



"Shoot the Hills" Photography Competition

Competition Rules & Policies

*Thank you for participating in the
2015 Shoot the Hills
Photography Competition!*

COMPETITION RULES & POLICIES

I. ALL DIVISIONS

- a. Shoot the Hills Photography Competition strives to honestly promote the living, lifestyle, and natural history of the Hocking Hills Region. All participants must respect these goals.
- b. Shoot the Hills Photography Competition is open to photographers of all ages: amateur, professional, and juniors alike, regardless of gender, race, or nationality.
- c. In order to be eligible for participation in Shoot the Hills Photography Competition, a photographer must;
 - i. Agree to and abide by all Rules & Policies associated with the competition.
 - ii. Complete the registration form.
 - iii. Pay the appropriate registration fee(s).
 - iv. Sign the Agreement to Participate. (Photographers under the age of 18 require a co-signature by a parent or legal guardian.)
 - v. Additionally, photographers under the age of 18 are required to have a completed and signed Parental Consent form.
- d. Model releases and/or property releases will be required of winning entries if applicable.
- e. Current Shoot the Hills judges, auditors, and committee members are ineligible to enter.
- f. All entries must photograph within the boundaries of the Shoot the Hills Photography Competition region. The competition boundaries are marked or divided by county lines. The only Ohio counties that are included in this competition are: Hocking County, Fairfield County, Athens County, and Vinton County. The subject matter or scene of entries must be within the boundaries of this said region.
- g. No entry may be vulgar; offensive to ethnic, religious, or minority groups; or determined by the judges to be unsuitable for "family" viewing. Photographers are strongly advised to use their best judgment to ensure that an entry is "appropriate." But if discrepancies or public concerns are raised, a majority of judges have the right to disqualify any entry.
- h. Winners in all divisions will be announced at the Shoot the Hills Awards Program at the end of the weekend. Photographers do not need to be present to win. However, the recipient may be responsible for charges to have awards shipped. The method of shipping is at the discretion of the Shoot the Hills Committee and Friends of the Hocking Hills State Park. Winners not present at the awards program will be notified by mail and/or telephone at which time delivery of awards will be determined.
- i. Copyright of all entries remain the property of the photographer. While the copyright of the winning images belong to the respective photographers, the winning images may be published or printed and used by officials of Shoot the Hills, Hocking Hills State Park, Friends of Hocking Hills State Park, Ohio State Parks, Hocking Hills Tourism Association, and/or its designees for editorial uses, promotional purposes, advertising, and/or the production of merchandise items relating to the event. No additional compensation (other than the original prize) will be made to photographers; and a photographer's eligibility in this competition is contingent upon this agreement. Proper photo credit will be given to each published photograph; however, in the event of an erroneous oversight or misprint, the organization, the competition officials, and related agencies will not be held liable for real or perceived "damages." However, a correction or retraction may be published to correct any misprinting or oversight.
- j. Photographers of Shoot the Hills Photography Competition agree that any and all photographs or images made of them or their likeness during the competition may be published and/or reproduced by officials of Shoot the Hills, Hocking Hills State Park, Friends of Hocking Hills State Park, Ohio State Parks, Hocking Hills Tourism Association, and/or any of its designees for editorial uses, promotional purposes, and/or advertising relating to the event. His/her name may or may not be published as identification. No compensation will be made to photographers for this use. In the case of a photographer under the age of 18, a parent or guardian must consent to these conditions.
- k. Photographers and/or their families will hold harmless officials, judges, and volunteers of Shoot the Hills, Hocking Hills State Park, Friends of Hocking Hills State Park, Ohio State Parks, and Hocking Hills Tourism Association; as well as event sponsors and vendors, and their employees, in the event of loss, personal injury, or death as a result of participating in Shoot the Hills Photography Competition. Photographers are solely responsible for their own well-being, safety, and protection—even though safety rules and/or regulations may be in place in designated areas. A photographer's eligibility in this competition is contingent upon this agreement. In the case of a photographer under the age of 18, a parent or guardian must consent to these terms and conditions.
- l. These rules and policies are subject to change without notice; and additional regulations or restrictions may be added by Shoot the Hills Photography Competition officials as a condition of participation.
- m. ALL DECISIONS BY SHOOT THE HILLS OFFICIALS ARE FINAL.

