

Tom Bennett Art and Environmental Science Contest 2011  
San Bernardino County Museum Association  
**Wetlands Conservation**

---

**Individual and Family Poster Design Guidelines**

**The Basics**

Decide which kind of poster you or your family would like to create – an informational piece, an invitation to attend an event, or a persuasive piece to encourage taking action. Consider the abilities and interests of the members of your family when deciding how to design your poster. Choose a topic within the subject of wetlands conservation that will be fun for you or your family to learn about and illustrate.

Poster entries must contain references to wetlands habitats that occur in southern California. Posters can contain or promote either real or make-believe events or actions. If you invent an event to promote, make sure it sounds realistic. Persuasive posters should present and support an action or concept that you/your own family can relate to.

***Informational poster***

Posters may be used to share or provide information. They can be simple or complex, depending on their purpose. Either way, they are most effective if they are presented simply and clearly. Graphics and images help get the message across, illustrating what the written part describes.

Information poster entries should contain real and accurate information related to wetlands in southern California. Many references give information about different types of wetlands. Keep your focus small and local, and you will increase your success with an informational poster.

Examples of Topics for Informational Posters:

- Describe the pond habitat of a city park that is popular with people in the neighborhood.
- Detail the life history of one or more plants or animals that live in wetlands. Everyone has heard of cattails, but what do you really know about them?
- Wetlands in California have been depleted by over 90% of what they were 300 years ago. Describe this fact, or the impact this change has had on wildlife.

### ***Invitation to attend an event***

Nature festivals occur all over the world. People get together to celebrate nature, learn about plants and wildlife in their area, and have fun. An event poster addresses these basic questions: what, where, when, event purpose and details like admission fees and special attractions. Event posters convince people that the event will be worthwhile to attend, and give all the information needed to get people there.

Invitation posters should make the event sound like fun. You/your family may design a poster to promote a real event that will be happening soon, or even one that has recently passed. Or, you may invent an event that celebrates wetlands. A good way to find an event, or to get inspiration for a make-believe event that sounds like fun, is to search the Internet for “wetlands festivals” and surf from there. Remember that the event, either real or invented, must somehow relate to or take place in southern California.

[http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/unleashed/2010/05/happy-international-migratory-bird-day.html?utm\\_source=twitterfeed&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/unleashed/2010/05/happy-international-migratory-bird-day.html?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter)

This site contains an example of an event that can be promoted with a poster.

### ***Persuasive position poster***

Persuasive posters attempt to change people’s behavior. Exploring nature, and in particular wetlands, is a fun and popular activity, and a poster might entice people to take it up as a hobby. A poster might offer easy steps for people to take at home to lessen their impact. Some migratory birds depend on healthy wetlands habitats in their breeding and winter ranges as well as all along the way during migration, so a poster might encourage people to preserve natural areas so the birds have reliable stop-overs for their long journeys. Preventing the drainage and development of wetland areas is another pursuit that will support wildlife and people alike.

Persuasive arguments are most effective if they are simple and clear. Too much information can make the topic or issue confusing. Too little information will not convince the viewer to change their behavior or take up a new activity. Select a topic that you/your family is already familiar with, or that you already take action for. This will help members express why they take their position. A simple action on behalf of wetlands can be as effective as a complex action or major lifestyle change. Remember – think simple for this endeavor!

### ***Artists Statement***

Each poster entry must be accompanied by an “artist statement.” This is the artist’s chance to describe what motivated them to create the art work, in this case a poster. A brief description of the individual’s or family’s interest in the topic and why you chose the type of poster you created helps museum visitors and the judges understand the content. Each family member’s name and the ages of participating children should be included in the artist’s statement.

**Some hints for researching wetlands:**

Start with the resources given in this program guide. Online sources are helpful for locating wetlands habitats of your region, especially those websites of local and state agencies and wildlife organizations such as Audubon Society or California Fish and Game Department. Be aware that many popular reference books and websites are very generic, and will not give specific information about plant and animal species that occur in southern California.

**Designing your poster**

Once you have decided on a topic and which type of poster you will be creating, do a little brainstorming. What sort of graphics will help illustrate your topic? How much information is needed to get the point across? To be effective, information should be clear and straight forward. Illustrations support the topic by including elements that are best understood through visual presentation, such as what a bird species looks like or migration maps.

Write out the information, event details or persuasive argument first. Then talk about what illustrations you could use. Next, sketch a few layout ideas. Balance the amount of written information with illustrations, and balance elements across the page.

Once you have your sample design, begin creating your poster. If you are working with your family, make sure that each family member contributes something to the poster. Handwritten work is acceptable and with some fancy lettering, adds to the overall look.

Be aware that the rules for this competition explicitly state that you may not use copyrighted work, either prose or images, unless you give it proper citation. When designing your poster, keep your artistic ability and confidence in mind. Do not simply cut pictures from a magazine or print them from a website and present them as your own work on a poster entry. Any such entry will be disqualified.

**Poster requirements and parameters**

- Your poster must be at least 11" X 17", but may not exceed 30" in either direction.
- Posters should be 2-dimensional, but may have 3-dimensional elements added as long as they rise less than three-quarters of an inch off the poster surface.
- Make sure all 3-dimensional or add-on elements, if used, are securely adhered to the poster. Some posters will be displayed vertically.
- NO ORGANIC MATERIALS may be used on the poster, such as real feathers or leaves. Feathers, moss or other organic materials purchased at a craft store are acceptable.

- Posters must be accompanied by the individual or family “artist statement.” This includes the names of family members, ages of children under 18, and a brief description of why the poster subject is meaningful to you or your family.
- Paperclip the artist statement to the front of the poster for submission. The statement may be type- or hand-written, but must be legible. It will be exhibited next to the poster.

**Judging criteria**

Judges will evaluate poster entries based on accuracy of information and creativity in presentation. For family entries, they will be looking for the contributions of each family member based on the names and ages given on the artist statement, to ensure that all members have contributed to the entry. Remember, simplicity is effective in a poster – simple designs and simple messages make a good presentation that is easy for the reader to follow and absorb. Poster entries that exceed maximum size requirements or that contain organic materials will be scored but will not be displayed during the Wildlife Art Festival.