

37th Annual Nisqually Watershed Festival

Poster Contest



Celebrating the Nisqually Watershed! Saturday, September 26th, 2026

This festival celebrates the environmental, cultural, historical, and economic stories of this unique river basin in South Puget Sound. Students can take part in the awards ceremony as well as a variety of free family-friendly events and activities!

This year's contest theme is
"Birds of the Watershed"!

Choose a bird native to the Nisqually Watershed!

See page 3 for more information and resources.

All poster mediums are welcome: paint, colored pencil, pastel, marker, etc.

The poster must be 8.5x11, 11x17, or 12x18 inches in size.

Any posters with words on the front (including names, labels, signs, etc.) will be **DISQUALIFIED**.

To submit your poster:

Fill out and glue or tape entry form to the back of the poster.

Mail to:

Nisqually Watershed Festival Poster Contest
100 Brown Farm Rd.
Olympia, WA 98516

Or Hand Deliver to:

Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually
National Wildlife Refuge
100 Brown Farm Road
Olympia, WA 98516
9AM-4PM in the Admin Office Mon-Fri or
Visitor Center Sat-Sun

Or Submit Digitally at:

nrep.nisquallyriver.org/nisqually-watershed-festival

**Submission Deadline:
Monday June 1st 2026**

For questions, please contact Shelby Anderson at nisquallyeducation@fws.gov (360) 753-9467
or Julia Fregonara at julia@nisquallyriver.org or (360) 438-8715 ext. 2155

How to Design a Poster

The steps below describe how to draw a basic bird. Your bird might have a different shape and color pattern, but the steps for drawing it could give you an idea on how you might start!

Remember to fill up the entire page! Judges will be looking for original and creative pieces of art. Both realistic and imaginative interpretations are encouraged.

Winning posters are usually very colorful and bright. Think about how you will use color on your bird and in your background.

Want to download an entry form?

Want to see past winners?

Want to find out more about the contest or the festival?

Visit

[nrep.nisquallyriver.org/
nisqually-watershed-festival](http://nrep.nisquallyriver.org/nisqually-watershed-festival)

How to Draw a Bird

1. First, choose a native bird. Remember that it should live in the Nisqually Watershed! You can use the resources on page 3 to see lots of different native birds.
2. Next, loosely plan where you want the main bird or birds to go on the page. Remember that you typically want the bird to take up a lot of space on the poster!
3. Sketch the head and body of your bird- is it slender or poofy? Is it perching or flying? Are the wings outstretched or folded in?
4. Now add the beak- is it short and hooked? Long and slender? Wide and flat?
5. Now add the legs and feet of your bird- are they short with talons? Long? Webbed?
6. For the feathers, think about whether your bird is trying to blend in or stand out- you can use photos of your bird to help you choose where to add patterns and colors.
7. For the background, think about where your bird lives. What type of habitat does it live in? What would be some things near your bird? How can you use the background to add color to your poster? Remember that lots of bright colors will make your poster pop!

Judging and Awards

5 winners in each grade will receive prizes!

Awards will be presented during the Nisqually Watershed Festival on September 26th, 2026.

Winning artwork will be displayed at the Refuge during the Festival.

A panel will judge all entries based on **originality** and **expression of theme**. Both realistic and imaginative interpretations are encouraged.

The Best of Show artwork will be used on flyers, brochures, and will be displayed on the festival website!

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2026 Nisqually Watershed Festival

Birds of the Watershed Information Page

What is a bird?

A bird is an egg-laying animal with wings, feathers, and a beak. Birds can be found all throughout the Nisqually watershed, from the river's headwaters on Mount Rainier to its end at Puget Sound. Birds come in a huge variety of colors, shapes and sizes, from tiny iridescent hummingbirds to huge soaring eagles!

What is the difference between native and nonnative birds?

Birds that occur naturally in an area are called native birds in that area. Some native birds have both cultural significance and ecological importance. Birds that occur in an area due to human intervention are called nonnative birds in that area. These types of birds can compete with native birds for resources like food and space.

What are some common types of local native birds?

