

University of California 4-H Youth Development Program



**On the Wild Side
2006 Program
Evaluation**



**Marianne Bird
4-H Youth Development Advisor
University of California
Cooperative Extension**



On the Wild Side 2006 Narrative Report

The On the Wild Side Project began in 1999 hoping to enthuse and educate elementary school children about nature and the outdoors, and encourage community involvement and activism in teenagers. It is both a service learning experience for teens who plan and lead the program, and an environmental education experience for elementary school-age participants. Young staff work in partnership with adult volunteers to orchestrate and deliver weekend camp programs to 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students attending schools in low-income neighborhoods.

Project Goals: On the Wild Side is about learning and service, but also about experiencing wonder and a sense of fulfillment. It's as much about the excitement of paddling a canoe for the first time or hugs from campers as it is learning environmental concepts and discovering the gift of giving. Program goals for teen leaders include:

- Skills and confidence in program planning and delivery.
- An increased awareness of the importance of civic engagement.
- A sense of empowerment.
- Feelings of satisfaction and pride in successful project completion.

For young participants, the program goals include:

- Expanded knowledge of the natural world and systems within it.
- The development of an enthusiasm for nature and outdoor living experiences.
- An appreciation for the importance of conservation and environmental stewardship.
- A fun, positive experience with peers and staff in the outdoor setting.



Project Description: On the Wild Side begins in the fall with a core design team of youth and adults who create a project plan. Team members secure funding, recruit teen teachers and adult coaches, organize training, and develop a plan for media exposure. The team recruits camp staff by early spring, and the staff attends a *Project Wild* and *Project Learning Tree* training session where they receive copies of these curricula. At a weekend retreat in April, staff members select the activities they will teach, chose teaching partners, learn strategies for teaching and working with 4th-6th grade students, and begin to bond as a team.

This year On the Wild Side ran two weekends. Campers and their adult chaperones arrived Saturday morning, were divided into groups and rotated through six teen-led activities. Teen staff slept under the stars and shared family-style meals with campers. A campfire, group games, and closing ceremony round out the two-day program.

Population Served: Twenty-one teenagers planned and delivered the program for 115 fourth, fifth and sixth grade youth. Demographics of participants are listed in Table 1. We recruited teenage participants through high schools, 4-H Clubs, the 4-H Youth Experiences in Science (YES) Project, and partnering organizations. Seven teen participants were new to 4-H. Five elementary schools (PS7, Rio Linda, SOL Aureus, Tahoe, and White Rock)—all in low-income communities—participated in the 2006 program.

Table 1: Profile of On the Wild Side 2006 Participants

Ethnicity	Elementary Students (n=115)		Teen Teachers (n=23)		Adult Staff and Chaperones (n=47)	
African American	49	43%	1	4%	10	21%
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	4%	5	22%	6	13%
American Indian	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Caucasian	31	27%	17	74%	28	60%
Hispanic	28	24%	0	0%	3	6%
Gender						
Female	73	63%	17	67%	33	70%
Male	42	37%	6	33%	14	30%

Teens’ Thoughts on the Project: Teens evaluated their program and explored their experience in a group setting with the adult coaches two weeks after the last session of camp. We also gathered information from teen participants about their project experience through written surveys before and after the camp weekends.

Feelings of success: Teens unanimously said that On the Wild Side had been successful. How did they know this? Most all the teen responses fell into two categories: The children seem to learn, and campers enjoyed themselves. Evidence teens cited: “The kids told us they had fun and they were really sad to have to leave,” “Kids that come back remember things they were taught a year ago,” “The program was extremely successful at conveying the key ideas, concepts, terms and ethics on nature. It was evident once you read their journals or heard it in the depth of the questions the kids reflected back.” As detailed below in the data collected on the campers, the teens’ observations are accurate.

Youth-Adult Partnership: Teens praised their adult partners. Ninety-four percent of the youth thought that the adults involved in the project respected and supported them in their role. As one youth expressed, “Through the program, adults of various professions were connected to active youth and many partnerships developed.”

