

# OUTCOMES & IMPACT QUARTERLY – SUMMER 2022

## INTRODUCTION

While USU Extension is often thought of as an agricultural services organization, Extension serves the general public in many other areas and delivers a wide variety of education and programs to audiences in Utah. This issue of OIQ discusses the efforts and impacts of USU Extension on environment and society. Building resiliency in our natural and man-made systems and in individuals in our society will lead to a better and brighter future for Utah.

I invite you to read this current issue to learn more about our progress and impacts on youth development, water conservation, relationships and land management.

Sincerely,

**Kenneth L. White**

Dean, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences; Vice President, Extension and Agriculture



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# - DESIGN GUIDE DEVELOPED FOR OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS IN UTAH -

*Derek Jenson, Jake Powell, David T. Anderson, and Rose Judd-Murray*

Studies nationwide suggest that outdoor classrooms benefit students in academic subjects such as language arts, math, science, and social studies, and that critical thinking and interpersonal skills are better acquired in outdoor learning settings than in traditional classrooms.

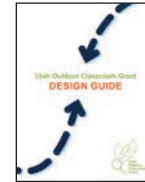
In 2021, the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation (OOR) established the Utah Outdoor Classroom Grant as a pilot project to increase the number of outdoor classrooms in the state. The grant provides up to \$150,000 a year in matching funds for the construction of permanent outdoor classroom infrastructure. However, many interested applicants have little or no experience with landscape design and struggle to create an outdoor classroom site plan for their grant application.



**36** applicants applied for funding in 2021.

**8** respondents used the design guide to develop their grant proposals.

**50%** of respondents found the design guide "very helpful."



View the Utah Outdoor Classroom Grant Design Guide at [bit.ly/3z6lZLi](https://bit.ly/3z6lZLi)

At the request of the Utah OOR, the USU Extension Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning (LAEP) program created a Utah-specific outdoor classroom design guide. The digitally interactive, 50-page "Utah Outdoor Classroom Grant Design Guide," is simple enough for beginner-level, non-designers to follow, and detailed enough to help produce high-quality outdoor classroom design proposals. It includes case studies, design resources, and critical information for community involvement from statewide locations and will serve as a free public resource.

## SPRING RUNOFF CONFERENCE PROVIDES PERSPECTIVES ON DROUGHT

*Erin Rivers and Hope Braithwaite*



While Western states have been consistently warm and dry for the last two decades, 2000 to 2021 was the driest period in history.

Over the last 10 years, USU has published more than 1,000 documents related to drought. Sharing this research is critical as the state faces complex challenges managing water supplies and mitigating the irreversible damage to Utah's natural resources during severe drought conditions.

To connect stakeholders and the public with essential drought information, USU Extension presented the Spring Runoff Conference. The forum included university experts, federal and state agencies, natural resource managers, and community members who shared cutting-edge research on drought forecasting, conservation practices, and community strategies for adapting to drought through water-efficient practices.

USU Extension professionals plan to implement the conference annually to provide a forum for agency professionals, Extension faculty, and the public to connect and share resources for managing water quality and improving water efficiency.

**1,000**

documents related to drought published by USU.

The conference was attended by

**135**

state and federal agency professionals, local water managers, and USU faculty and students.

**74%**

of participants reported an increase in knowledge and intentions to adopt water conservation practices.

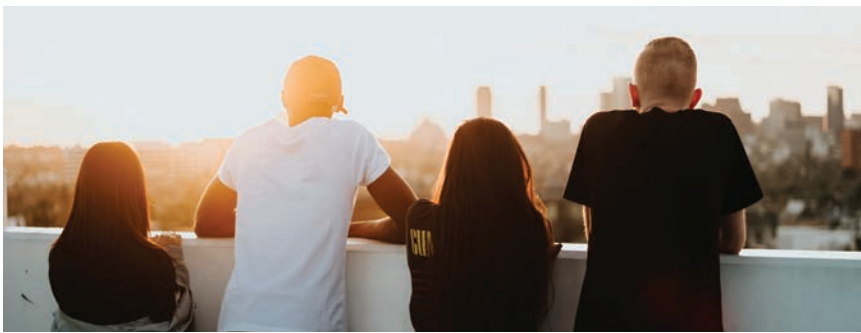
# PREPARING RURAL YOUTH FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

Andrea T. Schmutz, Alison Campbell, Abbey Bean, Amanda D. Ali, Paul Hill, and Emy Swadley

As more people move to urban centers in search of job opportunities, it is a challenge for rural communities to retain their workforce. USU Extension recognized the opportunity to help these communities by encouraging youth involvement in remote work education through the USU Extension Rural Online Initiative (ROI) economic development program.