II. TECHNICAL DIVISION (Traditional 24-hour Weekend Event)

There are three levels in the Technical Division: Simply Starting (Beginner Level), Simply Snap (Intermediate Level), and Simply Raw (Advanced Level). A photographer may enter the Technical Division one time in one of the three levels.

- a. **Simply Starting (Beginner):** This level is recommended for beginners or those who have not previously placed in a prior Shoot the Hills Competition.
 - i. We recommend that all digital photography novices enter this division, even if they use an SLR camera.
 - ii. We also discourage "intermediate" and "advanced" photographers from entering this division in the pursuit of fairness.
 - iii. In this division, entries should be captured in the highest-quality JPEG mode offered by the camera. (For example, we recommend using a setting, such as "Fine," versus "Basic." Please keep in mind that terminology and descriptions of these settings may vary between camera make and model.)
 - iv. To assist photographers in this entry-level group, representatives of Shoot the Hills will provide "Help Desks" with representatives who may help download memory cards for the contestants to select their entries. These representatives may also help to:
 1. Rename the chosen files appropriately
 2. Burn said images onto the official media (CD, DVD, or USB drive provided by Shoot the Hills).

Even though this free service is being provided, it is highly recommended that competitors strive to master these tasks before the competition.
- b. **Simply Snap (Intermediate):** This level is recommended for intermediate level photographers who are familiar with the functionality of their camera and its capabilities. Participants in this level must be able to download the images from their camera and save them to external media.
 - i. Enhancements, edits, features, and etc. that are part of your cameras capabilities are acceptable in this level. (i.e. black/white, panoramic, color/light enhancements)
 - ii. In this level, entries should be captured in the highest-quality JPEG mode offered by the camera. (For example, we recommend using a setting, such as "Fine," versus "Basic." Please keep in mind that terminology and descriptions of these settings may vary between camera make and model.)
 - iii. Post processing, software edits are not permitted.
 - iv. Photographers are expected to copy their own entries onto the competition media (CD, DVD or USB drive provided by the Shoot the Hills competition). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that photographers will bring (or have at their access) the necessary computer hardware, software, and/or skills to achieve this. While official representatives of Shoot the Hills may be available to answer questions; they are not permitted to do any of the preparatory work for photographers in this division.
 - v. "Advanced" photographers are discouraged from entering this division in the pursuit of fairness.
- c. **Simply Raw (Advanced)** This division is recommended for experienced photographers, and those who can abide by the advanced requirements of this division. However, if you cannot shoot in the camera's RAW mode or do not understand these requirements, you must enter the Simply Snap Level instead.
 - i. All entries must be shot in the camera's RAW mode only (not in JPEG, TIFF, or other "quality" mode). We understand that different camera manufacturers use specific proprietary "file extensions" to represent a camera's RAW mode (i.e. Nikon maybe ".nef" and Canon may be ".crw"). Regardless of the way a camera names the RAW files, entries must only be captured in the camera's RAW mode.
 - ii. The camera's RAW mode must be supported by Adobe Photoshop Creative Suite or higher. (NOTE: If you are uncertain, please see a Technical Division Representative before you begin the competition, or *research this in advance of the competition. [*Be aware that in many locations in the Hocking Hills State Park wireless Internet service is not available.])
 - iii. All entries in the Simply Raw level must be submitted as a RAW file.
 1. A JPEG derivative will not be accepted.
 2. Adjustments/edits pre or post processing will not be accepted. (No cropping, etc.)