Adults witnessed teens’ ability to “step-up,” compromise, and deliver curriculum. Adults new to On the Wild Side, so hadn’t had previous experience working with teenagers, were surprised and impressed with the teens’ ability, commitment and follow through. They also appreciated the unique gifts the teenagers brought to the effort. One adult noted that the teens proved very successful teachers, observing that when the younger students heard something from a teen teacher, it seemed as if it meant more than if it had come from a different source such as an adult or book, and thus validating the power of the youth presenters.

Impact on Teens: When teens reflected on how they changed through the experience, four themes arose: personal growth, changes in their perception, a sense of efficacy, and skill development. Almost 40% mentioned changes in personal qualities like becoming friendlier, more tolerant or patient, less bossy or opening up with unfamiliar people. One youth said that the part of the program that meant the most to her was overcoming her shyness. Camp also provided new roles for teens and created space for self discovery. Two youth reflected, “I have a more respect for teaching,” and “I like kids more.”



Several teens (40%) spoke of gaining tangible skills including working with children and learning leadership techniques. Teens completed a retrospective pre-post test at the conclusion of the program to assess growth in specific leadership skills. They were asked to rate their skill level on six leadership components on a four-point Likert scale. Average scores are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Retrospective Self-assessment of Leadership Skills for On the Wild Side Teen Teachers

Leadership Skill	Average skill level prior to On the Wild Side program	Average skill level after On the Wild Side program	Difference
Making a presentation	2.31	2.94	.63
Sharing my opinion with adults	2.62	3.18	.57
Sharing my opinion with other teens	2.81	3.45	.64
Organizing my time	2.67	3.27	.60
Organizing my supplies	2.50	3.00	.50
Working with younger kids	3.06	3.56	.50

Teens reported at least a half-point increase in all the listed skill areas. The data reflects that teens felt the skills they grew most in were sharing their opinions with peers, making presentations and organizing their time. They felt least confident in “making presentations” and most confident in “working with younger children” both before and after their On the Wild Side experience.

Community impact: Ninety-four percent of teens felt as though they had made an important contribution to their community through the program. They listed the following:

- Teaching youth environmental awareness through hands-on activities
- An opportunity for new experiences for younger children, teens, and even some adults
- Teaching teen participants valuable skills that can be utilized in the community including cooperation, communication and planning
- Spreading new information and ideas

Project Impact on Campers: Our evaluation utilized data from participant surveys, children’s journals, and pre- and post-tests measuring knowledge gain for young participants. The data suggests that participants are learning environmental concepts, and that the program is fun and engaging.

Participants are learning: As in past years, there is a significant difference in participant's pre- and post test scores measuring what they learned during the camp experience (Appendix, Figure 1). All but one of the five participating sites demonstrated statistically significant knowledge gain in the environmental information presented (Appendix, Figure 2). Journaling activities after each activity allowed children to reflect upon and communicate what they learned: "Arachnids have 8 legs, 2 body parts, 8 eyes and no antenna while insects have 6 legs, 3 body parts, 2 eyes and an antenna.," "I learned that a spider has two (body) parts and I thought it had three parts," "Baby fish are called fry," "A limiting factor (for salmon) is fisherman, eagles, trash, sharks, whales, dolphins and humans," "Bats are not dangerous," and "I learned about the taproot and how it helps stabilize the tree. I like that leaves make food for the tree."



At the end of camp, participants were given a retrospective pre-post test asking them how much they know about nature before camp and how much they learned about nature at camp. What the children felt they learned was significantly more than what they reported they knew before attending the program (Appendix, Figure 5). The children perceive they're learning, a finding the test scores validate.

A positive, new experience: For most students, On the Wild Side creates opportunities to explore and encounter nature in ways they haven't before. The list of new experiences children report illustrates the beauty youth meet in the natural setting: "I saw a deer running through the forest," "I saw two shooting stars and the Milky Way," "Sleeping outside," "Seeing bats," "Swimming in a lake," "Looking for bugs," "I rode in a canoe." We had many returning sites this year and, as such, many returning campers, but still almost 60% indicated it was their first camping experience.

