

Arenac County 2023 Annual Report

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

135	PROGRAMS ATTENDED BY ARENAC COUNTY RESIDENTS
11	SOIL SAMPLES FROM ARENAC COUNTY PROCESSED
11	HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
45	RESIDENTS ATTENDED FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMS
41	RESIDENTS SERVED BY SNAP-ED
207	NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
96	AGRICULTURE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
415	YOUTHS ENROLLED IN 4-H

500

TOTAL ARENAC COUNTY
RESIDENTS PARTICIPATED IN
MSU EXTENSION PROGRAMMING
IN 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

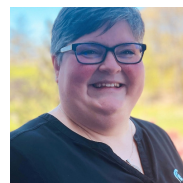
This annual report is a summary of the work that MSU Extension has done in Arenac County to help people improve their lives through an educational process that brings the vast knowledge and resources of Michigan State University to local communities in northeast Michigan.

In the following pages, you will discover the stories of progress, resilience, and empowerment that have defined our engagement with individuals, families, and organizations across District 4. From cultivating sustainable agriculture practices to nurturing the potential of our youth through 4-H programs, each achievement is a testament to the dedication of our team and the unwavering support of our communities.

We could not do this work without local partners in community government, local volunteers and supporters, or people who turn to us for the information and education that we provide. Please continue to use us as a resource for information and ask us questions.

Thank you for your support in 2023 and beyond.

Sincerely,



Julie Darnton
District 4 Director



More than 322,000 people in Michigan visited our website last year. You may want to look here too!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES

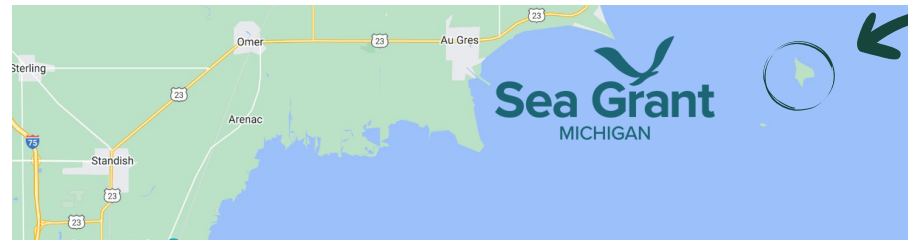
Our natural resources programs improve public understanding, help landowners and communities use those assets for sustainable long-term social and economic development and conserve natural resources for future generations. In 2023, **207** Arenac County residents participated in local and regional natural resources programs and workshops including a Saginaw Bay-focused session, part of the Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops.

SUPPORTING CLEAN WATERS

As leadership partners of the Northeast Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, MSU Extension and Michigan Sea Grant supported local schools in fielding place-based stewardship education projects.

In the 2022-2023 school year, **74 students and 3 educators** from Au Gres-Sims Middle/High School were engaged in Great Lakes and natural resources stewardship programs.

In the 2023-2024 school year, **94 students and 4 educators** from Au Gres-Sims Elementary and Middle/High School were engaged in Great Lakes and natural resources stewardship programs.



Spotted Knapweed is an invasive plant, common in the Great Lakes region on dry sandy soils in disturbed areas like roadsides and abandoned agricultural fields. Spotted Knapweed can also invade intact natural areas including dry prairies and dunes.

SUPPORTING LOCAL TEACHERS

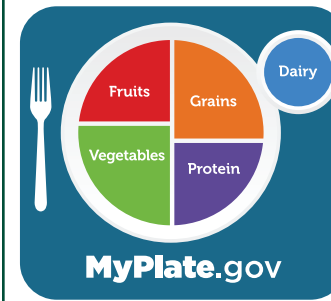
The Lake Huron PBE Summer Teacher Institute professional development opportunity took place in Au Gres bringing many educators from around the state to visit and learn about Au Gres.

Luke Freeman, Au Gres-Sims School District, served as the lead teacher, and shared about Au Gres-Sims green infrastructure efforts. As a lead teacher, he received both a \$500 project stipend and a \$500 personal stipend for his mentorship efforts.



BIG CHARITY ISLAND

MSU Extension and MI Sea Grant helped train students for their Big Charity Island field visit and supported 34 students and 2 teachers from Au Gres-Sims Elementary during their field visit (and boat ride) to the island in Fall 2023, where students learned about and removed invasive Spotted Knapweed and marine debris.



MSU Extension partners with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to provide

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), a nutrition education program designed to reduce hunger and food insecurity and promote healthy eating habits. MSU Extension SNAP-Ed nutrition instructors teach youth, teens, adults and seniors how to make health a priority through instructional series such as Show Me Nutrition, Eat Healthy Be Active, Cooking for One, and Healthy Eating Adds Up. **41** Arenac County residents participated in SNAP-Ed programs in 2023.

AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS

The agriculture industry is developing and growing, contributing more than \$104.7 billion annually to Michigan's economy. MSU Extension works to increase farm success through workforce development opportunities, protecting the environment, ensuring food safety, reaching new markets, and advancing agriculture through applied research. In 2023, **96** residents from Arenac County participated in agriculture and agribusiness programs.

GROWING FUTURE FARMERS

MSU Extension continues to develop opportunities to introduce youth to agriculture sectors and potential areas of future employment. These efforts aim to introduce youth to different aspects of the industry, hopefully piquing their interest in further development as they consider employment options.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

HEALTH & NUTRITION

Through MSU Extension's nutrition and physical activity programming, Michigan adults, families, and children gain crucial knowledge about nutrition and healthy foods, increase their daily activity, and improve their food security. In 2023, **52** Arenac County residents participated in **35** health and nutrition programs.

SUPPORTING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

MSU Extension offers food preservation programs in-person and online. Classes cover a wide variety of topics, from water bath canning to blanching and freezing to making jam and jelly to preserving many Michigan grown vegetables to pickling to preserving venison and much, much more. After participating in MSU Extension's food safety programs including Cottage Food Law, ServSafe, and Home Food Preservation, **45** Arenac residents learned how to reduce their risk of illness when preparing food and how to preserve food safely; workers and volunteers learned how to protect their customers' health and sell food products safely and legally.



Introduced in 2018, the Youth for the Quality Care of Animals Program (YQCA) is a national multi-species quality assurance program for youth ages 8 to 21 with a focus on three core pillars: food safety, animal well-being, and character development. **33** youths from Arenac County participated in in-person YQCA trainings in 2023.



MSU is an affirmative action, equal-opportunity employer. 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.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CHILDREN & YOUTH

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Michigan 4-H is growing current and future leaders. 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. While learning about the world around them, youth gain valuable life skills such as responsibility, citizenship, teamwork, and problem solving. In 2023, **305** Arenac County youth participated in **26** programs.



HELPING YOUTH FIND BELONGING

4-H Exploration Days is a pre-college program for youth ages 12-19 from across the state of Michigan designed to allow youths to try new things, gain confidence and independence through hands-on learning, and make friendships that can last a lifetime. The 2023 4-H Exploration Days theme was around belonging and all the ways that youth can and do belong. **9** Arenac County youths attended 4-H Exploration Days in 2023.



8 youths participated in 4-H Archery.

4-H & TSC
TRACTOR SUPPLY CO. PROUDLY SUPPORTS
CREATING OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL KIDS

The Tractor Supply Company Spring 2023 campaign raised **\$387** to support 4-H in Arenac County.

CONTACT US



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