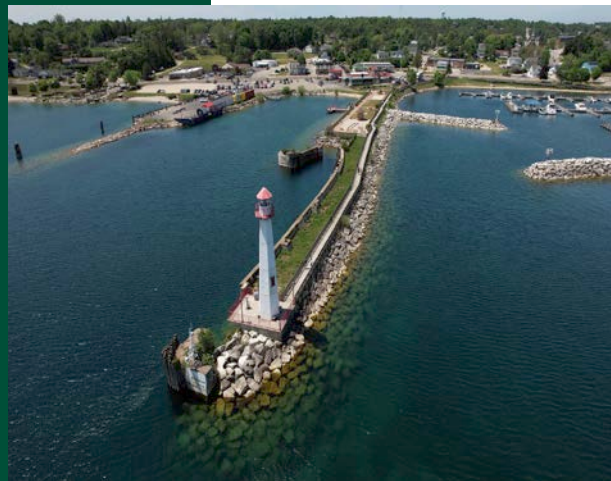


# MACKINAC COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

210 Burdette Street, St. Ignace (physical location) |  
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- Cody McLaren, Community Nutrition Instructor
- Tracie Abram, 4-H Program Coordinator



## Message from the District Director

MSU Extension continues to make a lasting impact across Alger, Chippewa, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette and Schoolcraft Counties. In 2024, we provided critical support to farmers, engaged over 1,500 youth in 4-H, and delivered nutrition education to more than 1,000 residents. We expanded leadership training for local officials, helped small businesses thrive, and partnered on conservation efforts to protect our natural resources. We also secured new office space in Mackinac County, strengthening our ability to serve the region. Our success is made possible through dedicated staff, volunteers, and community partnerships. Thank you for your support—we look forward to another year of growth and impact!

**Erin Daines**  
District 2 Director, MSU Extension

## Impact



3 community coalitions within the county in MSU Extension employees are members



7 answered Ask Extension questions



523 participants from the county attending programs.



27 volunteers serving in the county



338 youth enrolled in 4-H

## Overall Impact

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3 community coalitions within the county that MSU Extension employees are members of



10 policy, systems, and environmental changes with those PSE sites.



523 participants from the county attended programs.



17 client consultations



109 programs (across the state) attended by participants from this county.



29,264,562 contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters, and handouts. (STATEWIDE)



3 Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy System and Environmental sites receiving PSE education within the county.

## Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, and Agricultural Productivity

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67,320 participants in community, food, and environment programs from across Michigan



470 virtual programs related to Financial Education, Food Systems, Water and Environmental Quality, Government and Businesses.



436 participants in county agriculture programs.



\$246.5 billion annual impact of food and agriculture on Michigan's economy

# Overall Community Impact



25 community partnerships within the county that MSU Extension employees are members of



16 participants in Agriculture Agribusiness Institute programs from the county.



23 programs hosted in the county



201 participants in Children and Youth Institute programs from the county



611 participants attending programs hosted in the county



197 participants in Health and Nutrition Institute programs from the county



110 participants in Community Food and Environment Insitute programs from the county



904 e-newsletters and handouts in the county



420 youth participants in programs from the county



Elliot Nelson  
Extension Educator,  
MI Sea Grant

2024 marked the 9th annual Aldo Leopold Festival, an initiative Elliot helped start at the beginning of his tenure with MI Sea Grant. Each year, he was responsible for many tasks, aiding in the final festival experience. This time, **200 participants, 40 volunteers**, invited speakers and field trip leaders were present. Elliot has been creating, distributing, and analyzing the festival post-assessment, which includes questions on learning outcomes, festival satisfaction and economic impacts.

**The economic impact** reached approximately **\$100,000** in 2024. For an extended weekend in a township of only 1,950 individuals, arguably a great achievement. Part of the goal of the festival was for festivities to be held the first weekend in June to help strengthen the tourism shoulder season. The prime season is July 4th to Labor Day weekend, but this festival has now become an early kick-off to summer for several seasonal residents and has drawn **hundreds of new tourists** to the area.



## Overall Community Impact



25 community partnerships within the county that MSU Extension employees are members of



16 participants in Agriculture Agri-Business Institute programs from the county.



