



2009 Impact Summary

4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp

4-H Great Lakes & Natural Resources Camp is held annually in early August on the northern shores of Lake Huron in Presque Isle, Michigan at Camp Chickagami.

This MSU pre-college program gives teens aged 13-15 the opportunities to:

- Increase awareness, appreciation and understanding of natural resources ecology and management.
- Learn to enjoy, teach about and provide leadership in natural resources, especially the aquatic environment and the Great Lakes.
- Be motivated and see value in becoming good stewards in local natural resources projects.
- Develop career and personal interests in natural resources ecology and management.

Youth learn ecological concepts during morning sessions and participate in “try something new” afternoon natural resources recreational sessions. The partners that contribute time, expertise, and funding for camp are MSU Extension Children, Youth, Families & Communities – 4-H Youth Development, Michigan Sea Grant Extension, Michigan 4-H Foundation, MSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and MSU Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resources Studies. Resource people from Michigan Sea Grant, MSU faculty and Extension staff, and volunteers represent a wide range of natural resources and environmental science backgrounds. A 1:3 staff to camper ratio allows for intense mentoring of campers in their leadership, personal and career-related development. Youth have the opportunity to learn from natural resource professionals in fields such as Great Lakes coastal and fisheries management, geology, limnology, wildlife, forestry, geography, as well as Extension and environmental education.

Camper surveys have shown that:

- Camp helps participants improve their knowledge about Great Lakes and natural resources ecology and management issues. It increases awareness of environmental problems, fosters environmental stewardship and enhances participants’ level of involvement in local natural resources projects.
- Camp increases participants’ interest in the outdoors, develops leadership skills and self-confidence and influences career decisions.
- The main reasons participants like camp are the quality camp activities and resource people, hands-on experiences, meeting new people and developing friendships.

Excerpts from 2009 camper thank you notes include:

- Coming to this camp had taught me to look at nature in a new way. I learned so much more in this one week than a year of school. Besides all I learned, I made lots of new friends and I caught my first fish outside of a DNR park. – Christine, Chippewa County
- I learned many new things that I never thought I'd learn in just a week! I loved charter boat fishing and learning how to kayak, sail and canoe. I also got to meet many new people. – Garrett, Macomb County
- I loved learning about different animals and their habitats and about the Great Lakes. I also got a lot of information about careers that I'd like to pursue. It was really a lot of fun! – Brianna, Kent County
- This camp has given me a lot of confidence about what I want to do when I grow up. I would like to go into fish and game management, forestry, or fisheries. This camp has shown me that there are careers out there for me and that my goals can be reached. – Nate, Calhoun County
- I learned about wetlands, forestry, shipwrecks, invasive species, how to give a presentation, how to record scientific data and much more! This camp has influenced me to join the Michigan 4-H Youth Conservation Council and start to make changes to help the environment. I also made a ton of new friends. – Elizabeth, Van Buren County

Positive impacts and camper intentions reflected in the 2009 camper evaluation data showed:

- 97% of campers rated the camp as overall excellent (79%) or good (18%).
- Woodlands & Wildlife was the highest rated session – 95% rated it as excellent or good.
- 92.4% of campers plan to attend college; 53% plan to attend MSU, another 23% said they will consider MSU.
- 83.3% of campers said they were interested in a career that is outdoors, works with the Great Lakes or is connected to some type of environmental science.
- 78.8% plan to use the information learned at camp in 4-H, community or school projects.
- 75.8% of campers reported on the post-camp survey that they felt confident in their abilities to give a lesson or presentation to others about nature, the environment, or the camp to others. Only 45.3% felt this way before camp.
- 68.8% intend to work with others to do a community service project within the next year to improve the environment.

Camper enrollment has increased 82% since 2003.

Camp 2009 was attended by 78 youth (campers ages 13 to 15 and older teen counselors) from 30 Michigan counties and Spain (1 exchange student). It was the first time ever that more girls attended than boys; there were 53% females and 47% males. Other youth demographics are that 15% were from farms, 49% from rural areas, 31% from suburbs and 5% from urban areas. The reported racial make up of youth was 91% Caucasian, 9% people of color. A total of 62% of campers were first-time attendees. 73% of all campers were 4-H'ers.

For more information on 4-H Great Lakes & Natural Resources Camp, please visit <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/cyf/youth/glnrc.html>.