YOUTH & FAMILY OUTDOOR EDUCATION INTERNSHIP IN PUEBLO COUNTY

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

PROJECT BACKGROUND

CSU Extension Pueblo County wanted to provide youth and their families with more opportunities to engage in outdoor, agricultural, and natural resources education. Through my internship, I supported community programming while also developing an evaluation process to better understand participant experiences, learning, and program reach.

Through this internship I combined program evaluation, community outreach, hands-on education, and data collection to help inform future programming, including where to continue efforts and where additional support may be needed.

INTERNSHIP GOALS

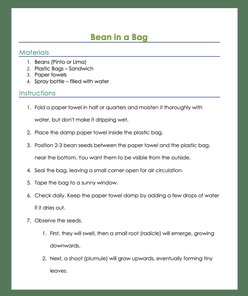
- Develop and implement evaluation tools for youth and family programs
- Evaluate participant experiences, learning, and program reach
- Support outreach efforts to engage families throughout Pueblo County
- Create and facilitate accessible, hands-on natural resource education

CONNECTION TO MY EDUCATION

As a Human Dimensions of Natural Resources student, this internship allowed me to apply concepts from my education through environmental education, community engagement, and program evaluation. Developing hands-on activities taught me how natural resource and agricultural topics can be made engaging and accessible for youth and families.

Creating and analyzing participant surveys also strengthened my skills in data collection and evaluation and demonstrated how community feedback can be used to guide future educational programming.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PROGRAMMING



Bean in a Bag

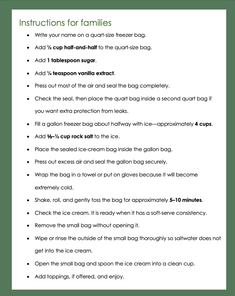
Materials

1. Beans (Pinto or Lima)
2. Plastic Bags – Sandwich
3. Paper towels
4. Spray bottle – filled with water

Instructions

1. Fold a paper towel in half or quarters and moisten it thoroughly with water, but don't make it dripping wet.
2. Place the damp paper towel inside the plastic bag.
3. Position 2-3 bean seeds between the paper towel and the plastic bag, near the bottom. You want them to be visible from the outside.
4. Seal the bag, leaving a small corner open for air circulation.
5. Tape the bag to a sunny window.
6. Check daily. Keep the paper towel damp by adding a few drops of water if it dries out.
7. Observe the seeds.
   1. First, they will swell, then a small root (radicle) will emerge, growing downwards.
   2. Next, a shoot (plumule) will grow upwards, eventually forming tiny leaves.

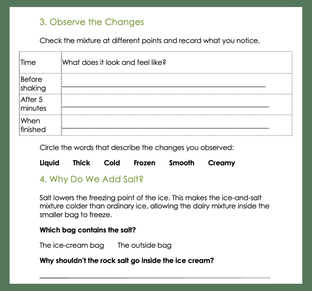
Figure 1. Developed a hands-on seed germination activity.



Instructions for families

- Write your name on a quart-size freezer bag.
- Add ¼ **cup half-and-half** to the quart-size bag.
- Add **1 tablespoon sugar**.
- Add ¼ **teaspoon vanilla extract**.
- Press out most of the air and seal the bag completely.
- Check the seal, then place the quart bag inside a second quart bag if you want extra protection from leaks.
- Fill a gallon freezer bag about halfway with ice—approximately **4 cups**.
- Add **½–¾ cup rock salt** to the ice.
- Place the sealed ice-cream bag inside the gallon bag.
- Press out excess air and seal the gallon bag securely.
- Wrap the bag in a towel or put on gloves because it will become extremely cold.
- Shake, roll, and gently toss the bag for approximately **5–10 minutes**.
- Check the ice cream. It is ready when it has a soft-serve consistency.
- Remove the small bag without opening it.
- Wipe or rinse the outside of the small bag thoroughly so saltwater does not get into the ice cream.
- Open the small bag and spoon the ice cream into a clean cup.
- Add toppings, if offered, and enjoy.

Figure 2. Developed and facilitated a hands-on ice cream-making activity connecting food, agriculture, and science.



3. Observe the Changes

Check the mixture at different points and record what you notice.

