

2026 Florida State Fair Creative Living Competitions

# Woodcarving Competition Handbook

## ADULT

**QUESTIONS?  
CONTACT US!**

BY PHONE AT  
0170421-7821

BY EMAIL AT  
CREATIVELIVING@FLORIDASTATEFAIR.COM

## IMPORTANT DATES

**Entry Deadline:** Friday, December 5, 2025

**Late Entry Deadline:** Friday, December 12, 2025

**Item Delivery:** Friday, January 9, 2026 - 11:00am-6:00pm  
Saturday, January 10, 2026 - 10am-4:00pm

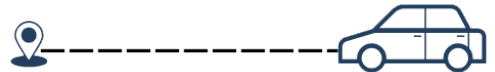
**Alt. Delivery:** Thursday, January 22, 2026 - 10:00am-2:00pm  
Friday, January 23, 2026 - 10:00am-2:00pm

**Item Pickup:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm  
Thursday, February 19, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm  
Friday, February 20, 2026 - 11:00am-3:00pm  
Saturday, February 21, 2026 - 10:00am-2:00pm

## ENTRY DELIVERY & PICK-UP

*Enter off of Orient Road through the Service Entrance on the west side of the fairgrounds.*

A map with directions to the Florida Center is available on the Creative Living Website



## ENTRY FEES

**Adult Divisions (Ages 18+): \$5 Per Entry**  
**Late Entry: \$10 Per Entry**

ENTRY FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE

## GUIDELINES

- **No more than six (6) items per person may be submitted for judging, however, exhibitors may enter only two (2) entries per class.**
- Maximum size limits for a carving entered item are as follows: length 55", width 32", height 48". Except for walking sticks, which may be up to 75" in length. Carvings that exceed any of these dimensions will not be accepted.
- Relief carvings must be submitted with a stand or ready to hang with strong hooks, loops, or wire. Entered items without a stand or not ready to hang will be disqualified.
- Items submitted should match the division, class, and description listed on the entry form.
- Entered items are to be made of wood. Nontraditional materials are allowed and must be carved using the same tools and subtractive techniques as traditional wood carvings. Acceptable materials include, but are not limited to golf balls, soapstone, antlers, and bones. Other materials may be used for habitat and structural purposes; however, they are to be hand formed with the exception of eyes.
- Identical items cannot be entered into more than one Division or State Fair competition.
- Each adult exhibitor will receive one (1) admission ticket to the Fair.
- Entries previously exhibited in the Florida State Fair may not be submitted for competition.
- Exhibited work must be completed within the last two (2) years.
- Entries must have been prepared by the exhibitor in whose name they are entered.
- Entries completed by two or more individuals are permitted but will be counted as one exhibitor.
- All entries will be displayed at the Fair whether they receive an award or not. In keeping with the Florida State Fair's family orientation, items of an offensive, controversial, or objectionable nature or subject matter will not be accepted.

## ELIGIBILITY

- **The Woodcarving Novice Division** is open to all Florida residents ages 18 and up who have entry-level skills in carving or wood burning. After entering the Florida State Fair for two (2) years at the novice level or having received two (2) 1st place awards or Best of Show in this division at Florida State Fair. After, the carver must advance and compete at the Intermediate level.
- **The Woodcarving Intermediate Division** is open to all Florida residents ages 18 and up whose skills consist of refined sculpting and painting techniques that are above entry level. Individual shows consistent techniques in carving/painting/burning. After entering the Florida State Fair for three (3) years at the intermediate level or having received three (3) 1st place award or Best of Show in this division at Florida State Fair. After, the carver must advance and compete at the advanced level.
- **The Woodcarving Advanced Division** is open to all Florida residents ages 18 and up who has achieved a mature level of skills in the woodcarving art and craft. Open to professional, semi-professional and amateur status woodcarvers.

## JUDGING & AWARDS

- The Fair selects judges who are experienced and knowledgeable in the categories they are assigned. Judges are expected to be fair and unbiased. They may reassign an entry to a different division or class if they feel it's a better fit.
- All entries will be judged using a scorecard to help ensure fairness and consistency. Judges' decisions are final.
- If the judge feels that an entry does not meet the standards for an award, no ribbon or prize will be given, even if it is the only entry in the class.
- Winners and final displays will be announced during the Fair.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

Divisions and Classes in this handbook will be judged by a combination of the following criteria:

**Originality and Creativity, Design, Skill and Execution, Surface Finish and Final Presentation**

## WOODCARVING DEFINITIONS

**Carving** is a general heading that embraces sculpture and carving.

**Relief** means carving with gouge, chisel, or power tool in order to decorate a generally flat surface, to give the illusion of depth and perspective. Frames are accepted but are not judged.