Campers give high ratings to the On the Wild Side experience. Ninety percent felt the program was excellent, and the remaining 10% said it was a good experience (Appendix, Figure 6). Likewise, teachers had positive comments about the program. The teens' observations are accurate; children certainly seem to enjoy the experience.

Strengthening the Program: Teens and adults made a few suggestions to improve their program including

- *Examine how many teens are needed to run each activity.* Having too few or too many teens means too few hands to help or idle time.
- *Train the teens on multiple activities.* Though teens become specialized in a particular lesson, assuring they are comfortable with each activity assures no one is uncomfortable with the material if impromptu changes in staffing are necessary.
- *Find a way to assure a full camp.* Schools, while intending to fill their allotted student spaces, are not doing so. We have the capacity to serve more youth and need to work with schools to maximize the numbers who attend camp.
- *Reinforce the importance of commitment.* A few team members did not follow through.

In Their Own Words...



“I think it’s hard to be a salmon. If they’re extinct, that tells you it’s hard.”

“Baby fish are called fry.”

“Too many bugs. The spider webs were nasty.”

“I thought Insect Walk was interesting because we got to take a walk and try to catch an insect. I didn’t catch one, but other people did and I enjoyed it.”

“I learned a spider has two (body) parts. I thought it had three parts.”

“The campfire was great. I love the bat part and where we did skits.”



“I learned about the tap root and how it helps stabilize the tree. I like that leaves make food for the tree.”





“I just ate lunch and it was great. I did it family style.”

“Lunchtime teaches us to share and have teamwork. I love it!”

“I caught a mountain ant.”

“When I was looking at the stars, I saw a shooting star. I was amazed. I didn’t make a wish, though.”

“This camp is awesome. I want to come back next year. I don’t want to leave.”



“The best part I like was the canoe because you did it by yourself. It was really fun. We splashed ourselves. I learned to paddle. We got to go anywhere we wanted.”



“Today I learned a lot of thing, but had more fun than ever.”

Thank You

By Don Francisco,
Parent chaperone

Thank you
 For having us
Thank you for all
 The wonderful moments
Things, times and places
Will never be forgotten
From the rising of the sun to
A splash of dawn
 Bringing us a new day
A wonderful smile
Thank you for bats, sketches and things
Thank you
 For showing us
The wonderful
 Night sky
With her curtain
 Of Milky Way
Thank you
 For the lessons
We learned
 Thank you for
Your time
But most of all
 Thank God
For giving us
 You wonderful people



On the Wild Side 2006 Financial Report

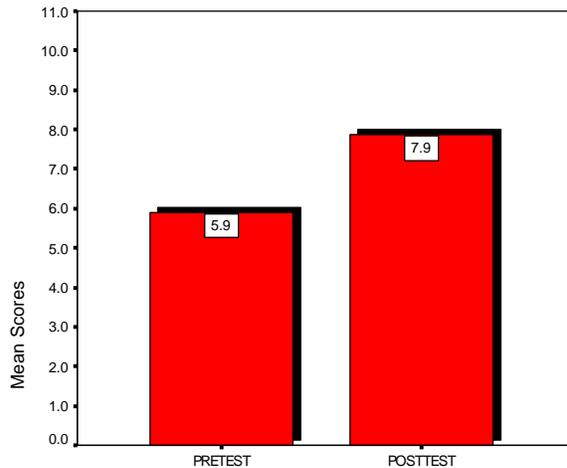
Category	Description	Budgeted	Actual
REVENUE			
Grants	4-H Service Learning Grant	\$2,860	\$2,860
	Grant Advisory Board for Youth		2,000
Fees	School Sites (3 @ \$500; 1 @ \$250)	2,000	1,750
Donations	Private Donations	2,000	
	Dyer Family Foundation		2,000
	Youth in Governance Award		100
	4-H Leaders' Council Outreach Funds	500	
2005 Overage		890	890
Total Revenue		\$8,250	\$9,600
EXPENSES			
Personnel	Lifeguard for Camp Sessions	\$150	\$150
Program Supplies	Program Materials	400	302
Facility	Facility Rentals	2,400	2,200
Food	Food for Camp	2,000	1,681
Transportation	2 buses for each camp session	2,700	2,257
	Vehicle Mileage (2 each weekend)		255
Insurance	14 youth @ \$8; 1 adult @ \$4		116
Program Evaluation	Both Summative and Formative	600	682
Total Expenses		\$8,250	\$7,643
Total		\$0	\$1,957

