route, but carries several complexities. Since only faculty and some qualified students can drive their school vans, it is essential to know who from each school is a qualified driver (and how many vans, and of what size, each school has) so that drivers can be identified for each trip. Assigning drivers, and vans, for each trip can be a bit of a puzzle, so it is especially useful to ask on the registration form for each school to specify number and capacity of vehicles they are bringing, and who is qualified to drive. This allows the host to assign vehicles and drivers to each trip before Conclave begins, and to provide this information to each participating school at registration (if students are allowed to trade workshops, assigned drivers should not be allowed to do so as well!). Even if the host does a great, thorough job asking for all of this information on the registration form, be prepared for many of the schools to not provide this requested information. This may be due to neglect, or more often to not knowing. It will probably be necessary to follow up with several schools for this information. Realize, too,

that some participating schools have policies that prohibit anyone not from their institution from riding in their vehicles. This may be another useful question for the registration forms.

A final challenge of workshop transportation is getting participants to their respective vans. A large parking area helps. A map showing where vans for each workshop should be parked by drivers during lunch prior to the workshops could be provided in the registration packets (have more available at lunch). Then host representatives for each workshop can stand around the lunch area, holding a poster, at the end of lunch, with a coordinator (with a microphone or bullhorn) pointing each out when it's time to go. Allowing sufficient time between lunch and workshop departure will help ensure that students are present and ready to load on vans promptly.

Since the closing banquet occurs after the workshops, and dress for this event is usually a step up from casual, van drivers should expect to drop off participants in their vans at their respective hotels/areas of housing.

Scoring and Awards

Awards are given for 1st through 3rd place in all competitions and also for the overall Conclave score. Traditionally, awards are some sort of plaques (something that makes them unique to the host school is nice), with the exception of the top 3 categories: Quiz Bowl, Team Competition, and Overall. Awards for these 3 often are framed wildlife prints. Commonly, the 1st place overall team takes their pick of the available prints, followed by 1st place Quiz Bowl, followed by 1st place team competition, and repeated for 2nd and 3rd choices. Since overall winner often also is in the top 3 for quiz bowl and team competition, some teams may take home 2 or 3 prints. So, some host schools don't give prints for all 9 of these awards. Creativity here is encouraged; some schools lack sufficient space to hang awarded prints. Additionally, the Quiz Bowl winner receives a traveling cup from the prior year's winner.

Scoring has been one of the most-discussed aspects of Conclave. The host is expected to honor tradition and follow these guidelines. Overall score is based on:

- Team Competition 30%
- Quiz Bowl 25%
- Other competitions 45%
 - Physical competitions 15%
 - Intellectual competitions 15%
 - Artistic competitions 15%

The host school has latitude to add or subtract competitions in the "other" category, with the understanding that the total value of each of the 3 subcategories is 15%. So, for example, the more physical competitions are held, the less each one individually counts.

Since all categories (except, usually, wildlife calling) count toward the overall score, every school must be ranked in every event, including all art and photograph categories and for every station in the Team Field Competition. The average ranking across all stations in the Team Field Competition will be the final overall score (i.e., ranking) for the team field event. The stations in the Team Field Competition should not be scored traditionally as out of 100% or total number correct; instead, station scores must be the rankings for all teams. Otherwise, stations with more questions (e.g., 50 duck wings) carry substantially more weight than a station with fewer questions. All teams that participated in an event are ranked and then all teams that did not participate are ranked as a tie for last. Even if a team participated and scored a zero, the participating teams should be ranked ahead of and separate from schools that did not participate in an event. To prevent skewing the spreadsheet results, scores for schools that tie should be averaged across the range of rankings for the tie. For example, 1st place among 20 schools receives 1 point, 2 ties for 2nd place each receive 2.5 points, and 4th place receives 4 points. As a second example, if 3 teams tied for 7th place, then they occupy 7th, 8th, and 9th place and they receive an average ranking of 8 in the spreadsheet. As another critical example, if 4 teams out of 20 did not participate in field photography, those teams tied for 17th place but the score is the average between 17 and 20

so these schools all score 18.5. The host school must provide a completed spreadsheet with all results to advisors after Conclave, so the spreadsheet should be carefully maintained and checked. It is highly recommended that host schools understand the scoring system before the competition and before setting up events with assistants so that activities are crafted in a manner that they all can be translated into rankings for every school.