**In-the-Round** means shaping a freestanding three dimensional form or forms.

**Chip Carving** refers to hand carving by cutting chips with a knife or other instruments usually in geometric designs.

**Wood Burning** is the process of burning a design with an electrically heated tool. Scene on a flat surface must have a stand or be ready to hang. Frames will not be judged.

**Natural Finish** means that the grain of the wood must show through the finish. Limited natural wood staining of a single color and/or limited wood burning is permitted.

**Painted Finish** means work with other than natural color wood stain, such as polychrome, acrylics or extensive wood burning, etc.

**Realistic** refers to a carving completed as an accurate presentation of the subject matter.

**Stylized** refers to a carving completed according to a style or stylistic pattern rather than strictly according to reality.

**Caricature** refers to a carving completed as a representation by exaggeration or distortion for humorous or satirical effect.

**Bust** refers to a carving of a person's head, shoulders, and chest.

**Non-Traditional Materials** are materials in this category must be carved using the same tools and subtractive techniques as traditional wood carvings. Acceptable materials include, but are not limited to golf balls, soapstone, antlers, and bones.

# **WOODCARVING DIVISIONS & CLASSES**

**Woodcarving (Novice) - Adult Division 80.201**

**Woodcarving (Intermediate) - Adult Division 80.601**

**Woodcarving (Advanced) - Adult Division 80.101**

Class 1 Aquatic – painted or natural finish

Class 2 Wood Spirits – natural or painted

Class 3 Portraiture Relief – single or group portrait of human face, head or head and shoulders

Class 4 Architectural Relief – primary subject (i.e. buildings, bridges, agricultural scenes, etc. including crest, signs & emblems), natural or painted finish (gold leaf, etc.)

Class 5 Flowers and Plant Life Relief – natural or painted finish

Class 6 Animal Relief (other than aquatic) – all animals including wildlife, domestic or farm animals, natural or painted finish

Class 7 Religious Relief – natural or painted finish

Class 8 Seascape/Nautical Relief – natural or painted finish

Class 9 Fish Relief – natural or painted finish

Class 10 Animals (Four-legged, other than horses) – all four-legged animals include wildlife, domestic or farm animals, natural or painted finish

Class 11 Carousel Animals – natural or painted finish, (May exceed maximum size limits for a carving)

Class 12 Horse(s) – natural or painted finish

Class 13 Flowers and Plant Life – natural or painted finish

Class 14 Aquatic and Marine Life – natural finish

Class 15 Aquatic and Marine Life – painted finish

Class 16 Decorative Birds (stylized), – natural or painted finish

Class 17 Waterfowl, realistic – natural or painted finish

Class 18 Shorebirds, realistic – natural or painted finish

Class 19 Upland Game Birds, realistic – natural or painted finish

Class 20 Birds of Prey, realistic – natural or painted finish

Class 21 Song Birds, realistic – natural or painted finish

Class 22 Animal Heads – natural or painted finish

Class 23 Bust – realistic single or several heads (includes shoulder and chest), natural or painted finish

Class 24 Full Figure – natural or painted finish, realistic human figure

Class 25 Masks – any finish

Class 26 Walking Sticks – any finish

Class 27 Caricature – natural or painted finish

Class 28 Fantasy – the free play of creative imagination. (Fairies, Dragons, Wizards etc.)

Class 29 Holiday Caricature – single or group caricature, natural or painted finish

Class 30 Miniatures – (1½" x 1½" x 2½"), natural or painted finish

Class 31 Stylized/Abstract of Any Subject – natural or painted finish

Class 32 Miscellaneous In-The-Round (including housewares) – natural finish

Class 33 Miscellaneous In-The-Round (including housewares) – painted finish

Class 34 Religious – natural or painted finish

Class 35 Flatwork – natural or painted finish

Class 36 Dimensional work – natural or painted finish

Class 37 Wood Burning – natural finish

Class 38 Wood Burning – painted finish

Class 39 Miscellaneous – Non-Traditional Materials



# GENERAL RULES

## DISCLAIMER

All entries are submitted at the exhibitor's own risk. The Florida State Fair is not responsible for any loss, damage, or theft of exhibits even if caused by staff, volunteers, contractors, or visitors. If you want insurance for your entry, you must arrange it through your personal insurance provider before the Fair. Reasonable care will be taken to protect exhibits. No unauthorized people are allowed in the building after closing hours.