Overage a result of receiving the GABY grant, an opportunity we didn't anticipate when creating our budget. We'd like to use overage as seed money for next year's program.

Appendix: On the Wild Side 2006 Test Results

Knowledge Gain: On the Wild Side participants took a pre-and post-test to help measure what they learned through the program. Each participant was given a total score for both the pre-test and post-test, and we compared mean (average) scores between the two. We then conducted a paired samples t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between the scores. The t-test revealed significant differences ($p=.00$) for the entire sample ($n=87$) participants. As in past years, we can say with confidence that the children are learning about the environment through participating in On the Wild Side.

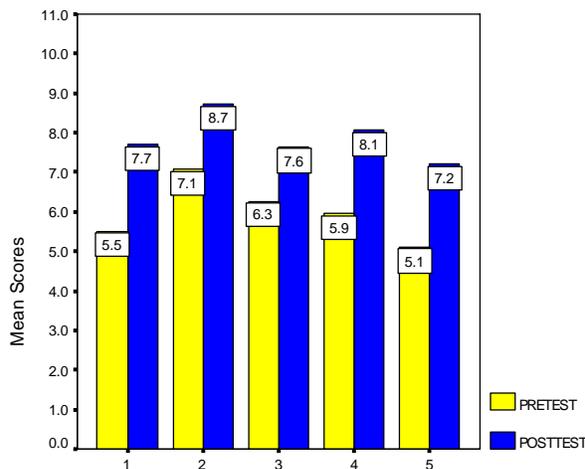
Figure 1: Mean pre-test and post-test scores for all participants



	Pretest	Posttest
Means	5.9	7.8
Standard Deviations	1.9	1.4
N	87	87

Site Comparison: All sites showed significantly higher post-test scores compared to the pre-test (site 1 and 2, $p = .000$; site 3, $p=.01$; sites 4 and 5, $p=.001$). The graph showing pre-test and post-test scores by site and the means are displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Showing pretest posttest scores by site



Site	n	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Difference
1	33	5.51	7.69	2.18
2	14	7.07	8.71	1.64
3	11	6.27	7.63	1.36
4	19	5.94	8.05	2.11
5	10	5.1	7.2	2.10

Grade Level and Number of Times in Program: There were significant difference between grades for pre-test and post-test scores. Difference in pre-test and post-test scores were significant for all grades namely 4, 5 and 6 ($p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.001$ respectively).

There was no significant effect for the number of times a participant had experienced the program on pre-test and post-test scores. Post-test scores were significantly higher for participants who were visiting camp for the first and second time ($p=.000$). For participants visiting the third time there was no statistical significance ($p=.18$), however there were only 3 participants visiting for the third time so the sample is too low to make any interpretations.