Time	What does it look and feel like?
Before shaking	
After 5 minutes	
When finished	

Circle the words that describe the changes you observed:

Liquid **Thick** **Cold** **Frozen** **Smooth** **Creamy**

4. Why Do We Add Salt?

Salt lowers the freezing point of the ice. This makes the ice-and-salt mixture colder than ordinary ice, allowing the dairy mixture inside the smaller bag to freeze.

Which bag contains the salt?

The ice-cream bag The outside bag

Why shouldn't the rock salt go inside the ice cream?

Figure 3. Developed an educational worksheet to reinforce learning during the ice cream activity.

WHO DID WE REACH?

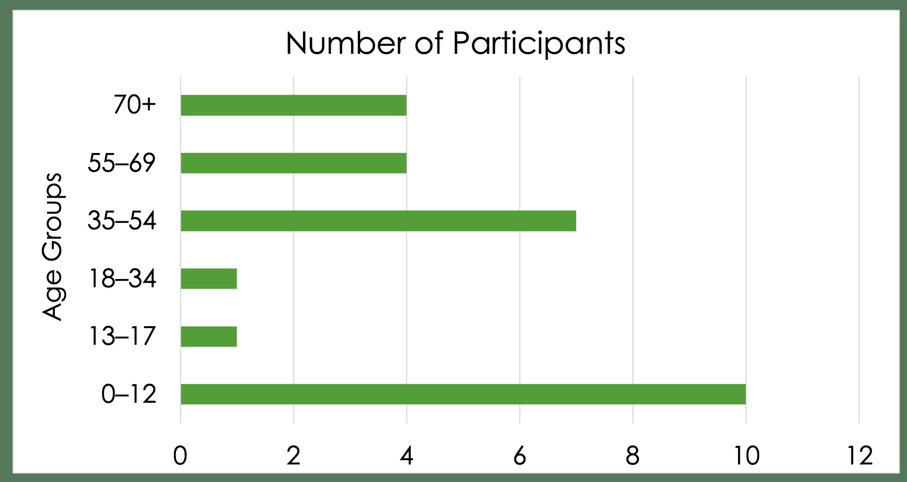


Figure 4.

Participants ranged from 2 to 87 years old, with the largest age group being youth ages 0–12. The distribution demonstrates participation across multiple generations.

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

Learned Something New	Would Participate Again
100%	100%

Suggested Improvement	Mentions
Later start time	2
Stay at locations longer	1
More shows	1
Feeding animals	1
No suggestion provided	8

Figure 5.

Most participants did not suggest changes, while the most common recommendation was a later start time.

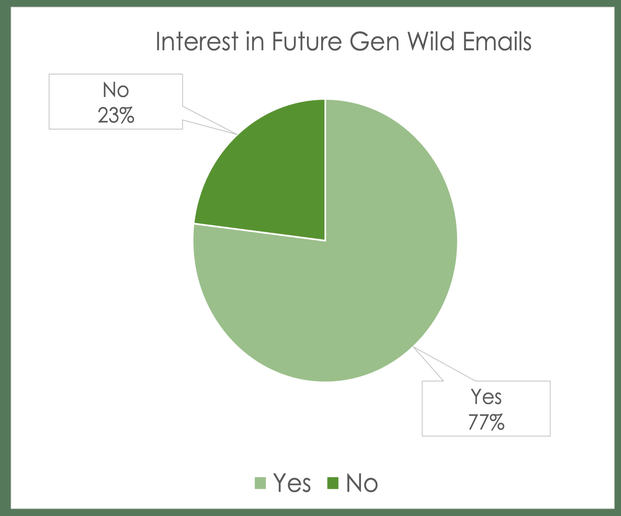
KEY FINDINGS & WHAT I LEARNED

KEY FINDINGS

- 100% learned something new
- 100% would participate again
- 77% signed up for future emails

WHAT I LEARNED

This internship strengthened my skills in developing hands-on educational programming, community engagement, and program evaluation. I learned how participant feedback and data can be used to measure program success, identify areas for improvement, guide future educational programming and outreach



RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

- Continue offering hands-on, family-centered educational programming.
- Maintain communication with families interested in future Generation Wild opportunities.
- Continue using participant surveys to track learning, participant experiences, and program reach over time.
- Use participant feedback and demographic data to guide future program planning and outreach.

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