

# ALPENA COUNTY 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT



I am very pleased to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Alpena County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Because of your continued support, we've been able to make a difference in the lives of youth, families, businesses and communities. MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based educational outreach to county residents. Over this past year, we've empowered families and individuals to live healthier lives, supported new and local businesses, created opportunities for youth leadership development and career exploration, helped farmers with business management and mental health, brought health programs to local schools and much more. Our staff live and work alongside county residents and are rooted in community relationships and responsive to community needs. Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Alpena County, thank you for another great year. We look forward to your continued support and hope you will be able to join us during one of our upcoming programs.



- Adam Koivisto, District 14 Director

**PROGRAMMING  
REACH**

**2,885**

**PROGRAMS  
ACCESSED BY  
RESIDENTS**

**164**

**SOCIAL MEDIA  
REACH**

**23,608**



# DEVELOPING YOUTH & COMMUNITIES

**210 youth  
enrolled in  
clubs**  
**67 registered  
adult  
volunteers**



Youth from 24 Carrot 4-H Club work together to make jam.

The largest youth development organization in Michigan, 4-H provides thousands of young people with experiential learning opportunities to explore new interests and discover their passion.

### Highlights for Alpena County 4-H

- A 3-day, 2-night 4-H Summer Camp where 75 youth participated in hands-on STEM and science activities at the Ocqueoc Outdoor Center.
- Alpena youth were able to participate in hands-on programming this year, including crafts, ice fishing, scholarship applications, cardboard box sled races, embryology, owl pellet dissection, March is reading month programs, and education on the solar eclipse.
- Partnerships included Alpena Public Schools, Art in the Loft, the Library, Antique Steam Engine & Tractor Club, Wolverine Credit Union, and Alpena Alcona Area Credit Union to name a few.



The cardboard sledding event had a focus on STEM learning.



Trunk or Treat Community Event



Adopt-A-Highway and Pied Piper programming



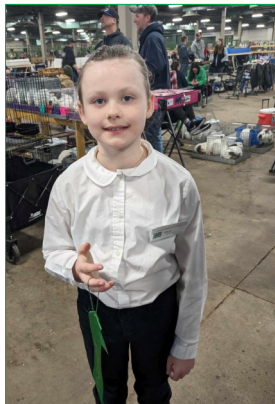
# DEVELOPING YOUTH & COMMUNITIES



Alpena youth representing Alpena well at the State Horse Show.



Point member challenge laser tag night



One of two youth at the State Rabbit Expo.



Participant at Art in the Loft partnership program.



Youth smile at 4-H Day at the Breslin Center.



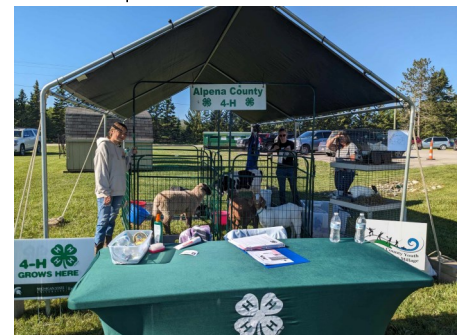
Four youth and three volunteers received certification in shooting sports modalities.



Wolverine, Boys & Girls Club Color Run charity



Youth participating at Exploration Days, on MSU's campus.



4-H youth petting zoo at an elementary school celebration



4-H Ocqueoc Outdoor Center overnight campers smile for picture.



# Alpena County Fair





# IMPROVING HEALTH & NUTRITION

MSU Extension is here to support all the ways we can live healthier lives, be strong and successful and build healthier communities, by bringing the vast knowledge and resources of MSU directly to your community. MSU Extension offers programming and resources for social-emotional and mental health, chronic disease and diabetes management, food safety and food reservation, developing healthy relationships, caregiving and parenting, nutrition and physical activity and more. Supported by the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed), MSU Extension helps create long-lasting, positive changes - from community gardens to childcare homes and beyond.

Programs to highlight in Alpena County:

**Cooking Matters:** a six-week series that shows adult participants a wide variety of budget friendly recipes, with participants making a new recipe each week.

**Show Me Nutrition:** youth curriculum focused on the five food groups on MyPlate: Fruits, Vegetables, protein, grains and dairy. Each week, the second-graders at Besser Elementary had a food tasting that connected to each food group and participated in different physical activities.

