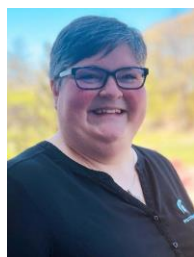


IOSCO COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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Message from the District Director

At MSU Extension, we believe that learning and working together make our communities stronger. In 2024, we helped farmers grow food more efficiently and overcome emerging challenges, supported individuals and families in making healthy choices and gave young people opportunities to develop leadership skills and explore interests and careers. Our programs bring people together to solve problems and create new opportunities across District 4.

This year, we focused on supporting local communities, improving stewardship of our natural resources, and helping people prepare for the future. Whether through 4-H youth programs, farming workshops, community development support or health and wellness education, MSU Extension continues to provide valuable resources that make a difference in everyday life.

We are proud of the work we've done and excited for what's ahead. Thank you for being part of this journey with us. Together, we can build a brighter future for Iosco County.

Impact



30 commercial, farm, and homeowner soil samples processed



51 participants in county agriculture programs



572 youth enrolled in 4-H



102 volunteers for 4-H



2,362 participants from the county attending programs



232 programs (across the state) attended by participants from Iosco County



1,101 participants in community, food, and environment programs from Iosco County



29,264,562 contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters, and handouts

Finding His Spark

While attending the Whittemore-Prescott Area Schools Fall Activity Night, Jennifer Colvin, a 4-H program coordinator brought materials to recruit 4-H youth and volunteers. A young boy and his parents approached the booth with interest in joining a 4-H program. Rabbits were on display for the community to pet. When Jennifer asked if the young boy would like to pet the rabbit, he was very nervous and uneasy about it. He eventually said yes and when he did it he lit up like a Christmas tree! He asked many questions about rabbits. He asked how to care for them, how long they live, and what their personalities are like. The youth ended up joining the small animal club and he will be getting his first bunny in the spring.

“I have never seen him so interested before!” –parent of participant

Fish Camp

To better understand Saginaw Bay 4-H Fish Camp impacts, camp organizers conducted a pre- and post-camp survey for participants in 2024.

Overall, campers improved their fishing knowledge and skills. Over 75% of campers learned how to make fishing tackle and tie fishing knots as a result of camp. 100% of campers learned about a new fish at camp.

Campers also removed invasive European Frog-bit with Saginaw Bay Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) and the Arenac Conservation District from the Au Gres River. 100% of campers now know how to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species. Close to 70% of campers learned to clean, drain and dry gear to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species because of camp.



What will you tell your friends about Fish Camp?

“You should definitely come to fish camp next year. It is so fun, and you learn tons of stuff.”

-program
participant





New Club Flourishing

In February 2024, a group approached Jennifer Colvin with interest in starting an underwater Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) 4-H club. They were concerned about the lack of knowledge youth in our community had about the Great Lakes. They created an Iosco County 4-H Underwater ROV Club. This very small club of four youth started to meet every Tuesday learning about some of the issues we have within the Great Lakes. Within four short months, meeting multiple times a week, these four youth constructed an Underwater ROV with the goal of it being able to clean bodies of water such as Great Lakes and oceans. They found an issue to focus on, planned and experimented - working steadily to create a machine to clean the floors of our Great Lakes. The Team ended up taking their vehicle up to Alpena to compete in the UROV Competition. The competition consisted of three areas: an interview, the construction and plan of their build and the vehicle itself. They ended up placing first! The group of volunteers now want to run two clubs next year; an advanced group and a beginners.



277 Iosco Co. residents participated in health & nutrition programs

Integrating healthy choices into daily life

During a Cooking For One class that was held at a senior center in Oscoda, participants shared their experiences and changes they made throughout the series of classes. 14 participants were included in the class discussion.

At the beginning of each class Community Nutrition Instructor Danielle Jirasek asked participants if they had made any changes over the course of the five weeks of sessions.

One participant shared that she hosted Bunko party at her house that previous week and usually she makes sweet treats to serve, but that week she put together a veggie tray to offer her guests. She said it was a hit and there were only a couple of cucumber slices left.

The same participant also shared that she tried a pasta that was made with chickpeas as part of her dinner with her spouse. She stated that she was impressed with how well it went with her husband and that they both really liked it. She was excited that it was a new way to add lean protein into their diet.

This participant has shared how wonderful the class has been. Some of the information she already knew, but it was a great reminder. From the beginning, receiving a nice workbook, having an interactive and engaging class, getting an insulated tote bag and a cookbook at the end, she was very impressed and asked for more program opportunities with Michigan State University Extension.

The value of partnerships:

Michigan State University Extension engages community partnerships to leverage resources, expand outreach, and address local needs effectively. By collaborating with organizations, businesses and government agencies, MSU Extension strengthens programs in agriculture, health, youth development and community vitality, fostering sustainable solutions and improving the well-being of individuals and communities across Michigan.

MSU Extension's partnership with Whittemore-Prescott Area Schools provides educational enrichment to youth through MSU Extension programming on science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM).



Whittemore-Prescott students learn about mushrooms and more from MSU students

Whittemore-Prescott fifth graders were learning about soil, decomposition, fungi and other topics of interest in their section in science. Mrs. Kiwak reached out to 4-H Program Instructor Karen Collins to ask about a connection to learn more about mushrooms and how to grow them in their room as she was confused about this since the subject is so broad and challenging with so many variations of mushrooms.

Karen reached out to several colleagues at MSU Extension and finally connected with Mr. Allosane Sow, a student working on his master's in Mycology at MSU. Mr. Sow scheduled a time with some of his fellow students in his department to provide a hands-on learning experience about mushrooms by bringing his supplies and spores to grow them in our classrooms and at home. Students were very interested in the process as they showed them how to spread several containers full of moist straw and soil on the tables and spread the spores throughout the material. He also provided individual baggies for students to take home and instructions on how to grow them properly. Students were so involved in the process and mentioned how cool it was.

One presenter was a student from Germany. The students were interested in his accent and asked more about him. The student, Bryant, shared he arrived about a year ago to learn in the United States. Students were so interested in his culture and language that we also had a short instruction about his home and his language, where he spoke his native language and helped the students learn a few words. Every student was very involved and interested in the entire program. They later made personal cards with colorful mushrooms for all the "mushroom guys," as they called them. Some stated how cool they all were and how happy they were to meet them.

"Thank you so much for coming all the way up to our small school from MSU!"

—student participant

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