- iv. Photographers are expected to copy their own entries onto the competition media (CD, DVD or USB Drive provided by the Shoot the Hills competition). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that photographers will bring (or have at their access) the necessary computer hardware, software, and/or skills to achieve this. While official representatives of Shoot the Hills may be available to answer questions; they are not permitted to do any of the preparatory work for photographers in this division.
- d. There are five competition categories in the Technical Division (Landscape, Flora, Wildlife, Human Interest in Nature, and Abstract in Nature). Photographers may enter up to a total of five (5) entries per registration in the judged division; BUT may not enter any more than two (2) images in any single category per registration. Definitions for the judged categories are listed below. If an entry has qualifying characteristics of more than one category, the photographer should select the "most appropriate" category in his/her opinion.
 - i. **Landscape** is defined as scenic view or overview of a particular region or land, showing an area's terrain and/or diversity in ecosystem(s). It may include landmarks and geological highlights, as well as land, sky, and bodies of water. While it may include wildlife and/or people, emphasis should be on the habitat or terrain.
 - ii. **Flora** is defined as a non-artificial plant, plant life, or part thereof. In the event of ties while judging, preference will be given to native Ohio plants and wildflowers. Picking of wild plants is strictly prohibited, but photographers may photograph cultivated species if desired as long as wild plants are not uprooted, damaged, cut, or picked.
 - iii. **Wildlife** is defined as a wild animal or part thereof. In the event of ties while judging, preference will be given to untamed and uncontrolled species that are photographed under natural conditions; although, legally controlled or rehabilitating wildlife may be photographed. Animals must not be harassed or stressed during the photographic process.
 - iv. **Human Interest in Nature** is defined as an image that illustrates human interest in nature. The image may show or imply a person or persons participating in an outdoor activity or interest, or encountering/experiencing nature in some way (posed or natural). The image may also portray or imply a person's presence, such as his/her shadow, silhouette, or footprint, for example. The subject(s) must be outdoors. We recommend that photographers obtain written permission of any person(s) appearing in their photographs if the subject(s) appear close-up or are easily identifiable in the photographs. Model release forms will be available in the registration area of the Hocking Hills Lodge during competition hours.
 - v. **Abstract in Nature** is defined as an image where the subject is not necessarily identifiable. This is a category where "less is more," meaning that a good abstract might only include part of a whole subject. Photographers are encouraged to regard lines, patterns, textures, and/or subject movement for greater appeal.
- e. The inclusion of "props" (defined as a subject, object, or item; manmade or natural; foreign or native) is discouraged if the "prop" or use thereof does not accurately represent or depict the region or natural history of the competition coverage area. Likewise, the use of "props" that are intended to falsely represent or inappropriately depict the area will be graded poorly and may be eliminated in the pre-judging round as this diminishes the spirit of the competition.
- f. All entries must be captured within the 24-hour legal shooting period of this contest to qualify for entry. The dates and times pertaining to this and other deadlines may vary from year to year, and are listed on our website.
- g. **Photographer's Choice:** Registered photographers in the Technical Division may also enter one (1) image per ID Number in the Photographer's Choice category.
 - i. A winning Photographer's Choice photo will be recognized in each level.
 - ii. Though not a judged category, Photographer's Choice is defined as any remaining image from a registered memory card that the photographer chooses.
 - iii. This is considered to be an "open" category. Photographer's Choice is not limited to any particular subject (as long as it is not in violation of any other rule); and may, in fact, fit as well into another category.
 - iv. Only Technical Division registered photographers may vote in this category. Photographers may have only one vote per registration ID Number in the level they entered, and may not vote for themselves or in another level.
 - v. The entry receiving the most votes in each level will be the Photographer's Choice winner.
- h. All qualifying images must be captured on the photographer's own memory card. Digital media cards are not provided by Shoot the Hills.
 - i. Photographers may use only one memory card/one camera per registration/entry #.

1. It is, therefore, recommended that photographers use memory cards that can hold a maximum number of images, suited for their particular camera (i.e. use a 4GB memory card versus a 1GB memory card if possible).
2. The memory card must be designated for use in one camera only and formatted/verified in that camera (see section i. – Verification)
 - ii. Entries may only be submitted from the designated and verified memory card.
- i. Upon registering, each photographer must proceed through the specific "Verification Process" to help ensure fairness to all during the competition. This process will be witnessed by officials of Shoot the Hills.
 - i. First, the photographer will designate a specific memory card for use during the contest. It may be of any size that fits the camera.
 - ii. Next, the photographer must verify the correct date and time in his or her camera. (Please know how to access this feature to expedite this step).
 - iii. Lastly, the photographer **MUST REFORMAT** the memory card intended for use in the competition. (Please do NOT use a memory card that you do not or cannot reformat!
- j. After the Verification Process, photographers will then be instructed to photograph a predetermined subject (a "contest starter") as the first photo on the memory card used for the competition. This photo must not be deleted. ***All winners may be required to have this particular image certified by the judges as being captured on the same memory card the photographer used for the contest. Officials will proceed to review and check the card's files if questions of authenticity or other concerns arise. False entries (those coming from other memory cards or those not shot during the competition) will be disqualified.***
- k. Photographers are restricted from altering their digital images after capture in a way that falsely represents the original scene at the time of capture. This means that image modifications, performed by photo editing software (such as Adobe Photoshop or similar software programs), are not acceptable.
 - i. **Exceptions: THESE APPLY ONLY TO THE SIMPLY STARTING and SIMPLY SNAP DIVISION.** Edits made in camera are permitted. The use of photo editing software is NOT acceptable. Images that violate these rules or undermine the integrity of these rules will be disqualified. When in doubt, leave "as shot."
- l. All entries must be received in the designated area and manner by or before the contest deadline. It is the photographers' responsibility to know and meet all contest deadlines.
- m. Blank media (CD, DVD or USB Drive) will be provided for entries. All entries must be submitted on the media provided by Shoot the Hills, and remain the property of Shoot the Hills.
- n. When submitting media, it should be marked as follows for discrete identification. The front of the media must contain the following information:
 - i. Only photographer's assigned ID number
 - ii. Not his/her name, address, or contact information
 - iii. **File Renaming:** All entries in the Technical Division (Simply Starting, Simply Snap, Simply Raw, and Photographer's Choice) must be submitted on the media provided by Shoot the Hills. **ONLY THE ENTRIES** should be burned onto the media, NOT the entire memory card!
 - iv. Photographers must modify the file names of the images to be submitted for competition. This will enable officials to identify and credit photographers as needed. File names of the images to be burned onto the media should begin with the photographer's ID number followed by an underscore then the camera file number.