## DIVISION OR CLASS CANCELLATION

The Florida State Fair may cancel any division or class if there are not enough entries to ensure fair competition. Any affected entries will be returned.

## ENTRY ERRORS

Exhibitors are responsible for making sure their entries are correct. This includes online forms and summary sheets. The Fair is not responsible for correcting mistakes, and no awards will be given for entries disqualified due to exhibitor error. If an award is later found to be ineligible, it will be withheld or recovered. You may appeal a disqualification in writing within 90 days of being notified. Include your name, address, full entry details, and your reason for requesting a review.

## PREMIUM PAYMENTS

Prizes will be awarded based on the Judging Criteria Record Sheets. **Prize checks are void 6 months after the date on the check. No replacement checks will be issued after that, so please cash them promptly.**

## SUBSTITUTIONS

If needed, substitutions must be made within the same department as the original entry. They must be completed by the last day of the entry delivery period. You may not transfer your entry to another person.

## PREVIOUSLY ENTERED ITEMS

Entries that have been shown at past Florida State Fairs are not allowed, except for entries in Horticulture and Aquarium Beautiful.

## VERIFICATION OF ENTRY

To confirm that your mailed entry form and fees were received, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. Online entries will receive a confirmation code after submitting.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXHIBITS

The Fair is not responsible for exhibits left behind after the scheduled pick-up time. **Anything left after that time will be treated as abandoned and discarded by April 1st of the same year.**

## ENTRY REMOVAL

Once accepted, entries cannot be removed until the official release date listed in the Competition Handbook. Early removal is only allowed in cases like serious illness, emergencies, or at the Fair's discretion.

## RETURNED OR BOUNCED CHECKS

A \$25 fee applies to any returned checks. This must be paid with cash, a certified check, or a money order.

## MAILING PAPER ENTRY FORMS

Entry Forms must be postmarked by Friday, December 5, 2025. Failure to complete any portion of the entry form may result in disqualification. Late entries must be postmarked before December 12, 2025. If you're submitting a late entry form, you must include the extra \$5 per entry fee. **Make checks payable to: Florida State Fair Authority**

### **Mail Entry Form to:**

Creative Living Competitions  
Woodcarving  
Florida State Fair  
P.O. Box 11766  
Tampa, FL 33680

## SHIPPING ENTRIES

Shipped entries must arrive no later than January 6, 2026. **Packages MUST include Shipping form and prepaid shipping label.** Entries will be shipped back to the exhibitors after the fair in the same container. Return shipping costs are the responsibility of the entrant.

### **Ship Entry Form to:**

Florida State Fair Authority  
Woodcarving  
4800 US HWY 301 North  
Tampa, FL 33680

## RETRIEVING ENTRIES

All entries not claimed by April 1st of the same year will be recycled, disposed or donated through our program department. Entries not picked up on designated dates can be arranged for a special pick-up appointment by emailing [CreativeLiving@floridastatefair.com](mailto:CreativeLiving@floridastatefair.com).

## EXHIBIT DESIGN & SET UP

The Florida State Fair controls how exhibits are displayed. If your entry is meant to be hung but isn't ready to hang, the Fair will display it as they see fit. No changes can be made once items are on display. Exhibitors cannot handle their entries after drop-off. Fair staff will handle final placement and assembly, using any instructions you provide. If your item needs assembly or disassembly, include clear instructions and diagrams. The Fair may use pins or other tools to secure your exhibit for display. Online entries will receive a confirmation code after submitting.

## AWARD PREMIUMS

### Woodcarving - Novice & Intermediate Division

**First Place** - State Fair Ribbon **\$20**  
**Second Place** - State Fair Ribbon **\$15**  
**Third Place** - State Fair Ribbon **\$10**

### Woodcarving - Advanced Division

**First Place** - State Fair Ribbon **\$50**  
**Second Place** - State Fair Ribbon **\$35**  
**Third Place** - State Fair Ribbon **\$20**

**Best of Show (Novice)** - State Fair Ribbon **\$20**  
**Best of Show (Intermediate)**- State Fair Ribbon **\$35**  
**Best of Show (Advanced)**- State Fair Ribbon **\$50**

Best of Show Awards will be chosen from the first place winners of each class.

**Director's Choice Award** - State Fair Ribbon **\$35**  
**Honorable Mention Ribbons** may be awarded at the discretion of the judge(s).

