



Native Rhythms Festival 2026 Paula Ellis Memorial Flute Player's Competition



Competition Eligibility

****THIS YEAR APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY MAIL. THERE WILL ONLY BE 12 APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED. **
(SEE BOTTOM OF THIS FORM FOR INFORMATION)**

1. Except as noted below, flute players of all levels of experience are eligible to compete. However, we intend this competition to highlight the skills of developing players at various stages of their flute-playing journey, from beginner to advanced. Exceptions:
 - No performers receiving compensation in any form to perform at the **Native Rhythms Festival**, either this year or any previous year, will be permitted to enter.
 - The 1st Place winner of the 2025 competition may not enter the 2026 competition.
 - No member of the **Native Rhythms Festival** Organizing Committee may enter.
2. Only 5-hole (mode 1) or 6-hole (mode 1 & 4) single chamber, pentatonic minor tuned Native American style flutes are permitted. For example, competitors **may not use** (1) multi-chambered drone or “harmony drone” or other such instruments, or (2) Native American Flutes with “non-standard” tunings (e.g., diatonic or near-eastern), or (3) Anasazi, Hopi, Quena or other rim-blown flutes.
3. Flutes may be of any material: wood, bamboo, river cane, ceramic, PVC, etc. and may be in any key.
4. All entrants will perform solo. No accompaniment, either rhythmic or melodic, will be permitted. No electronic enhancement (echo effects, etc.) will be permitted. All competitors will perform using only the sound system provided by the event organizers.
5. The fee for participation is \$20.00 (checks, money orders, etc. made payable to “**NHGI**”). Application fees are not refundable. If applying by mail, applications must be postmarked between October 1st through October 31, 2026, inclusive.
6. All flute player's competition entrants will receive a necklace with the event's Kokopelli image imprinted on it. Photos of necklace (with last year's date) will be available on our event website at <http://www.nativerhythmsfestival.com/Competitions.htm>.

Competition Rules and Procedures

1. The **Native Rhythms Festival** Organizing Committee will select not fewer than three judges who are qualified to evaluate the performances. Judges may not be related to any of the contestants. Judges will be identified and acknowledged at the event.

2. The decisions of the judges are final and not subject to appeal. Competitors' scores will not be disclosed to competitors or the public.
3. The **Native Rhythms Festival** flute players competition will be conducted live on Friday, November 13th at the festival grounds. All competitors will perform only on that day.
4. **All entrants MUST appear at the competition registration table by 10AM on Friday, November 13th for check in if they mailed their registration forms prior to the event and received notification of acceptance.** If twelve applications have not yet been received, applications will be accepted on Friday, November 13, 2026 on a first come, first served basis.
 - **A random drawing of numbers by the competitors immediately before the competition is to commence will determine the performance order. All competitors will be expected to be present to draw a number. Failure to appear may be grounds for disqualification.**
 - All competitors will be expected to be available and ready to perform when their number (order of position) is called. Please bring your number to the announcer when your number is called. Failure to appear may be grounds for disqualification.
5. Check the event schedule for the time and location of the competition performances. Competitors will be performing on the main stage.
6. Judging will be "blind" in that the judges will not be able to see the competitors while they are performing. Competitors will be identified on stage only by their performance order number.
7. Each competitor's performance will consist of two pieces. The first piece may be, but not necessarily, an original composition by the performer.
 - The first piece may be the competitor's choice. It may be a known song or the competitor's original composition
 - The second piece must be the competitor's interpretation of "*Wayfaring Stranger*". To be scored, the piece must be recognizable as the specified tune, but considerable latitude will be given for the competitor's interpretation. For those not familiar with this song, an audio MP3 file and a tablature music sheet of a simple version will be available for download from the event's flute players' competition page at www.nativerhythmsfestival.com/FlutePlayers.htm.
 - Each piece should be between 1 ½ and 2 minutes in length. If the competitor chooses, the announcer will signal at 1 ½ minutes after the piece begins. Each song will be played for a maximum of two minutes. If you go over the allotted time, you will be signaled to stop playing.
 - Different flutes conforming to these rules may be used for each of the 2 required pieces. We will try to have a flute stand available to hold several flutes for the entrant.
 - Please, no sacred tribal songs.
8. During the competition performances:

- **No** speaking or other extraneous sounds that might identify the performer are permitted. An event announcer will introduce the competitor by the entrant's performance order number only. The judges' score sheets will identify the entrants by the announced numbers.
 - **No** foot stomping, shuffling, or other body movements meant to generate rhythmic sounds to enhance the performance. Violation of this rule will result in disqualification from the competition.
 - The announcer may ask an entrant to stop and start again under such external conditions that would affect the performance, such as problems with the sound system, or a low-flying aircraft or other external noise source. Unless asked to stop, the competitor should continue playing.
 - The competitor is expected to handle the effects of the wind by turning his/her back to block the wind. The competitor may ask the announcer to adjust the microphone prior to beginning to play either of the 2 pieces.
9. Trophies and cash awards will be given to honor the memory of **Paula Ellis**. Paula's name will be on the plaques, and the cash awards are in honor of Paula as well. First Place: \$100.00, Second Place \$75.00 and Third Place \$50.00 to finishers based on total scores. Paula and her husband Byron were regular volunteers on festival weekends and hosted a couple workshops.
10. Possession or use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited by event rules. Anyone violating this rule will be disqualified from the competition and asked to leave the event grounds immediately, not to return.

Authorization to Take and Use Photographs/Video and Waiver and Release of Claims

Upon signing the "Competition Registration Form", confirms that I have read the above-entitled document herein and, I hereby grant NATIVE RHYTHMS FESTIVAL, its directors, officers, agents, and designees (collectively "NRF") non-revocable permission to capture my image and likeness in photographs, videotapes, motion pictures, recordings, or any other media (collectively "Images"). I acknowledge that NRF will own such Images and further grant NRF permission to copyright, display, publish, distribute, use, modify, print and reprint such Images in any manner whatsoever related to NRF business, including without limitation, publications, advertisements, brochures, web site images, or other electronic displays and transmissions thereof. I further waive any right to inspect or approve the use of the Image by NRF prior to its use. I forever release and hold NRF harmless from any and all liability arising out of the use of the Images in any manner or media whatsoever, and waive any and all claims and causes of action relating to use of the Images, including without limitation, claims for invasion of privacy rights or publicity.

FOR ENTRY INTO THE FLUTE PLAYERS COMPETITION, PRINT COMPETITION REGISTRATION FORM, FILL OUT AND MAIL ALONG WITH YOUR CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO: NHGI

MAIL YOUR APPLICATION AND FEE TO:

Native Rhythms Festival
c/o Joyce Neumann
4709 S. Dossey Road
Lakeland, FL 33811