For example, if your ID number is 1234, one of your entries might be named: ID1234_DSC_XXXX. *(The latter part of this example should represent the actual image number as assigned by the camera.)*

If the photographer is entering two (2) images in the same category, he or she should put an "a" immediately after the ID number on the first image, and a "b" immediately after the ID number on the second image.

For this example, again if your ID number is 1234, you would add the "a" or "b" following your ID number as show here: ID1234a_DSC_XXXX; and ID1234b_DSC_XXXX

- o. **Judging Procedures:** After a round of pre-judging (each Level judged separately), final entries will be scored by five judges independently in the following four skill areas.
 1. Artistic Merit & Composition (1-10 points)
 2. Technical Quality (1-10 points)
 3. Originality (1-10 points)

4. Level of Photographic Challenge (1-10 points)
- ii. Winners of the Simply Starting, Simply Snap, and Simply Raw levels will be named according to "score ranking" in each level.
- iii. The entry from the Technical Divisions (both Simply Snap and Simply Raw) with the highest overall score will be named as the "Grand Prize" winner, regardless of Category. A "Grand Prize" will not be awarded in the Simply Starting Level.

III. SIMPLY CREATIVE DIVISION

This division allows photographers creativity to manipulate their work post processing in external software applications.

- a. Photographers may enter 1 photo per Simply Creative Division entry fee.
- b. Entries may be submitted via email to info@shootthehills.com or digitally in person. (Shoot the Hills is not responsible for images not received due to technical failure.)
- c. Photographers may enter as many times as they wish.
- d. Entries may include any subject or topic as long as they are within the general competition guidelines in section - I. g.
- e. Entries may be from any time period. The date and location must be included on the entry form.
- f. Photographers do not have to be present to enter and/or win.
- g. All entries must be received by 7:00 pm on Saturday of the competition weekend.
- h. In order to be eligible:
 - i. Entries must meet the competition general guidelines of subject matter and geographic area.
 - ii. Entries must be the work of the photographer who is named on the entry form.
 - iii. Image Specifications:
 1. **Image Size** should have a long dimension of at least 1000 pixels and no more than 3000 pixels
 2. **Save file as (JPG)** with maximum quality.
 3. **Color Space** should be Adobe1998, sRGB or untagged color space.
 4. **File Size** should be no more than 4 Mb
 5. **All Submitted Entries are FINAL** and cannot be replaced, deleted or edited by Shoot the Hills.
- i. **Judging Procedures:** After a round of pre-judging, final entries will be scored by five judges independently in the following four skill areas.
 1. Artistic Impression (1-10 points)
 2. Composition (1-10 points)
 3. Technical Excellence (1-10 points)
 4. Storytelling (1-10 points)
- j. Winners will be named according to "score ranking".
- k. Winners will be announced during the Shoot the Hills Photography Weekend Awards Program. Winners who are not present will be notified by mail and/or telephone. (See General Policies regarding shipment of awards.)
- l. In order to be published, the winners must submit a high resolution digital copy of the winning image to Shoot the Hills within 30 days of notification of the award.