

Title of Entry (COLUMN - BLOG):

Highlighting Florida 4-H – Opportunities for Youth and Adults

Objectives, Target Audience, and Current Population

The primary objective of the blog series is to engage families with innovative 4-H programming by highlighting opportunities in outdoor education, youth hunting, summer day camps, competitive events, and volunteer involvement. The target audience included parents, youth, and potential 4-H volunteers, particularly those new to the organization. By showcasing timely and relevant topics, the blogs aimed to increase awareness and participation in Florida 4-H programs.

The current population of Holmes County is approximately 20,059, with a total population of 1,794,290 across the 18 counties that make up the Florida 4-H Northwest District.

Methods Used

Each blog post is published on the Northwest District Florida 4-H website (<https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/4hn/author/lauenc/>), ensuring accessibility to a broad audience. Posts incorporate calls to action with embedded links to additional resources, making it easy for readers to take the next step in getting involved. Topics are selected to align with seasonal events and pressing community interests, such as summer day camps and competitive events, to maximize engagement.

Impact Results

The blog series has contributed to increased awareness of Florida 4-H opportunities, particularly in outdoor education, youth hunting, summer camps, competitive events, and mentorship programs. Engagement metrics, such as link clicks, shares, and direct inquiries from families and volunteers, indicate that the content successfully connects with its audience. Analytics indicate over 238 views. Feedback from readers suggests that the posts have played a role in attracting new participants and reinforcing the importance of 4-H mentors.

Role in the Entry, Publisher's Requirements, and Production Costs

As the sole author of the blog series, I am responsible for research, writing, and content development. Each post is tailored to align with Florida 4-H's mission while maintaining an engaging and informative tone. The blog is hosted on the official University of Florida IFAS Extension website, meeting all organizational publishing standards. Production costs are minimal, with resources allocated primarily toward maintaining the website and promoting content through social media and digital outreach.

Outdoor Adventures: Considerations for Introducing Youth to the World of Hunting

by lauenc | Feb 5, 2024 | 4-H Events and Activities, 4-H Shooting Sports, Animal Sciences, Environmental Sciences

Hunting, when approached responsibly, can be a rewarding and educational experience for young individuals. As a 4-H agent dedicated to fostering a love for the outdoors, I recognize the importance of instilling a strong foundation of ethics and safety when introducing youth to the world of hunting. To ensure a positive and educational introduction to this amazing tradition, several key considerations should be considered.

1. Safety Training and Ethical Hunting Practices:

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) offers comprehensive safety resources, emphasizing the importance of proper firearm handling, wildlife identification, and safe hunting practices. Educating young hunters about the critical role of safety protocols ensures a secure and enjoyable experience in the field. There are a variety of hunter safety courses available. Visit the [Which Hunter Safety Course Is Right For You? | FWC \(myfwc.com\)](#) webpage to find out what course to see what may work best for your family. If you have completed an online course and have a certificate, you can participate in the upcoming Field Day on November 18, 2023 at West Pittman Baptist Church in Holmes County. Visit the [Hunter Safety Registration \(site.com\)](#) webpage to register or find other courses in your area on a different date.

2. First Shot Fundamentals:

Holmes County 4-H has been awarded several grants from the The National Rifle Association (NRA) Foundation. Our Holmes County 4-H Shooting Sports Program includes archery, rifle, and shotgun disciplines. Youth members learn "first shot fundamentals" that will translate to important life skills as they may choose to ultimately participate in hunting opportunities. Emphasizing the values of fair chase, respect for wildlife, and the importance of humane and responsible harvesting helps instill a deep appreciation for the natural world and ecosystem.

3. Conservation Education:

Collaborating with 4-H programs that incorporate conservation education can help young hunters understand the vital role they play in wildlife conservation and habitat preservation. Teaching the principles of sustainable hunting and the importance of maintaining ecological balance contributes to the development of environmentally conscious and responsible hunters. This also includes ongoing education and research related to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Holmes County and the surrounding region to learn what we, as hunters, can do to help.

4. Mentorship Programs:

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission often organizes mentorship programs that pair experienced hunters with newcomers. These programs, align with 4-H's emphasis on positive youth development and foster a supportive learning environment. Mentors follow the guidance outlined in mentorship materials to provide hands-on training, impart valuable skills, and promote the development of strong ethical values in young hunters. Visit the [Mentored Hunts Registration \(site.com\)](#) webpage to find upcoming opportunities across the state of Florida.

5. Legal Compliance and Regulations:

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) provides up-to-date information on hunting regulations,

licensing requirements, and seasonal restrictions. Educating youth about these regulations instills a sense of responsibility and legal compliance, contributing to the cultivation of law-abiding and conscientious hunters.

By integrating these considerations into the process of introducing youth to hunting, we can ensure that they develop not only a passion for the sport, but also a respect for wildlife and the natural world. Together, we can foster the next generation of responsible and ethical hunters who prioritize safety, conservation, and ethical hunting practices in their outdoor adventures. For more information about how your youth can get involved with Holmes County 4-H, visit the [Holmes County 4-H \(holmescounty4h.com\)](http://holmescounty4h.com) webpage.



