

Notes from Ashland County 4-H Strategic Planning Session, held at the Ashland County Courthouse, 6/5/17 (6-9pm)

Present: Amy Tromberg, Margaret Oliphant, Alan Brew, Seija and Mike Anderson, Gina Pearce, Liz Wabindato, Bella Wabindato (youth rep), Phoebe Kebec, Jennifer Nortunen, Becky Mika, Doug Liphart

After introductions and a snapshot of where 4-H is in Ashland County in 2017, and a look back at the 2012 strategic plan and progress and some stats from 2012, the group discussed and determined the following:

Ashland County 4-H Values:

- Hands-on Learning
- Developing Social Skills/Social Interaction
- Responsibility
- Strong Work Ethic
- Self Confidence
- Community Pride
- Exploration/Try New Things
- Value Outdoors
- Integrated Club Activities
- Empathetic
- Service to others and Community
- Fun

SWOT Analysis (2017)

Strengths:

- Lots of great leaders
- County Values
- Takes advantage of natural resources
- Non-club options
- Diversity in opportunity
- Ambassadors
- Engaged People
- Minimal financial barriers to participation for members
- Cooperative integration between clubs
- Cross county activity with Bayfield County
- Resources (project) – plentiful

Weaknesses:

- Sometimes difficult to figure out how to get into 4-H
- 4-H Online ☹️
- Preconceived Expectations on the part of residents of what 4-H is and what membership involves

- Reaching disadvantaged kids (much of 4-H requires some parent involvement and many families in our community struggle)
- Scheduling is an ongoing puzzle – in some ways is easier with technology, and in some ways harder
- Communication (multiple platforms for communication – can be difficult to figure out how to reach people in their preferred way or cumbersome to try and hit ALL platforms)
- Defining 4-H (especially to folks outside 4-H in an easy and concise way)

Opportunities:

- Multi-county activity/functions
- Connecting with Northland College (classes and volunteers with 4-H background)
- Connecting with Bad River (i.e. for transportation?)
- Elevator Speech (would be helpful – not hard to develop and disseminate)
- Low tech methods of communication (i.e. 4-H posters [by members through a contest])
- nEXT GEN restructuring may have some opportunity in it

Threats:

- More males needed (males are still under-represented, though improving)
- Social change as a result of Technology and social media (includes decreasing children and youth numbers in organized group activities)
- Retention of graduates and parents
- Community struggles (AODA, peer pressure, etc....)
- Funding
- nEXT GEN restructuring

Next Steps/Areas for Work/Action Plans 2017:

- Improve interclub communication about activities they are doing (timeline: immediate; Club Leaders and Amy can be in charge of this one)
- Survey Youth regarding their interests; Survey leaders re what they are experts in and would like to share (surveys, community mapping, focus groups in: community, HS classes, BR Youth Open House, charter schools, online by June 2018; In charge: Leader's organization, club leaders, Doug Liphart, Amy Tromberg, support for community mapping by Liz Wabindato, Ambassadors).
- Improve 'Cool Factor', public awareness and image with marketing campaign (timeline: ongoing, but have new factors in place by 2018; PLO, Ambassadors in charge – 2 contests: a. elevator speech contest, b. poster contest for recruitment for schools and community - spring contest activity. Ongoing T-shirt contest and Facebook/newspaper media coverage of non-cows and plows aspects of 4-H. Parents & kids post to Facebook, tag and share; short videos to YouTube?)
- Bolster social setting [submitted by youth] (2017-2018 hold a lock-in, dance, event [ie ag Olympics, Teen night at fair] or other large social gathering to help retain older youth [7th – 12th gr] and draw others in. Ambassadors, Club Officers, Doug, Liz, Jen will work on this).