23 programs hosted in the county



110 participants in Community Food and Environment Institute programs from the county



611 participants attending programs hosted in the county

### Gratitude for MSU Extension

In 2017, MSU Extension presented the Citizen Planner Program in St. Ignace for local officials in and around Mackinac County. The Citizen Planner Program teaches the fundamentals of roles, responsibilities, and best practices for planning and zoning in Michigan. Among a dozen or so local officials was Betsy Dayrell-Hart - a new member of the City of St. Ignace Planning Commission. Betsy gained important new knowledge and confidence to participate in public meetings, find and use new information to make informed decisions, and engage citizens in planning and zoning in her community. She also gained a partnership with a trusted source of research-based information for years to come. Betsy regularly engages in MSU Extension programming multiple times a year to further her knowledge (say now perhaps 'expertise') of local government and community development. What's more, she seeks to coordinate with MSU Extension and other educational organizations to bring relevant training to governments and organizations of the Eastern Upper Peninsula.



Brad Neumann  
Senior Extension Educator

Following one MSU Extension Government and Community Vitality program, Betsy commented, ***“As always, these webinars make me think - what can tiny St. Ignace do to implement some of these ideas? I remain grateful to MSU Extension for all that you do for us! Thank you and MSU Extension, again, for providing continuing education to people in St. Ignace and other rural communities. We are making progress because of it.”***



Nick Cassell  
Extension Educator

Cassell acquired \$175,000.00 via the US Forest Service Developed proposal and was granted \$175,000.00 for habitat protection of coastal wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and increasing partnership capacities working with the east zone of the Hiawatha National Forest, in Mackinac County.

He also received \$57,409.00 via CLMCD/USFWS collaboration. This is a collaborative grant with CLMCD through the US Fish and Wildlife Service to carry out secretive marsh bird surveys, waterfowl surveys, outreach/education efforts, and invasive species outreach within Mackinac County, focusing on the Straits of Mackinac and St. Mary's River.

## Mango Mayhem

Background: Teen Cuisine Series is direct nutrition education that takes place at St. Ignace Public Schools(LaSalle). The target audience is teens. I program with 4-5 sessions/lessons. The partner for this program is LaSalle Public Schools.

After finishing up a nutrition lesson, the class started a tropical fruit tasting and preparation demonstration. Cody explains and demonstrates how to pick out, cut, and verify the ripeness as well as taste of tropical fruits. One of the chosen fruits is mango. It can be a very confusing fruit to eat and prepare without much experience. The educated advice is that the fruit should "yield to gentle pressure" when judging ripeness. It's also best to cut up the fruit before trying to peel the skin off. This is due to the unique-shaped pit inside and the very slippery orange flesh.

During the sampling, a student told me a short story: "One time I was shopping with my mother, and I wanted to try a fresh mango. We chose one that we thought looked ripe and brought it home to eat. The following day, I asked my mother if we could eat the mango. We then spent the next 15 minutes making a slippery orange mess. We tried peeling the mango first, then cut a bunch of weird pieces of fruit. We ended up wasting a lot of the fruit trying to eat it."

Cody assured the student that this was a common mistake to make, and the student left feeling more confident. In all, the students enjoyed the fresh fruit samples and were engaged with the activity.



Cody McLaren  
Community Nutrition Instructor

### ***Participant Quote:***

"Thank you for showing us how to tell when they are ripe, and most importantly how to cut them up with out making a giant mess. Now that I know what I'm doing, I will encourage my family to buy mangos and other fresh fruit more often."



\$537.03 4-H volunteer hour value



109 nutrition and physical activity participants hosted in-county.



133,306 total youth participants (statewide)



197 county residents who participated in health and nutrition programs.



12,861 of the total volunteers across the state



9,808 of people participating in Food Safety programs, including ServSafe®



Tracie Abram  
4-H Program Coordinator

### Horseman Association Gardens

The Horseman's Association has five gardens around their equine barn that need attention, but they did not have enough staff to see to it. Tracie asked a St. Ignace Master Gardener if she would be interested if the Horse Club 4-H members helped. She said YES! In 2024, with the help of local 4-H'ers, the gardens were catered to. An apple tree has been added, and the local nursery donated a second after hearing about the help of our 4-H.