Flawed and inconsistent scoring is a very common problem at Conclave. To correct this, an Excel spreadsheet can be found at the Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society website: <http://wildlife.org/se-section/>. It is requested that host schools use this template for scoring all competitions, and that entered scores are carefully vetted by at least one authority with a sound understanding of the scoring system.

Advisor Meetings

One, and sometimes 2, advisor meetings are held during Conclave to discuss various matters and touch on status of future Conclaves. The first (and usually only) meeting is often held between check-in and dinner the first day. Advisors from schools that arrive late may miss this meeting, so having it shortly before dinner or during the game calling competition after dinner may maximize attendance. Some host schools also invite student chapter presidents, but this can increase attendance from around 20 to numbers approaching 40 or more, which can be cumbersome. Having it the first day, though, is important, because there is often a good bit of miscellaneous information for the host school to transmit here at the beginning. A second meeting may be held the second or even last evening but may not be necessary.

The advisor of the host school runs the meeting. Common agenda items may include instructions or other details for various events; requests for information; vehicle arrangements; expectations regarding protocols, behaviors, alcohol, etc.; and a wide range of other topics. It is important to include at least a brief discussion on future Conclaves, during which upcoming hosts verify that they are still on track, etc.

Other Considerations

Eligibility to Attend

Conclave has grown from a relatively modest attendance to the point at which it is difficult to find a venue in the desired natural setting that will hold everyone. In 2012, attendance was limited to 20 participants per school; for some schools this has not been an issue, whereas other schools consistently brought more. An advantage to limiting attendance (beyond ability to accommodate everyone) is that this partially (admittedly not fully) equalizes the competition, with regard to number of competitors per school. However, number of participating schools has steadily increased. 2009 was the first year with 20 schools, and 24 schools have attended at least 2 years. Continued growth may mean attendance growing well beyond 400. A future potential solution would be to hold 2 Conclaves per year (say, East and West, etc.), but this would be complex and would preclude students from seeing many new habitats and ecosystems. A more immediate, simpler alternative would be for the host to get an early fall estimate from advisors of how many schools plan to attend, then set a cap based on that number and their venue's capacity (realizing many schools do not bring the maximum allowable number).

Another common issue has been participation by schools with no attending advisors. This is usually only one or 2 schools with small groups (3 or 4) and has not usually been an issue. At times, however, disciplinary issues have arisen from these groups, and at times it has been a challenge to secure their commitment to host Conclave when it is their turn. This has been a periodic discussion item at the annual advisor meetings and likely will continue to be so.

A final eligibility issue regards attending schools from other TWS Sections. When the Southwest Section Conclave is hosted by a far western state such as Arizona, Stephen F. Austin, Tarleton State, and Texas A&M Kingsville have occasionally attended the Southeastern Section Conclave due to its much nearer proximity. This also has occurred for West Virginia University in the Northeast Section and could occur for Southeast Missouri State University in the North

Central Section. We have always accommodated these schools and would like to continue to. However, there may come a time when their attendance prohibits what we feel is too many of our own students from attending. This, too, has been a periodic discussion item at advisor meetings and will probably continue to be.

Alcohol

Alcohol (primarily beer) has sometimes been prohibited from Conclave, but it has usually been allowed at evening events and is often provided. Two primary problems have occurred related to alcohol. The first is overconsumption and resulting behavioral (and occasionally legal) issues. The second is students bringing alcohol to a location or event at which it is prohibited. Advisors are of divided opinions on whether alcohol should be allowed at Conclave. However the host school deals with alcohol, it should be carefully considered and regulated. In recent years, all participants of legal age are required to wear a provided wrist band before they can possess alcohol. Hand stamps and other traditional marks have also been used successfully.

Communication

Communication between host school and participating schools before and during Conclave is critical. Initial communication occurs by email. An email contact list of advisors exists; there is currently no authority with responsibility for this list. Updating it with new schools and new advisors has generally been done each year by the advisor of the host school. This seems to be a growing challenge; discussion is ongoing (as of May 2018) with the TWS Parent Society, which currently does not release advisor names or contact information, to request that they do so.

Once this list is established, the host school typically asks the participating advisors, via email, for a representative attending student (this may be the student chapter president, Conclave committee chair or representative, etc.). Subsequent emails are sent to both the advisor and the student contact from each attending school.

The second primary form of communication prior to the event is a website, which serves as the entry site for registration, accommodation and event and competition information and rules. Note: competition information and rules should be posted as early as possible in the fall semester, but this information must be followed thereafter, **without changes**.