**Teen Cuisine:** Pied Piper students in the transitioning classroom, ages 16-26, learned about the five food groups while focusing on eating a well-balanced breakfast, making healthier choices – drinks with less added sugar and when eating out. In addition, the community nutrition instructor also worked with the lead teacher and greenhouse expert to propose a grant submission to help Pied Piper grow their own vegetables and herbs. They used the \$1,000 grant fund to purchase supplies to help them enhance their greenhouse success and items to make serving those fruits and vegetable easier.



Cooking Matters, Alpena Senior Center



Food tasting - cottage cheese with pineapple!



All plants pictured were started from seeds planted by students.



Youth making homemade ice cream.



Safe food and knife handling with a veggie dip tasting at Oqueoc 4-H

## WELCOME MORGAN HARDIES

Morgan is our new Community Nutrition Instructor serving Alpena and Montmorency Counties.

*"I am very excited to be out in the community working with all ages and in our schools with their students."*



# FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES



Dedicated to the protection and sustainable use of the Great Lakes and coastal resources, **Michigan Sea Grant** is a cooperative program of the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Through MSU Extension, Michigan Sea Grant works with Michigan's people, industries, and coastal communities to encourage their use, benefits, and enjoyment of Great Lakes resources that positively influences our state's economy, environment and quality of life.



Guests touring Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage exhibits at the Besser Museum.

Highlights of programming include:

- **Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops** provided an educational opportunity for more than 200 anglers, charter captains, and others learning with fisheries researchers and managers from across Michigan.
- **Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Trail Network**, led by Michigan Sea Grant, partnered with Besser Museum and NOAA's Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary to host nearly 30 people and museum partners from around the Great Lakes to attend the annual, statewide 2024 Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Trail networking conference here in Alpena.
- **Sea Grant Center for Great Lakes Literacy provides education leadership for the Northeast Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative** which supported 88 educators and engaged more than 3,100 students, through their learning, in Great Lakes and natural resources stewardship projects in (and with) their communities across northeast Michigan.
- **4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp** is a statewide science, careers, and youth leadership camp and MSU pre-college program hosted in northeast Michigan, serving nearly 70 campers – including Alpena County youth.



4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources campers explore fisheries science and maritime history.



Connecting with our Lake Huron fisheries - past and present -  
for ecological, economic, and community values



# FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES

## Governance, Leadership and Community Engagement

Successful and thriving communities combine knowledgeable and engaged legislators, businesses, community groups and residents. By connecting these groups with the most trusted tools, MSU Extension helps enhance the quality of life in Michigan.

MSU Extension educators work with businesses, local governments and communities to improve local economies and the lives of Michigan residents. MSU Extension educators also provide programming aimed at protecting and sustainably managing our state's natural resources.

**Alpena Area Joint Recreation Plan**  
 Alpena County, Charter Township of Alpena, Green Township,  
 Ossineke Township, Sanborn Township & Wilson Township

**2024-2028**

A special 2024 impact and accomplishment to highlight:

- Completion of the Alpena Area Joint Recreation Plan (2024-2028)
- ⇒ This plan involved five of the eight townships in the county plus the City of Alpena. This was a huge endeavor to complete in a year.
- Planning assistance and oversight was provided by the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)
- Mary Dunckel, Alpena County MSU Extension educator, provided administrative and facilitative leadership for this plan and has for all other planning activities conducted in the county over the past 23 years.

*This “5 Year Recreation Plan” opens the door for Alpena County to apply and receive funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and Waterways grants. Having a completed plan also meets eligibility requirements for community Recreation Passport grants.*



### NEW COMMISSIONER SCHOOL

For over 50 years, the New Commissioner School program has provided county commissioners, both newly elected and returning, with the preparation they need to enter their new term prepared to lead their counties successfully.

**1,792**

Government officials who use what they learned in making decisions



# FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES

*Supporting Food & Farming Entrepreneurs*

MSU Product Center helps Michigan entrepreneurs and businesses develop and launch new products and service ideas into the food, agriculture and bioenergy markets. Whether a budding entrepreneur or operating a well-established company, the Product Center is a key to the front door of Michigan State University’s vast and varied technical expertise, research and outreach services.



**Product Center**  
Food • Ag • Bio  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MSU Product Center Innovation Counselor Mary Dunckel, housed in Alpena County, provides one-on-one business support for food, agriculture or bioenergy entrepreneurs in northeast Michigan.