Miah, daughter of the Holmes 4-H Agent, enjoys the opportunity to harvest her first deer at age 6.



Holmes County 4-H Agent, Chris Lauen, introduces his children to a Holmes County whitetail buck.

2024 4-H Northwest District Tailgating (Grilling) Contest Results

by laueinc | Aug 6, 2024 | 4-H Science, Animal Sciences, Camp, Healthy Lifestyles, Recipes, Uncategorized

2024 4-H Northwest District Tailgating (Grilling) Contest Results

The 2024 4-H Northwest District Tailgating (Grilling) Contest was a great success and served as a platform to showcase the grilling talents of youth from various counties. This event is part of the broader Florida 4-H Tailgating Contest program, that aims to promote the safe preparation of animal proteins and develop valuable life skills in youth. The 2024 Florida 4-H District and State Contests are sponsored by Publix Super Markets and Sonny's BBQ.

Program Overview

The Florida 4-H Tailgating Contest encourages participants to grill different types of proteins, including beef, pork, poultry, and shrimp. Youth compete at county and district levels, with top performers advancing to the state competition. The Contest also requires participants to create a tabletop display to show off their recipe and creativity. Participants may use a laptop/iPad/poster & easel to complement their tabletop display to describe their recipe. The overall program emphasizes the development of grilling skills, highlights food and fire safety, and promotes healthy lifestyle choices.

2024 CONTEST RESULTS

Beef Category



- 1st Place: Cate B. (Okaloosa)
- 2nd Place: Jade L. (Liberty)
- 3rd Place: Sydney G. (Escambia)
- 4th Place: Charlie B. (Gadsden)

Pork Category



- 1st Place: Taylor A. (Escambia)
- 2nd Place: Josh W. (Washington)
- 3rd Place: Brogan B. (Holmes)
- 4th Place: Malec C. (Liberty)

Chicken Category



- **1st Place:** Tucker P. (Escambia)
- **2nd Place:** Braden P. (Escambia)
- **3rd Place:** Kylie T. (Bay)
- **4th Place:** Emmitt A. (Holmes)

Shrimp Category



- **1st Place:** Chipper M. (Holmes)
- **2nd Place:** Jeb W. (Gadsden)
- **3rd Place:** Hunter S. (Escambia)
- **4th Place:** Cheyanne H. (Gadsden)

Prizes

Winners in each category were awarded as follows:

- **1st Place:** \$400
- **2nd Place:** \$250
- **3rd Place:** \$100
- **4th Place:** \$50

State Competition

The top two winners from each category will advance to the Florida 4-H Tailgating State Contest on October 5, 2024, at the Animal Sciences Beef Teaching Unit in Gainesville, FL. Participants will have the opportunity to compete for further recognition and scholarships.

State Contest

For each protein category:

- **1st Place:** \$1,500
- **2nd Place:** \$1,000

The Florida 4-H Tailgating Contest not only provides a competitive platform but also equips youth with essential life skills, fostering a healthy lifestyle and decision-making abilities ([Florida 4-H](#)) ([UF IFAS Extension](#)). For more information about the District Contests and the State Contest, contact your local 4-H Agent and visit [Tailgate Contest - Florida 4-H - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences - UF/IFAS \(ufl.edu\)](#).

Let's Grow together at the Northwest 4-H Volunteer Forum!

by lauenc | Oct 7, 2024 | 4-H Events and Activities, 4-H School Enrichment, 4-H Science, Becoming a Volunteer, Volunteer Resources, Volunteer Training



Dates: January 10-11, 2025

Location: Panama City Beach, FL

Are you excited about helping young people grow? Do you want to become a stronger leader and connect with others who share your passion? Then save the date for the Northwest 4-H Volunteer Forum in Panama City Beach! We're looking forward to a weekend filled with learning, fun, and connection. This forum is a great chance for 4-H volunteers to gain new skills, share ideas, and make an even bigger impact on the youth we serve.

Volunteers are the heart of 4-H. You play a vital role in mentoring young people and helping them grow in projects like agriculture, science, health, and citizenship. Without your time and dedication, 4-H wouldn't be able

to fulfill its mission to empower and guide the next generation.

One of the best parts of attending the forum is the chance to network with fellow volunteers. Connecting with others who share your passion for 4-H opens the door to collaboration and learning from each other's experiences. By building communities of practice, we strengthen our local programs and create lasting partnerships that help us serve youth more effectively. These connections can lead to new ideas, shared resources, and ongoing support from others who understand the challenges and rewards of volunteering.

At the forum, you'll have the chance to attend workshops designed to strengthen leadership, build new programs, and provide helpful tips for mentoring youth. These sessions will be led by experienced 4-H Agents and volunteers who can't wait to share their insights. You'll leave with fresh ideas and skills to take back to your 4-H community, helping to make an even bigger difference.

Register today to be part of this exciting opportunity! Not only will you grow as a leader, but you'll also contribute to the success of 4-H for years to come. Let's work together to inspire the next generation of leaders and problem-solvers. Don't miss out—come grow, connect, and lead with us!

Feel free to [share this invitation](#) with other volunteers or anyone interested in supporting 4-H. Let's grow together!

Register in [4Honline](#) now through December 10th.