Initial email communication with advisors by the host advisor should begin at the **very beginning of fall semester**. A **website** with dates, competitions and their rules, attendance limits, etc., should be online as early as possible, but preferably **no later than November 1**. This gives attending schools time to determine which students will attend, and gives attending students time to secure funding and practice/train for their competitions if they wish to (many do!).

Communication at Conclave can occur in a variety of ways. In addition to the advisor meeting and announcements at meals and other events, the host school may use GroupMe, Remind, or other social media messaging services. Host schools have recently incorporated Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc. into the event for fun.

Photographs

Host schools commonly present slideshows of images taken throughout Conclave during the final dinner. These are great fun, but they do require some work and coordination (consider - several concurrent field competitions and workshops); a photo coordinator is suggested. Also, as specified in the artistic competition section, showing slides of winning artistic entries when they are awarded is highly recommended.

Overall stuff

Potential Coordinators (two or more of some responsibilities here may be held by one person)

- Overall head honcho/honchess(es) (typically advisor and student chapter president do this)
- Treasurer
- Fundraising (and perhaps door prize) coordinator
- Registration coordinator
- Registration material coordinator (works with above)
- Lodging coordinator
- Meals coordinator
- Entertainment coordinator
- Wildlife calling coordinator
- Quiz Bowl coordinator (oversees fairly large committee)
- Team Competition coordinator (another fairly large group)
- A coordinator for each field competition (~ 10-12)
- Artistic Submission coordinator
- Scoring and Awards coordinator
- Workshops coordinator
- Website and Social Media coordinator
- Photography coordinator

General Preparation Timeline

- 1 ½ - 1 year prior to event – Secure permission from host school administrators to host. Reserve venue.
- Summer prior to event – Start budgeting and fundraising.
- August – Organize and identify coordinators, committees, duties. Draft budget.
- September – Initial contact with participating schools. Coordinators organize committees and complete plans.
- October – Website up with time, location, cost, and list of competitions with general rules. Workshops finalized.
- November- January – Committees at work (semester ending, Christmas break, semester beginning)
- February – Registration

Summary Tips

- Start early! As soon as you know when you're scheduled to host, nail down the venue, reserve the vans, begin fundraising, start writing quiz bowl questions, and start organizing and assigning duties!
- Google Docs is your friend.
- Early (September-October) and clear communication with advisors is greatly appreciated.
- The devil's in the details. Organize well, assign effective committee chairs, and stay on 'em.
- Get an experienced treasurer, communicate well with them, and stay on top of the budget!
- Don't underestimate how many people you'll need (at times, as many as 4-6 dozen at once, all with different responsibilities).
- Consider where your volunteers will stay... and who will pay for it.
- Host school volunteers often wear Conclave shirts with a different (often brighter) color than participants, so they can be identified if their help is needed. It's nice if their shirts... and lodging...and food... can be free 😊.
- Think through your communication and transitions carefully. There are a lot of moving parts here.
- Host committees may need to meet several times throughout Conclave. Expect to lose some sleep.
- Walkie-talkies help - lots of radios!

- Stick to the plan, but be ready for snafus. Weather (yes, have contingency plan for lightning, tornadoes, wrath-of-God weather), no-show workshop leaders, equipment failure, unforeseen material needs or circumstances, etc. – it will happen. Be chill but be ready.
- Some participants are easygoing. Some are not. Do your best. Eliminate ambiguity from your rules, stick to 'em, be consistent with them, and remind the jerks who nitpick details (and they will) how much you're being paid for this. Maybe set some groundrules for griping at the advisor meeting the first night. There is never justification for a participating student to curse out a host student or advisor.
- Be sure your folks are helpful and courteous to all participants. Keep it fun for everyone!
- Have fun yourselves! This is a big job, but it's a blast to see it all come together. Keep your people on task, but be sure they can enjoy it, too!
- The last night of Conclave, be sure to acknowledge your people – they've worked hard! Also, remember to write thank you letters to all of your additional helpers (workshop leaders, donors, etc.)

Acknowledgements

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-Eric Pelren, University of Tennessee at Martin.

Table 1. An incomplete history of the Southeastern Wildlife Student Conclave.