Favorite Quote:

*"This wouldn't have been done without this program. Thank you!"*

### Curtis 4-H Garden

There was an unused garden behind Marcy's Pantry. Tracie approached the owner and asked if the 4-H Club could use the garden for their Garden Club. Without hesitation, he said YES! Thanks to this partnership, approximately 40 youth had the opportunity to grow carrots, beans, pumpkins, squash, and a variety of cut flowers. Seniors at the Portage Township meals enjoyed fresh cut flower arrangements during some of their luncheon meals, as did the staff at the Erickson Center, the Portage Township fire and ambulance corps, and the clerk's office. The kids had fun while learning about plant science and civic engagement. The community witnessed the fruits of hard work and dedication from our youth through the gifted flower arrangements.

Participant Quote: *"I never knew how many places and people volunteer in Curtis!"*



## County Partnerships

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Curtis Public Library	St. Ignace Public Library
Curtis Area Women's Club	St. Ignace Chamber of Commerce
Curtis Chamber of Commerce	Michilimackinac Historical Society & Straits Cultural Center
Erickson Center for the Arts	Little Bear East
Manistique Lakes Lions Club	Mackinac Island Public Library
Top of the Lake Association	Mackinac Island Public School
Engadine Public Library	Mackinac Island Recreation Department
Three Lakes Academy	Mackinac Island Community Foundation
Engadine Consolidated Schools	Mackinac Island Connect
Gro Cap School	Mackinac Island Horseman's Association
St. Ignace Public Schools	Les Cheneaux Public Library
	Hessel Schoolhouse

## SPIN Club Winter Archery Program

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Five 90-minute sessions were held in in Mackinac County during the month of April 2024

Youth from Mackinac and Luce Counties learned basics of archery including safety, safety equipment, proper stance, breathing, aim, parts of equipment, and learned about other opportunities such as regional and state tournaments

## 4-H Day of Wellness

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This was the second annual 4-H Day of Wellness event held at Three Lakes Academy. Ashley Freed, Tracie Abram, and HealthCorps Member Anna Jewell worked together to teach all students in grades K-6 a mindful eating lesson from Mindful Me.

Ashley and Tracie began, introducing each group to the concept of mindfulness and mindful eating. Then, Anna read each group the book, “Johnathan’s Apple.” We talked about what Jonathon did before, during, and after he ate his apple, and how we can eat mindfully too. Together we practiced the steps, mindfully eating an orange. Then we challenged them to eat a piece of chocolate mindfully. Some thought it was easy, and others really felt the challenge of this activity.

Each participant received a goodie bag including: an affirmation card, steps to mindful eating, a fidget toy, 4-H sticker, a 4-H pencil and a textured sticker.

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or veteran status.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 5

Figure 1



Figure 4

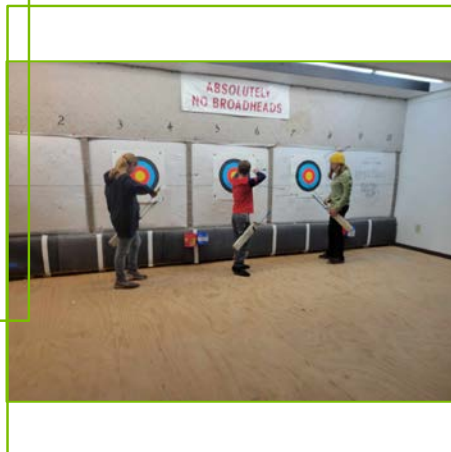
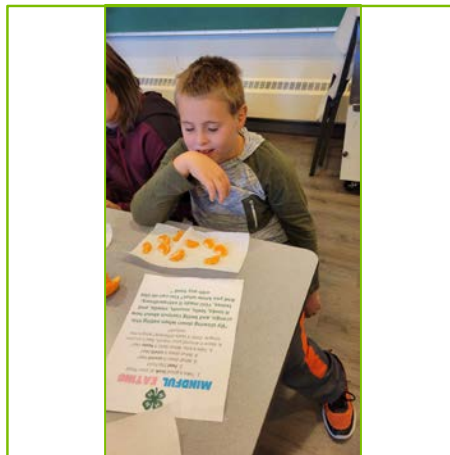


Figure 6

Figure 1 4-H  
Day of  
Wellness

Figure 2  
4-H Day of  
Wellness

Figure 3  
4-H Day of  
Wellness

Figure 4  
4-H Day of  
Wellness

Figure 5  
SPIN Club  
Winter Archery

Figure 6  
SPIN Club  
Winter Archery