

Narrative

Program Description

A Florida 4-H Virtual Day Camp Called Wildlife Outdoor Leadership Focus or (W.O.L.F.) was created to address the human dimension of natural resources. Basically, this is a youth conservation program dedicated to making participants aware of the importance of natural resources recreation, and to apply the art and science of natural resource management. The target audiences for the camp were all youth ages 11-18 from throughout Florida. W.O.L.F. has three main objectives:

- Participants will learn how to identify wildlife and plant species
- Demonstrate Knowledge of best management practices for wildlife
- Have a greater understanding of the complexity of natural resource management

Youth learn how to identify wildlife and plant species, best management practices for natural resources and their impact on the environment. The W.O.L.F. program will start by explaining why environmental education is important. For example, outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, boating and wildlife viewing contribute over \$25 BILLION to the state of Florida.

In addition, W.O.L.F. is also attended to spark awareness about the professionals who work with our natural resources. Participants virtually meet biologists, wildlife officers, and other natural resource professionals. Each career video will explain how they help our environment. Youth get to see what it would be like if they had their jobs. The program does not just stop with wildlife and fisheries science careers. The program explains many more sciences. 4-H Members learned about soil science, forestry, engineering, math, agriculture, and technology to name a few.

W.O.L.F. participants receive hands on practice of being a conservationist. The camp has 5 sections: Woods and Fields, Freshwater, Saltwater, Survival, and Biologist life. Each day has videos and activities that offer up a daily challenge. W.O.L.F. campers learn about wildlife/plant identification, and what specific wildlife species need to survive. Furthermore, we show youth how our actions, intentional or unintentional, affect the environment we live in. the virtual day camp also covers basic biology of mammals, birds, fish, and reptile. Participants are encouraged to go out with adult supervision and see what's going on in the great outdoors.

The final activity is the wildlife challenge where campers must be a wildlife biologist for a day. 4-H members are given a scenario with three wildlife species that the landowner wants to manage for on a piece of property. The camper must evaluate the property based on the requirements that the wildlife species need in to survive. The camper completes a wildlife management plan. They look at the best management practices given to them during the course and decide if the property is habitat for the desired wildlife species. If it is not, they must offer a solution.

Evaluation

Eighty-six youth who registered for virtual Wildlife Outdoor Leadership Focus (W.O.L.F.) Camp through Florida 4-H Adventure series were surveyed after each of the five sections. Through Google Forms, surveys indicated that participants gained knowledge in wildlife management and environmental education. All 4-H programming incorporates life skills and W.O.L.F. was no different. Sixty-nine (80%) of participants reported that they will make a safety plan before enjoying outdoor recreational activity. Participants also reported qualitative data on how the lessons made them think about career development and their impacts on the environment.

Sixty-nine (80%) youth reported that they learned at least one new native wildlife species. Campers navigated through videos that explained native wildlife and how detrimental nonnative species can be on our eco region. Furthermore, participants played trivia games on wildlife identification. Sixty-five (75%) campers could identify different mammals, reptiles, fish and birds using the trivia games. Species identification is critical when considering habitat management. Seventy-two (83%) of campers reported that they would strongly consider the habitat requirement of a particular species. This has implications of campers considering how their actions or management techniques affect individual wildlife species.

W.O.L.F. camp allowed participants to use critical thinking skills and apply what they learned in everyday life. 100% of participants reported they will now consider their impacts on the environment. This could lead to less littering and other forms of pollution. Furthermore, this could mean youth will conduct projects that will improve our environment. One camper reported to his 4-H Agent that this camp made him aware of litter around his favorite public beach access. Through participating in W.O.L.F. the camper organized a beach cleanup with his friends and family!