We assist entrepreneurs with:

- Business planning from concept to launch
- Food product development, safety testing and nutritional analysis
- Licensing and labelling
- Market analysis and research
- Trade show experience, confidence and buyer connection



**Making It In Michigan**  
**April 24, 2024 - Lansing Center**  
**Registration is Open!**

Hosted |  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension | MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Product Center  
Food • Ag • Bio

in partnership with



*Making It In Michigan (MIIM)* is a premier food trade show & networking conference.

The program features educational sessions, an interactive trade show and a unique buyer-supplier matchmaking program.

**148**  
Michigan-based Trade Show Vendors

**162**  
MIIM Conference Attendees

*“I am such a huge fan of MIIM (Making It In Michigan). It’s a great way to ease into trade shows, meet buyers who really care, connect and meet with local business owners.”*

*-Conference and trade show participant*





# SUPPORTING FOOD & AGRICULTURE

MSU Extension works to improve farm personnel well-being and income, expand agriculture-related businesses and increase employment opportunities, making agriculture one of the strongest industries within Michigan. Supporting agriculture and helping to improve financial stability and competitiveness has a significant economic impact on Michigan and local communities.

**\$104.7 BILLION**

annual contribution from Michigan's food and agriculture industry

**\$5.13 BILLION**

economic impact of the animal agriculture industry in Michigan

**805,000**

jobs related to the food and animal agriculture industry in Michigan

## Partnering with Growers for Timely Research to Address Local Issues

### Farm Management

Over \$1.57 million in tax savings

### Smart Gardening

32,711 article views in 2022

### Field Crop Programs

508,000 indirect  
11,565 direct

### Beginner Farmer

772 participants  
6,071 accessed resources



## Helping Farm Families Transition Farm Businesses to the Next Generation

- **168 Attended Educational Programs**
- **Over 100 Private Sessions**
- **35,272 Accessed Written Articles**

*"I want you to know that I sincerely appreciate the help you have given us in the farm transition. Thank you for the hope you have given me (personally). I haven't had any for the farm in a long time."*

Succession Planning participant

## Industry Collaborations Focus on Preparedness for Animal Agriculture Industry

### ERAIL: Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock

- Training of first responders, animal haulers and others on how to properly respond when animals are involved in a traffic accident
- The ERAIL program currently has three trailers fully stocked and deployed in Branch, Jackson and Otsego counties
- 42 counties, 7 other states sent trainees to ERAIL program

## MSU Extension Fruit Team Continues Fight Against Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD)

Daily contact with fruit industry, 20 presentations to 500+ growers representing majority of 60,000 acres of susceptible crops has reduced SWD economic impact

- 83% based management decisions on local/regional SWD trap reports and MSU Extension articles
- 69% pruned cherry orchards to open canopies to minimize SWD pressure
- 65% monitored for SWD adults using traps on-farm



# ALPENA COUNTY OFFICE

Alpena County MSU Extension assists community members through phone, email, Facebook and office walk-ins

As MSU Extension continues to bring research and education to citizens across the state, three wonderful resources help reach every community member in our county:

**MSU Extension  
Lawn and Garden  
Hotline  
(888) 678-3464**

Calls answered by Extension Master Gardeners with the knowledge and resources to help with gardening and lawn questions.

**Ask Extension  
canr.msu.edu/  
outreach/ask-an-  
expert**

One-to-one answers from MSU Extension experts on topics such as lawns, agriculture, food preservation, natural resources, and more!

**Soil Testing  
homesoiltest.msu.edu**

Don't guess - soil test! Learn what vital nutrient your soil is missing for healthy growth in gardens, lawns, and crops. Purchase soil tests in our office or online.

## MSU Extension Staff in Alpena County

- |   |   |
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| Brandon Schroeder<br><i>Michigan Sea Grant Educa-</i> | schroe45@msu.edu, 989-354-9885                  |
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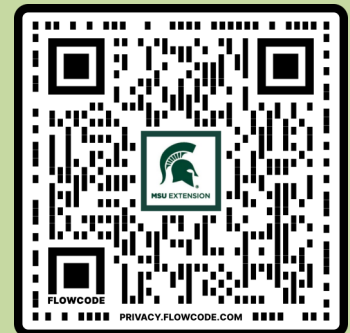
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