

# IMPACT

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## Fourteen years of 4-H Shooting Sports education in Idaho

### The Situation

Idaho has a rich heritage of outdoor recreation. Thousands of families participate in camping, fishing, hiking, shooting, and hunting activities. The shooting sports disciplines can involve each member of the family. The 4-H program also has a rich heritage throughout Idaho. The 4-H Shooting Sports program has been around for 30+ years but participation declined over the years. In the mid 1990's the National 4-H Shooting Sports Development committee was formed in response to several situations nationally:

- The shooting and hunter education organizations were interested in recruitment of new shooters.
- Hunter educators were interested in teaching new hunters how to hunt and shoot safely.
- The shooting industry had a financial interest in cultivating the next generation of recreational shooters.
- The 4-H program was faced with declining male participation, especially in youth over age thirteen.

The National 4-H Shooting Sports Development committee brought all of these groups together to rewrite the 4-H Shooting Sports training curriculum and develop a train-the-trainer program. Participants in a national training were certified to teach adults at the state level who would then lead 4-H projects at the county level.

### Our Response

University of Idaho State 4-H program hosted a national 4-H Shooting Sports training. Several participants from Idaho successfully certified in the disciplines of archery, rifle, shotgun, pistol, muzzleloading, and hunting. An Idaho state 4-H Shooting Sports training team was organized and trainings using the



4-H Shooting Sports participants practicing their teaching skills at a shooting sports training in Orofino, Idaho. These future 4-H leaders are demonstrating the rifle kneeling position to their peers.

new 4-H Shooting Sports curriculum were held for 4-H leaders. To lead a 4-H Shooting Sports project, an adult is required to be properly trained and certified. There have been over 30 trainings (average 2-3 per year) provided across the state, and the need is great enough that it is difficult to meet demand.

### Program Outcomes

The shooting sports are one of the fastest growing project areas in the 4-H program, both nationally and in Idaho. Recent events such as televised coverage of the 2012 summer Olympic archery games and the movie *The Hunger Games* have caught the attention of youth and sparked their curiosity in the shooting sports. Certainly the training of 4-H leaders across the state have led to more adults promoting the shooting sports projects.

Over a 14 year period the number of individual shooting sports projects has grown significantly.

There were 426 shooting sports projects reported in 2000 (approximately 10% of the Environmental Education projects) and 1,447 reported in 2013 (approximately 29% of the Environmental Education projects). The change in enrollments shows a 71% increase in the number of 4-H Shooting Sports projects. It is important to note that one individual 4-H member may have more than one shooting project. Many of the projects have been completed by new participants in the 4-H program.

The shooting sports projects help attract non-traditional audiences into the 4-H program. Youth with no interest in live-stock or other “traditional” 4-H programs are participating in the shooting sports projects. Research indicates that youth who participate in 4-H are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and are more likely to do well in school and pursue careers in science and engineering. The 4-H program promotes positive and healthy life styles and the development of positive life skills.

#### **The Future**

The demand for training opportunities continue to increase not only in Idaho but nationally. The University of Idaho State 4-H program continues to encourage adults to attend national trainings so the Idaho training team can meet the needs of adults wanting to become 4-H shooting sports leaders. Currently Idaho shares trainers with Washington, Oregon, and Montana to meet the need. The 4-H shooting sports program has grown to offer district and state competitions in archery. Idaho’s first archery team competed in the 2013 National 4-H archery competition. Teams in other disciplines may participate in the national competition but more trained leaders are needed. By providing opportunities such as the 4-H Shooting Sports projects for Idaho’s youth, the Idaho 4-H youth development program will continue to grow and provide the opportunity for positive influence for Idaho’s youth.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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