Year	Host School	# Attendees	Notes/ Comments
1972	U TN Knoxville		Held jointly with SEAFWA conference
1973	U AR Monticello		Held jointly with SEAFWA conference
1974	cancelled		cancelled due to high cost at SEAFWA
1975	cancelled		cancelled due to high cost at SEAFWA
1976			no records
1977	Auburn U		first independently held conclave
1978	Eastern KY U		
1979	MS State U	10	
1980	U GA		
1981	VA Tech U		
1982	LA State U		
1983	U FL	9	
1984	TX A&M U		
1985	Auburn U	9	
1986	OK State U	8	
1987	MS State U	11	
1988	Murray State U	10	
1989	TN Tech U	10	
1990	U GA	11	
1991	Stephen F. Austin	10	
1992	U FL	14	
1993	U TN Knoxville	11	
1994	Auburn U	13	
1995	NC State U		
1996	Clemson U	13	First Year for Team Competition
1997	VA Tech U	12	
1998	Eastern KY U	14	
1999	LA State U	17	
2000	MS State U		
2002	Murray State U		
2003	Haywood CC		
2004	AR State		
2005	U Florida	17	
2006	TN Tech U	16	
2007	U GA		ABAC's first year
2008	U TN Martin	18	
2009	AR Tech & U AR Monticello	20	
2010	Frostburg State U	21	
2011	Auburn U		
2012	U TN Knoxville	24	WCU's first year; First year to limit to 400
2013	NC State	22	Cleveland State's first year
2014	Clemson U	21	
2015	Virginia Tech	22	
2016	Eastern KY U		
2017	Mississippi State U	24	
2018	LA State U	20	

Table 2. Student Chapters of TWS in Southeastern Section, and tentative Conclave host schedule.

	State	School	City	Tentative Host Year
1	Arkansas	AR State U	Jonesboro	2023
2		AR Tech	Russellville	2028 (w/UAM)
3		U AR	Fayetteville	
4		U AR	Monticello	2028 (W/AR Tech)
5	Alabama	Auburn U	Auburn	2030
6		AL A&M	Huntsville	
7	Florida	U Florida	Gainesville	2024
8	Georgia	Abraham Baldwin Ag. College	Tifton	2019, 2038
9		U GA	Athens	2026
10	Kentucky	Eastern KY U	Richmond	2035
11		Murray State U	Murray	2022
12	Louisiana	LA State U	Baton Rouge	2037
13		LA Tech	Ruston	
14	Maryland	Frostburg State U	Frostburg	2029
15		U Maryland	College Park	
16	Mississippi	MS State U	MS State	2036
17		Delta State U	Cleveland	
18	North Carolina	Haywood CC	Clyde	2020 (w/ WCU)
19		NC State U	Raleigh	2032
20		U NC	Wilmington	
21		Western Carolina U	Cullowhee	2020 (W/Haywood)
22	Oklahoma	OK State U	Stillwater	
23	South Carolina	Clemson U	Clemson	2033
24	Tennessee	Austin Peay State U	Clarksville	
25		Cleveland CC	Cleveland	2021
26		Lincoln Memorial U	Harrogate	
27		TN Tech	Cookeville	2025
28		U TN	Knoxville	2031
29		U TN	Martin	2027
30	Virginia	Radford U	Radford	
31		VA Tech	Blacksburg	2034

Appendix 1. An example Conclave registration form.

20XX Southeastern Wildlife Student Conclave Registration

One form should be completed and mailed per school (Forms will not be accepted by individual students)

Forms postmarked on or before 2/10/20xx = \$120/person

Forms postmarked between 2/10/20xx & 2/20/20xx = \$130/person

Registration deadline is 2/20/20xx.

Registration covers:

Thursday dinner, all Friday and Saturday meals

Registration bag, nametag, t-shirt, events and entertainment

(Rooms are not covered by registration)

Mail completed spreadsheet with check to:

John Doe

100 Wildlife Hall

(etc.)

Make check out to: xxx

Workshops (see following page for workshop descriptions)

Each registrant rank 1st 3 preferences

1. Wildlife Damage Management
2. Wildlife Forensics
3. Bottomland Hardwood Reforestation
4. Upland Forest Management
5. X tour
6. Nongame Surveys
7. Native Warm Season Grass Management
8. Mussel Harvest and Management
9. Native Savannah Restoration
10. Wildlife Law Enforcement

(etc.)

*The X tour will include dinner and return late.

School Name:

Number and capacity of vehicles (for assistance driving to workshops):

Participating in Quiz Bowl? (Yes or No):

Participant (will be on name tag)	T-shirt size	Workshop Choice			Check if Veg./Vegan
		1st	2nd	3rd	
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
.					
.					
.					
20. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Note: Please specify advisors with a star to the left and circle names of all eligible drivers!