

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## Alpine 4-H Camp: The height of youth development

### AT A GLANCE

Ten years alone saw approximately 8,500 campers increase their self-confidence, gain foundational skills and give back to the next generation.

### The Situation

Youth have always needed a place and time away from the everyday routine to have positive formative experiences that prepare them for future successes as adults. More than ever, our digital, virtual society needs kids who have exercised their digits in hands-on crafts and caught the vision of interpersonal relationships and self-improvement. 4-H camp provides youth with an ideal place to explore nature and develop their natural abilities and skills in a new environment, thereby helping them grow.

### Our Response

Extension and 4-H personnel bring expertise, funding and curriculum to a regional collaborative effort from Salmon to Malad to the Idaho-Wyoming border outside Alpine. A total of 18 counties and tribes break up a month into multicounty groups of three-day camps for their youth followed by a regionwide horse camp.

Short classes and workshops range from shooting sports, crafts, geology, botany, service projects, drones, games and cooking, to S.T.E.M, fire safety and equitation. These are the little brush strokes that paint the big picture of Alpine 4-H Camp.



Jared Gibbons checking the snow load at camp on April 20, 2023. Photo by Lance Hansen.

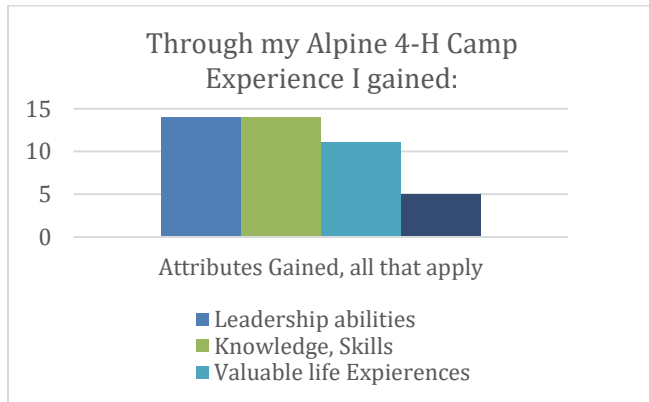
### Program Outcomes

Through these little strokes we paint a transformative picture of lifelong relationship building, stewardship of the outdoors and independent thinking. These framework skills allow for healthy mental and social development regardless of the field or vocation the kids pursue in the future.

The horse camp celebrated 50 years of youth development in 2023. The four-day event at the Alpine 4-H Camp features over 80 youth participants and their horses to learn a wide variety of disciplines and skills from English equitation to leather work. This year featured 10 youth counselors who assisted with the administration of the camp and led the younger campers in activities that enhanced the fun of the camp

experience. The youth counselor program is planned for expansion into teaching and mentoring to help youth and their parents have a better and more productive learning experience. Horses, their use and care, add a whole new dynamic to the learning and teaching environment provided at the Alpine 4-H Camp. The camp board is set to update and improve the entire horse camp area to provide additional camp revenues and prepare for the next 50 years of horse camp.

A survey of 14 previous camp counselors found that 100% of respondents gained leadership abilities, knowledge and skills as a result of their Alpine 4-H Camp experience. Significantly, four out of five who selected the “Other” category specifically stated meaningful friendships in their response.



The most touching parts of the survey were the text entry questions. When asked why being a camp counselor was important or what they expected of the experience, representative responses include: “Due to such a great time I had there as a camper I wanted to be able to give that same opportunity to the future generation. I also hoped to learn and gain better people skills.” And “It was important to me because I wanted to make sure every kid who goes to camp has the best time.” 85% of respondents said that those prior expectations were fulfilled by the actual experience.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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When asked how their camp experiences benefited them moving into adult life, one reply was: “I learned so many life skills at camp that I will use for the rest of my career. Being a camp counselor, I learned to be a leader and help everyone. In my career, now I have to help build people to do the best job possible. I learned how to communicate with people that don't see eye to eye with me and how we can make it work. The things I thought "oh I'll never use that, it's just a camp" has changed me for the better because it wasn't just a camp, it was an incredible opportunity to learn and grow.”

It is plain to see that an experience like camp easily creates an impression. But distinction comes with contrast. Respondents were requested to complete the following sentence: “Without camp I would not have had...” The most impactful reply was: ...“the experiences of growing up and learning with some of the best people I have met in my life that have taught me so many different things whether it was about camp, or friends, or life and how to be the best person I could be.”

### The Future

After nearly 75 years of Alpine 4-H Camp the future is bright. But as with anything its age, it takes careful management to keep the facility side of camp functioning properly. Current and future projects will assure a firm financial foundation in perpetuity. More importantly, the future is in the hands of this next generation of campers who will be learning the responsibility of tending a meaningful and relevant tradition.

### Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Our partners over the decades are too numerous to list; however, without them our impact would not be as far reaching. We heartily thank all our past and current cooperators and sponsors and welcome the chance to partner with new ones.