There are hundreds of birds that call the Nisqually watershed home! Here are some groups of birds that are common in the watershed, with a few examples of each group. There are many more than the ones listed below!

- Songbirds like the American Robin, Common Yellowthroat, and Yellow Warbler
- Raptors like the Bald Eagle, Great Horned Owl, American Kestrel, and Red-tailed Hawk
- Ducks and geese like the Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Mallard Duck, and Canada Goose
- Wading birds and shorebirds like the Great Blue Heron, American Bittern, Dunlin, Western Sandpiper, and Greater Yellowlegs

No matter which type of birds you like best, there's sure to be a species that inspires you!! For a slideshow of some of our favorite native birds, click here: [Native Birds of the Watershed](#)

Where can I find more information about local birds?

- Species of Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/billy-frank-jr-nisqually/species>
- Birds of Mount Rainier National Park: <https://www.nps.gov/mora/learn/nature/birds.htm>
- Birds of the Puget Sound Region by Bob Morse
- The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America by David Sibley
- National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America by Jon L. Dunn

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Nisqually Watershed Festival Poster Contest

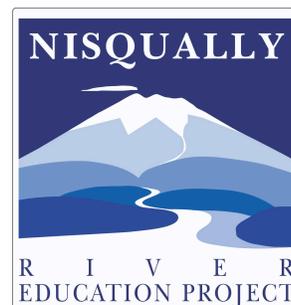
Submission Requirements

Rules:

- Posters can only be 8.5x11, 11x17, or 12x18 inches.
- **No words!** This means no titles, labels, or names can be on the front of the poster.
- Include only species native to the Nisqually Watershed. (See information page)
- Entries must be **one** person's original creation.
- Do not frame, mat, or fold the posters.
- Poster designs cannot incorporate any copyrighted character such as comic and/or TV, magazine, or newspaper illustration (ex: SpongeBob, Pokemon, etc.)

Tips for a great poster!

- Judging is based on **originality** and **expression of theme**. Think about how to make your poster stand out from others!
- Judges will be considering how this image will look when resized (smaller) and made black and white, both of which may happen to make copies of flyers for the festival.
- Avoid putting too many elements on the poster. Try looking at your poster from a few steps away to be sure the subject is big and clear.
- The image should fill up the whole paper; make sure to add a beautiful background and not just leave the background empty.
- Winning posters usually have lots of bright colors, a clear subject that takes up a lot of the poster, and have little to no empty space. If you want to see what the winning posters have looked like in past years, check out our website at: rep.nisquallyriver.org/nisqually-watershed-festival
- Have fun!



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2026 Nisqually Watershed Festival Poster Contest Entry Form

For Digital Submission please visit: nrep.nisquallyriver.org/nisqually-watershed-festival

Fill out teacher and school information before duplicating and distributing to students. Attach form to back of student posters. **Completed entry forms are required** and are used to notify winners.

Submission Checklist:

- Entries must be on 8.5x11, 11x17, or 12x18 inch paper.
- Entries cannot contain **ANY words** on the front (this includes names, labels, titles, etc.)
- Entries must be **ONE** student's original artwork.
- Posters cannot be folded, matted, or framed.
- Posters cannot include copyrighted characters (Pokemon, Spongebob, etc.)

Entry Deadline: Monday, June 1st, 2026

Submission: Mail entries to Nisqually Watershed Festival Poster Contest, 100 Brown Farm Rd, Olympia, WA 98516 or Hand Deliver to Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, 100 Brown Farm Rd, Olympia WA 98516 from 9AM-4PM in either the Admin Office Mon-Fri or Visitor Center Sat-Sun.

Teacher: _____ Teacher email: _____

School: _____

Grade (circle one): K 1 2 3 4 5

Student Name: _____

Poster Title: _____

Home Phone Number (this is how winners will be notified!): _____

Home Email (this is how winners will be notified!): _____

I hereby certify that this is the original work of my student/child, and is not a copy of published photographs, magazines, book illustrations, or other materials protected by copyright laws. I grant exclusive right to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its designees to utilize this artwork for reproduction and promotional purposes, and to display my art; also I agree that this artwork may be used, altered, or published as they see fit without compensation.

Signature of Adult: _____

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