



NEWS FROM EXTENSION

UW-MADISON DIVISION OF EXTENSION WOOD COUNTY



The 4-H Passport to Adventure

by Laura Huber, 4-H Program Educator

In 4-H, we use many approaches to help youth build skills that they'll need for success in adulthood. One of those approaches is group travel. While the focus of each travel experience differs, the benefits are consistent. Youth gain Confidence, grow Independence, and build Social Skills during 4-H travel. They get exposed to new cultures, learn flexibility and problem-solving, and practice lots and lots of patience. They travel with caring adults who model all of these great traits, too.

Travel experiences are offered by the county and by the state. Laura Huber, Wood County's 4-H Educator, helped plan and attended Summer Academy and National 4-H Congress.

Let's celebrate the youth who stepped up to participate in these amazing experiences in 2023! By participating, they said "yes" to investing in themselves and their futures.

Advanced Space Academy (for youth in grades 10-12)

Advanced Space Academy is an intense program at Space Camp in Huntsville, AL. It's so intense that participants earn one credit of freshman general science from the University of Alabama! Wisconsin sends 32 trainees every other year. Those trainees are immersed in science, technology, engineering, and math. Activities include Russian language lessons, SCUBA diving instruction, and advanced rocketry.

One Wood County 4-H'er participated in Advanced Space Academy in 2023.

Pictured below: 2023 Advanced Space Academy Trainees



American Spirit-East (for youth in grades 8-11)

American Spirit is a statewide experience that provides youth with the opportunity to experience our history and heritage through a 10-day bus adventure to the east coast. Participants learn more about our history, in the places where it occurred. They are also challenged to build their leadership and communication skills while exploring personal values.

Four Wood County youth traveled on American Spirit in 2023.

Pictured below: Wisconsin 4-H'ers visit New York



Discover Wisconsin (for youth in grades 5-8)

The Discover Wisconsin experience is for youth in Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, and Wood Counties. Local staff create this experience to take youth to new parts of the state to help them discover just what a cool place we live in. In 2023, we traveled to southeastern Wisconsin.

In July 2023, 11 Wood County youth joined our adventure. We toured Crave Brothers Cheese in Waterloo, enjoyed authentic BBQ in East Troy, boarded a train and learned about local history at the East Troy Railroad Museum, participated in community service at Women & Children's Horizons and the ELCA Outreach Center, and more! During this 3-day, 2-night adventure, we were reminded of just how cool middle schoolers are.

Pictured below: cleaning at the ELCA Outreach Center clothes closet & Wood County 4-H'ers waiting for the train to arrive.





National 4-H Congress (for youth in grades 9-12)

For 5 days in November, 35 Wisconsin youth travel to Atlanta, GA to meet with other 4-H'ers from across the country, Canada, and Puerto Rico. While there, they engage in leadership, citizenship, global awareness, and inclusion. They participate in community service projects across the city of Atlanta, too! This conference with over 700 delegates leaves a lasting mark on attendees hearts and minds.

In 2023, 1 Wood County 4-H'er joined the Wisconsin delegation.

Pictured below: WI's National 4-H delegation in Centennial Olympic Park, Atlanta



Science Expeditions (for youth in grades 3-13)

Each year UW-Madison hosts a weekend of all things science. It includes Exploration Stations, Spectaculars, and presentations. It's a family-friendly experience that brings people together to explore all the campus has to offer. A favorite experience for many was visiting the dairy herd and reaching into the fistulated cow to collect rumen samples.

This year 12 youth and 4 adults from Wood County said "yes" to exploring science with others from Marathon and Lincoln 4-H programs.

Pictured below: Wood County 4-H'er collecting rumen sample.



Summer Academy (for youth in grades 7-11)

This newer 4-H opportunity is all about helping youth discover possible pathways. Youth from across the state come together on UW Madison's campus and experience life in a residence hall while exploring future careers. This year, the learning tracks included: STEM, Human Services, Arts & Communication, Trades, Culinary and Health, Leadership & Civic Engagement, and Agriculture & Animal Sciences.

Four Wood County 4-H'ers explored their interests at Summer Academy in 2023.

Horticulture Diagnostics Update

by Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

Wood County residents have come to rely on their local Extension office to answer horticulture related diagnostic questions with research based answers in a timely manner. Questions come into the office either directly through phone calls to the office, direct emails to Janell Wehr, horticulture educator (janell.wehr@wisc.edu), or the UW-Madison Horticulture Program website. Inquiries also are processed through the Wood County Master Gardeners, either directly via email (woodcountymga@gmail.com) or at one of the many events they attend (farmers markets, plant sales, and the Central Wisconsin State Fair). Support for the Master Gardeners includes identification and selection of volunteers, training and orientation to diagnostics, as well as providing continuous support to the volunteers.

By providing research based answers to gardening questions, residents see reduction in time and money spent on efforts either have no impact, or worse, negative impacts in their lawns and gardens and the larger environment. Outcomes of diagnostic efforts can be summarized as follows:

Short Term: Increase awareness and knowledge of resources to decrease environmental contamination and pollution (due to overuse of horticulture chemicals in urban and suburban environments),

Medium Term: Adoption of practices that reduce pollution including recycling grass and landscape trimmings, mulching and home composting, obtaining soil tests prior to applying fertilizer, and using pesticides only when deemed necessary,

Longer Term: Sustained reductions of environmental contamination and pollution will improve aquatic and terrestrial ecological functioning in the environment.

In 2023, at least 89 diagnostic questions in Wood County were answered through the Extension office. Here are the trends from the inquiries:

30% of questions centered on trees and shrubs. This isn't surprising, since trees significantly add to property values.

41% of questions centered on insects, diseases, and weeds, most were located in vegetable gardens. This is an area of opportunity to increase responsible use of pesticides and fertilizers.

9% of total questions centered on the drought in the early summer.

Upcoming Extension Programs

- **4-H Project Discovery Day** | Marshfield | January 20 - 9am-3pm
- **4-H Teen Winter Camp** | Rosholt Lions Camp | February 16-18
- **4-H Youth on the Rise** | Zoom Series | Sundays - Feb. 25, March 3, 10, 17
- **Pesticide Applicator Training** | Cranberry School | January 24
- **Planning AHEAD** | Zoom | Jan. 15, 22, 29, Feb. 5, 12, 19 & 26 - 1-2pm
- **Rent Smart** | Marshfield Public Library | Thursday, February 1 - 1-4pm
- **Rent Smart** | McMillan Library | Friday, February 2 - 9:30am-12:30pm
- **WeCOPE for Childcare Providers** | Zoom Series | Jan. 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, 15

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