

Engaging 4-H youth in civic literacy with environmental projects

CAPE (Community Action Projects for the Environment) is a 4-H program for youth 11-18 years old that helps them navigate the process of exploring, developing, implementing, and reflecting on a project that addresses an environmental issue affecting their community by engaging with decision makers to make a change that benefits everyone and sustains their environment. Closely linked to 4-H Life Skills, the program engages youth in exploring local environmental issues and community governance, then identifying an issue and project they can undertake. Rather than assigning youth (or their parents) with a task for a pre-determined service project, CAPE leads youth through critical thinking exercises to select a change they would like to see in their community and make a persuasive request of local decision makers.

A co-development team of leaders, agents, and specialists from UF and FAMU have worked together to create the curriculum, dramatically simplified from EarthForce, to match the interests of youth and abilities of volunteer leaders. This presentation will introduce the program and highlight the projects that youth have undertaken in Sarasota, Leon, Hamilton, Alachua, and Duval counties in Florida. Let us know if you are interested in pilot testing this program in 2022-23!

Sarah Davis

Sarah Davis, MS is the 4-H Youth Development Faculty at University of Florida IFAS Extension of Sarasota County. As the 4-H Extension Agent, she coordinates 4-H youth and volunteer education and programs for Sarasota County. Prior to this she served as Instructor II, campus naturalist and coordinator of the University Colloquium: A Sustainable Future at Florida Gulf Coast University. She taught University Colloquium, Environmental Science, Environmental Education and Interpretation courses at FGCU. Her research interests include environmental education, the importance of connecting children with nature and natural and cultural resource interpretation. She is a certified interpretive guide and trainer and teaches UF Florida Master Naturalist classes. She serves on the board for the League of Environmental Educators of Florida and serves as the Florida representative to the Southeast Environmental Education Alliance.

Martha Monroe

Martha Monroe, PhD is Professor and Extension Specialist in Environmental Education with the School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences at the University of Florida. Her work in the human dimensions of natural resources (wildfire, water quality, climate change), emphasizes public perceptions, adaptive collaborative management, citizen engagement, and behavior change. She uses educational programs to build understanding and efficacy, building capacity for people to work together to address environmental issues.

Additional presenters

Kimberly Davis