Figure 3: Test Score Differences by Grade

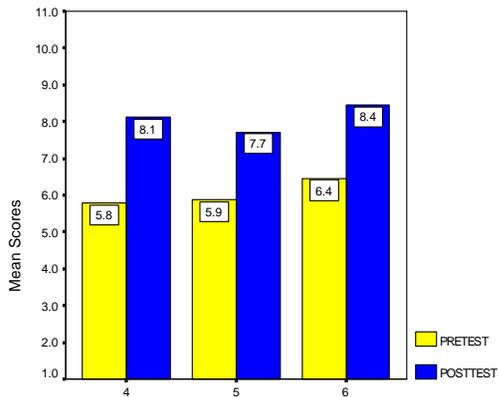
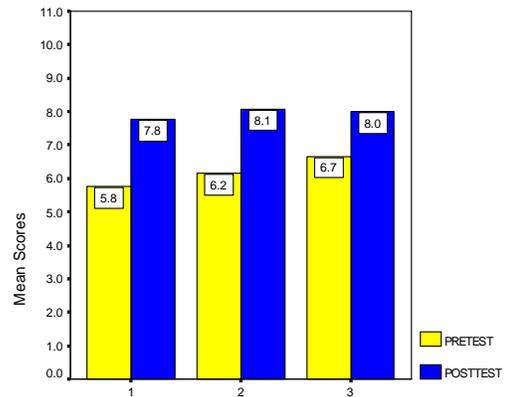


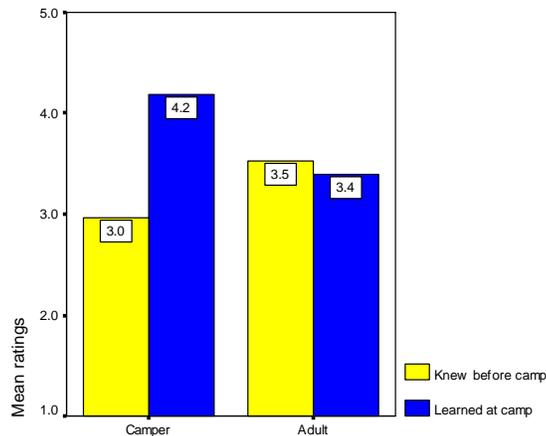
Figure 4: Test Score Differences by Participation Time



Self-evaluation on Nature Knowledge: A retrospective pre-post test asked participants (both children and adult chaperones) to report how much they felt they knew about nature before camp and how much they learned about nature at camp.

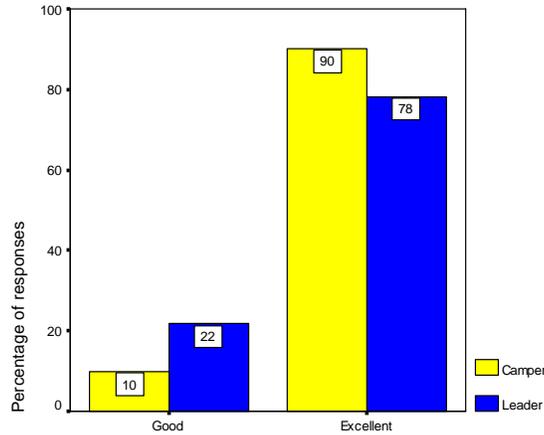
A t-test was conducted to test difference between participant’s self-reported prior knowledge and the amount they had learned about nature at camp. What participants felt they learned was significantly more than what they reported they knew when they came to camp ($p=.00$) For adults, the results were non-significant ($p>.05$). Since adults came to camp with a lot of knowledge of nature, it is not surprising that they report learning less.

Figure 5: Participants Self-Evaluation of Knowledge Growth



Participant’s Experience Ratings: The program was popular with participants, especially youth, as 90% of young people rated their experience as “excellent,” and the remaining 10% rated it as “good.” There were no poor or fair ratings by either youth or adult participants.

Figure 6: Youth and Adult Ratings of Camp



(Statistical analysis prepared with help from Aarti Subramaniam and the 4-H Center for Youth Development, Davis, California)

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION – UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA – SACRAMENTO COUNTY
 4145 BRANCH CENTER ROAD, SACRAMENTO, CA 95827-3898
 PHONE: (916) 875-6913 • FAX: (916) 875-6233
 E-MAIL: cesacramento@ucdavis.edu • WEBSITE: <http://cesacramento.ucdavis.edu/>

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