

4-H Youth Conservation Council January-April 2014

Audience

This program is open to Michigan teens interested in natural resources issues and community change. This program had 19 participants. Two participants from each 8th, three from 9th grades, two from 10th grade, seven from 11th grade, three from 12 grade, and two who had started college. There were 9 males and 10 females. Two participants had American Indian ancestry, one had Asian ancestry, and the rest were Caucasian..

Funding

This program was funded in 2012-2013 by a participant fee and a grant from the Michigan 4-H Foundation.

Objectives

This youth development program is designed to:

- Educate council members about the public policy process and empower them to make positive change in their community
- Improve council members' skills in research, writing and public speaking
- Increase council members' knowledge about natural resource and environmental issues

Description

Youth select an environmental issue, research the issue, develop a paper and present to the Michigan Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes.

Returning youth select five natural resources topics as potential topics for the year at first meeting in October. In December, the entire council comes together and meets with professionals in those topic areas. Based on what they have learned, the participants select a topic. The following two meetings students learn more about their topic as well as public speaking, research, public policy, and leadership skills. There were about 60 contact hours with the students throughout the process.

The program culminates with a presentation to the Michigan Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes around Earth Day.

There were 2 MSU faculty/staff, 2 volunteer advisors and many government and natural resource experts involved.



Outcomes

A pre-/post-survey was used to measure participants' skills and perceptions. Below are response highlights for youth who "agreed or strongly agreed" with targeted skills. Before the event responses are shown in parentheses.

- *I know who to contact to get things done*(53%) 95%
- *I can think critically about public policy issues and suggest ways for improvement*—(47%) 89%
- *89% felt confident you are able to make a presentation to a group of elected officials about ideas you have to help prevent or solve environmental issues*

Select comments from Teen Participants

- *YCC has showed me how teams work together and work together effectively, and definitely expanded my viewpoints.*
- *It has increased my confidence, encouraged me to take an active role in government, and helped me make a lot of great connections.*

Contact Information

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