

IMPACT

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4-H Summer Camp Book – your resource for area wide 4-H camps

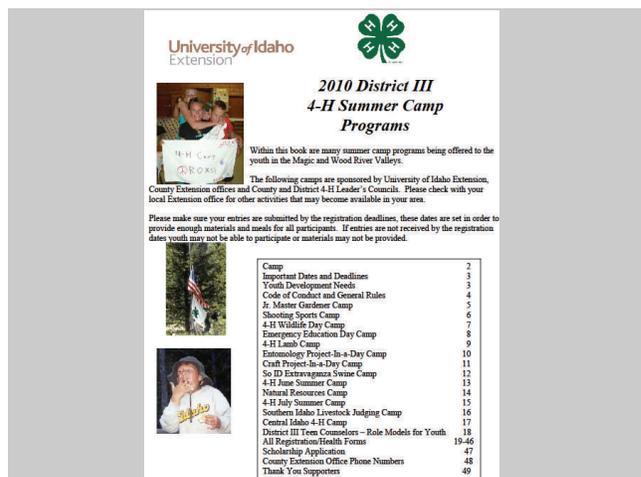
The Situation

During the fall of 2005, county 4-H programs throughout the UI Extension Southern District began to restructure into multi-county or area wide programs. County 4-H professionals started to share resources and plan and conduct quality educational events as a team. These combined programs were meant to attract a larger number of youth and adults to one regional location. With this restructure there was a change in how county personnel were involved. Instead of county 4-H professionals each planning their own activities, they now worked as a team to organize and conduct multi-county programs.

Promotional materials and registration forms for individual county activities had traditionally been sent by the different offices at multiple times throughout the year. Area families may not have known what 4-H activities were available throughout the summer if they requested information too early or too late from their local Extension Office. Individual county programs also were not always open or available for families outside of the organizing county.

Our Response

With this new organizational structure there needed to be a change in how 4-H information about area camps, workshops, contests and other educational programs was communicated throughout the district. The 4-H Summer Camp Book was created to provide a consistent message in a professional format to area families. In 2007, a pilot Camp Book was created which targeted an eight county area of the Magic and Wood River Valleys. Camp agendas, prices, deadlines, registration and scholarship forms were included. Camp Books were located in every county Extension office, on UI Extension websites, at local



Cover page of 2010 4-H Summer Camp Book. Photo credit Cinder Kinder and Jeni Bywater.

businesses, libraries, schools, recreation districts, courthouses, and city offices. The pilot Camp Book was funded through a Friends of 4-H Grant.

In 2008, 2009, and 2010, the 4-H Summer Camp Book was continued, updated and distributed before area school's spring break and was also made available to area families all summer long. The 4-H Camp Book contained everything families needed to know to identify, register and attend 4-H activities of interest. The last three years these books were sponsored by Magic Valley Bank, a division of Panhandle State Bank. The 4-H Summer Camp Book enables Extension Office staff to give out complete information, provides camp details in one convenient location, and showcases summer 4-H activities.

Program Outcomes

All eight counties in the Magic and Wood River Valleys requested 50 to 150 Camp Books the first year

they were published. By the fourth year each county was requesting from 100 to 200 books for distribution to their 4-H families. The public had learned that the 4-H Camp Book had all the information they needed for multi-county activities and began to ask for them each spring.

During the pilot year of 2007, one county posted the Camp Book on their county 4-H website. In 2010, four counties included the Camp Book on their website and others provided links to the information. How the Camp Book information is distributed by the county offices has also changed in other ways. In the beginning, many County 4-H Program Coordinators printed individual camp registrations and agendas in their newsletters. Very few announced that the Camp Books were available to pick up at the Extension Office. By 2010, most county newsletters did not include individual camp forms, instead let 4-H families know that Camp Books were available to pick up at no cost. This shift in the way camps were promoted enabled counties to reduce the amount of postage used for monthly newsletters since fewer pages needed to be included. Also, the change in marketing did not affect participation in the summer activities. Table 1 indicates that youth participation is stable or increasing at the four camps listed over the past four years.

Table 1. Yearly youth participation in four sample camps.

Camp	2007	2008	2009	2010
Wildlife Camp	138	93	71	95
Lamb Camp	90	83	135	136
Swine Camp	105	NA	144	124
July Summer Camp	84	64	74	75

Area families are excited about 4-H programs being offered and are now requesting the 4-H Camp Book before the spring publishing date. An example of how the Camp Book project has made 4-H information more available and benefits the community is its availability at the Twin Falls R&E Center located on the College of Southern Idaho Campus. This location is a convenient place for walk-in clientele to contact UI Extension. Even if the office staff is not directly involved in 4-H activities, they are able to give complete and correct information about upcoming events.

The 4-H Summer Camp Book has grown to include a variety of camps which are available to all youth in the Magic and Wood River Valleys. The 2010 Camp Book contained thirteen multi-county 4-H activities including Wildlife Camp, Jr. Master Gardener, Entomology training, various livestock species workshops and others.

There are also several different camp formats available; such as day camps, multi-day events and traditional week long summer camps. These programs offer opportunities for

youth to experience and learn from hands-on activities with a connection to the University of Idaho.

The 4-H Summer Camp Book has become the go-to place for up-to-date information, a complete resource for area families looking for 4-H youth development events, and provides an efficient and accurate way for local Extension Offices to promote 4-H programming.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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