



UW-MADISON EXTENSION

Nature and Ecology Project

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What is it All About?

Wyoming is home to some of the most vast and scenic landscapes in North America. Take a journey through fields, forests, lakes, and more to discover the wonders and mysteries of Wisconsin's natural environment. Through the 4-H nature and ecology project, you will learn about the interconnections of people and nature. You'll also develop respect for the natural environment while creating a sense of stewardship toward our natural resources.

Grow in Your Project

Starting Out

- Learn about ecosystem services.
- Explore watersheds and water purification.
- Collect and analyze soil samples.
- Learn about different sources of energy.
- Explore ecotourism.
- Learn more about aesthetics and the environment.

Resources

- Exploring Your Environment – Ecosystem Services (08410)*

Learning More

- Learn about environmental stewardship.
- Find out what natural capital is and why it is important.
- Explore local and national land use.
- Learn about population capacity and reasons for extinction.
- Use butterflies to test the local health of your ecosystem.

Resources

- Exploring Your Environment – Earth's Capacity (08411)*

Going Further

- Learn about climate change and its effect on the environment.
- Investigate your carbon footprint.
- Learn how to live an environmentally responsible lifestyle.
- Identify ways to conserve energy.
- Learn about resource sustainability.

Resources

- Exploring Your Environment – Facilitators Guide (08412)*

Take Your Project Further!

- Take a field trip. Identify different ecosystem services found in Wisconsin.
- Visit your local landfill or dump to find out about solid waste and recycling programs.
- Conduct an experiment to see how trash breaks down in a landfill.
- Set up an environment quiz bowl or skill-a-thon for your club or county.
- Attend your local 4-H camp.
- Interview someone from the Bureau of Land Management.
- Explore the types of foods in your area that wildlife might eat.
- Visit your local NCRS to find out more about the soil in your area.
- Plan an Earth Day celebration.
- Find out more about the effects of erosion.
- Tour parts of Wisconsin that are affected by erosion and weathering.



*Resources available at your local Extension office or shop4-H.org.

Applying Project Skills to Life

Enhance Your Communication Skills

- Research an environmental issue and prepare a presentation to government officials for resolution.
- Write articles or newsletters about environmental events and issues as well as natural resource topics.
- Create a blog about how kids can be environmentally friendly.

Get Involved in Citizenship and Service

- Start a recycling program in your neighborhood or community.
- Adopt a highway, river, lake or other outside area for cleanup.

Learn about Leadership

- Lead your club families in performing a home energy audit.
- Plan and conduct an “energy fair” teaching younger kids about wind, solar, biomass, and coal energy.
- Lead a group game at your club meeting related to learning about the environment.



Showing What You've Learned

- Can you identify local trees? Make a poster to help others learn.
- What attracts butterflies to your garden? Find out and share your findings in a video.
- How has Wisconsin's wildlife changed through the years? Create a timeline with visuals of significant events.
- Create a survey on what other youth think and feel about today's environmental issues. Tweet your friends and keep a tally. Report out through a poster, video, etc.
- Create a video on pros and cons of sun, wind, nuclear, coal power.
- Create an original piece of artwork using natural objects.
- Develop a display or notebook on forest diseases
- Create a field notes adventure pack.
- Display your filed notes and findings from your 4-H year.
- Make a leaf and twig collections.
- Make a bird feeding station.
- Create a report on soils in your area.
- Make a poster showing a wildlife habitat.
- Create a soda bottle ecosystem.
- Make a display of the ecosystem your favorite animal lives in.
- Make a comparison chart of characteristics of Wisconsin ecosystems and an ecosystem another part of the world.
- Build a model of a landfill.

Adapted with permission from Wyoming State 4-H, Project Information Sheet, Nature and Ecology.
Retrieved from: <https://www.uwyo.edu/4-h/projects/natural-resource-education/nature-ecology.html>.

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