

# *SOUTHERN EXPOSURES* PHOTO CONTEST INFORMATION AND RULES

**Please read carefully!**

**PURPOSE:** The contest encourages self-expression and allows youth to gain a lifetime skill, connect to nature, learn about the environment and have fun outdoors.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Develop a connection and appreciation for the environment and wildlife
- Develop a life skill helpful in school and business
- Share a message of conservation through the eyes of youth
- Promote and strengthen student's self-image

**BY ENTERING THIS COMPETITION, YOU AGREE TO THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

**1. WHO IS ELIGIBLE:** SEPC is open to youth photographers who are between the ages of 5 to 18 years old as of the beginning date of the Photo Contest and who have the consent of a parent or legal guardian. Photos must be the original art of the entrant. VLF reserves the right to verify, in its sole judgment, entrant eligibility.

**2. HOW TO ENTER:** NO PURCHASE NECESSARY, it's FREE! All contestants must register online at [valleylandfund.com](http://valleylandfund.com) (click Photo Contest) and complete a registration form, and provide contact information. Contestants must agree to these rules by checking the appropriate box online. Contestants can then begin uploading their images. You do not need to upload all photos at once. You may return to your account page at any time by logging in with your username and password.

**3. CONTEST ENTRY PERIOD:** SEPC begins on July 1, 2022. All entries must be received through [valleylandfund.com](http://valleylandfund.com) by 5:00 PM Central Standard Time on August 1, 2022. To avoid uploading delays, do not wait until the final days of the contest to enter. In past years, the large number of entrants trying to upload their photos just prior to the final deadline caused technical problems that left them unable to enter.

**4. ELIGIBILITY OF PHOTOS:** All photographs must have been taken by the contestant. Photographers are allowed to submit up to six (6) photos which must be nature-related. Pictures may be of any aspect of nature within the eight (8) counties of South Texas: Brooks, Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, Starr, Willacy, and Zapata. Respect for animal habitats must be observed. No photos of domestic, restrained, or caged animals will be accepted.

**5. WHAT PHOTOS TO ENTER:** We are looking for striking color images of nature—on land or in the air. These images may show animal behavior, portraits of wildlife in natural habitats, plant life, natural landscapes, or patterns in nature. DO NOT include photographs of pets, domestic animals, captive animals at game farms or roadside zoos, or animals from such facilities photographed elsewhere with the handler's control. Such images will be disqualified.

**6. ETHICS:** Valley Land Fund requires all participants to use extreme caution to protect the survival of the subject being photographed. Photographers should make every effort to avoid any action that might interfere with natural wildlife behavior. Contest entrants must not submit images that involve the willful harassment of wildlife or damage to the environment.

**7. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:** Only digitally uploaded images can be entered. Mailed or shipped entries will not be accepted. Contestants encountering technical problems while uploading may contact (956) 686-6429 or email [debralee@valleylandfund.com](mailto:debralee@valleylandfund.com)

In order to be displayed in our online gallery without being stretched or distorted, photographs must be submitted in .jpeg, or .jpg format, at least 2,000 pixels wide and no larger than 10 MB.

We do not accept photographs submitted through the mail. High-quality scans of non-digital photographs are acceptable. Digital photographs should be taken at the highest resolution possible.

Finalists must be prepared to submit an original if requested. The Valley Land Fund reserves the right to disqualify incomplete entries and/or contestants who are unable to submit, upon request, a high-resolution photograph of at least 300 dpi at 3,000 pixels on the longest side. Mobile photographs are exempt from this size requirement but must be submitted at their highest resolution upon request.

All photographs should accurately reflect the subject matter and the scene as it appeared. Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization will be disqualified. Acceptable alterations include adjustments to color, contrast, brightness, and sharpness; removal of dust and scratches; cropping (DO NOT CROP SQUARE)

**8. NO CATEGORIES:** Photographers can submit images of anything in our natural world such as...

- **Wild Animals in Nature:** Basically six (6) types of animals – Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Fish, Amphibians, and Invertebrates.
- **Botanical:** Anything plant – trees, shrubs, plant flowers, cacti, and more; find something unusual.
- **Natural Water Areas:** Ponds, creeks, lakes, beaches, and/or other.
- **Close-Up/Close-In:** Get close up. Use a combination of zooming in and moving closer to crop in as tightly as you can on your chosen detail.
- **Landscapes:** The art of capturing pictures of nature and the outdoors in a way that brings your viewer into the scene.
- **Day or Night:** Photo may be taken at any time of the day or night.

**9. JUDGING:** Photographs will be judged on originality, technical excellence, composition, overall impact, and artistic merit. All decisions are final and binding.

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD-WINNING PHOTOGRAPHS**

- **IMPACT** – What do you think when you see the photograph? Great images evoke emotions such as wonder, pride, anger, sadness, and laughter.
- **CREATIVITY** – Is the photograph original, fresh, and an extension of your personality?
- **TECHNICAL** – Is the quality of the image good? Make sure the image is not blurred!
- **COMPOSITION** – This is important – design your image. Make sure it's pleasing to the viewer.
- **SUBJECT MATTER** – The contest hopes that all can see "nature through the eyes of children." So, make sure the subject matter is located in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and related to nature. The beautiful thing about nature is that wildlife is FREE, and thus "caged animals" or "trained animals" do not qualify for this particular contest.
- **STORYTELLING** – Does your photography tell a story? Art should have a message.

**10. AWARDS AND PRIZES:** Every child is a winner! One winning image per contestant will be featured in an Outdoor Exhibit and Artist Reception, plus receive a free VLF Tote Bag that includes a T-Shirt, nature photography coffee table book, and free entrance to Awards Ceremony, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm at Quinta Mazatlán. The Valley Land Fund will select 10 finalists, 3 winners from each age division, and 1 Grand Prize winner.

**11. BINDING AGREEMENT:** In order to enter the SEPC, the Contestant must agree to these Official Rules ("Rules"). Because these Rules form a legally binding agreement with respect to this Contest, please read them carefully. If the Contestant does not agree to the Rules, the Contestant is not eligible to participate in the SEPC or to win any of the prizes. Entrant agrees that his/her registration as an individual participant under the SEPC constitutes his/her agreement to these Rules.

**12. OWNERSHIP & USE OF IMAGES:** Entrants retain ownership and all other rights to future use of the photographs they enter. In addition, entry to the contest constitutes your agreement to all your entered photographs to be used for promotion by the VLF for their purposes, including, but not limited to, production of brochures, promotion of future contests, public relations, advertising, education, books, traveling photo gallery and other media, without compensation.

**13. HOW TO CONTACT US:** For questions and inquiries regarding contest rules or guidelines, please email Debralee Rodriguez at [debralee@valleylandfund.com](mailto:debralee@valleylandfund.com) or call (956) 686-6429.