Utah 4-H and the ROI program collaborated to create a virtual “4-H Remote Skills Camp: For College and Career Readiness,” designed for 15-to-18-year old high-school youth to address rural migration concerns.

The one-month program combined online work with interactive core content, activities, and quizzes. Youth earned a certificate when they completed all assignments and quizzes, attended all workshops, and earned a minimum score of 80%.



## Camp topics:



Using remote work tools such as video conferencing and team messaging apps.



Gaining an understanding of effective teamwork and collaboration.



Building problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.



Developing a resume and portfolio.

Facilitators noted high levels of youth engagement during guest lectures and an interest in the application of technology and the process of career development. An exit interview provided participants an opportunity to apply their knowledge of remote work skills coupled with college and career readiness skills.

# FATHERHOOD EDUCATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

Joshua J. Turner, Brian Higginbotham, and Kay Bradford



## Workshop results:



Post-tests revealed a significant increase in father-child closeness.



Post-tests revealed a significant increase in job skill development.

“The teachers had really excellent ways of communicating the concepts to real-world situations and made it fun and enjoyable to attend.”

USU Extension faculty administer the Healthy Relationships Utah (HRU) initiative, which includes relationship education programs for fathers to help increase their involvement, improve co-parenting, and increase job skills.

In March 2020, restrictions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic required the transition from in-person to virtual workshops for statewide fatherhood education programs. HRU’s first virtual fatherhood education workshops were provided through Zoom in April 2020. Participants attended the *24/7 Dad* program virtually, in four two-hour sessions. Pre-tests and post-tests evaluated whether participants increased their knowledge of father-child closeness and job skill development, comparing in-person vs. virtual formats. Results revealed no statistically significant differences between in-person and virtual formats, and participants experienced similar knowledge improvements from the program regardless of format.

Some participants liked the virtual format, noting the convenience of distance learning and features of virtual formats, such as breakout sessions. Other participants described it as less favorable, citing the lack of intimacy, limited interaction, and technical difficulties. Despite disliking the format, those participants said it wasn’t necessarily a reflection on the course itself, just the given circumstances.

These findings support the effectiveness of the *24/7 Dad* program, regardless of the delivery method. They also illustrate the ability of Extension programs to adapt and meet community needs. Providing fatherhood education both virtually and in-person could increase the accessibility of Extension programming for fathers across Utah who have different learning preferences or face specific barriers to in-person participation.

# STATEWIDE IPM PROGRAM HELPS REDUCE PESTICIDE USE

Nick Volesky, Marion Murray, Claudia Nischwitz, Zachary Schumm, Boyd Kitchen, Benjamin Scow, Kristina Young, Sheriden Hansen, Nathan Staker, JayDee Gunnell, and Katie Wagner

Pests can cause economic loss and aesthetic damage. Pesticides, both organic and conventional, are often necessary for the production of healthy crops and landscapes.

To assist farmers, homeowners, and others, the Utah IPM program at USU developed a series of workshops to equip land managers with the skills to implement integrated pest management (IPM) practices. IPM prevents crop and ornamental plant losses, improves profits, protects human health and the environment, and promotes the use of non-chemical options first and pesticides as the last resort.

In January of 2022, the program partnered with USU County Extension offices and hosted eight half-day workshops across the state. The workshops were advertised through the IPM Pest Advisories email list, the Utah Pests News Quarterly newsletter, USU Extension calendars, and Utah Pests Facebook and Instagram sites. Each workshop was interactive and provided an opportunity for participants to engage with Extension specialists and county faculty.

Based on evaluation results, there was an improvement in participants' knowledge on all IPM topic areas covered in the workshops.

Moving forward, future sessions will incorporate a virtual component to increase access to trainings, field demonstrations, social media events, and other interactive workshops and grower meetings.

## Participants included:



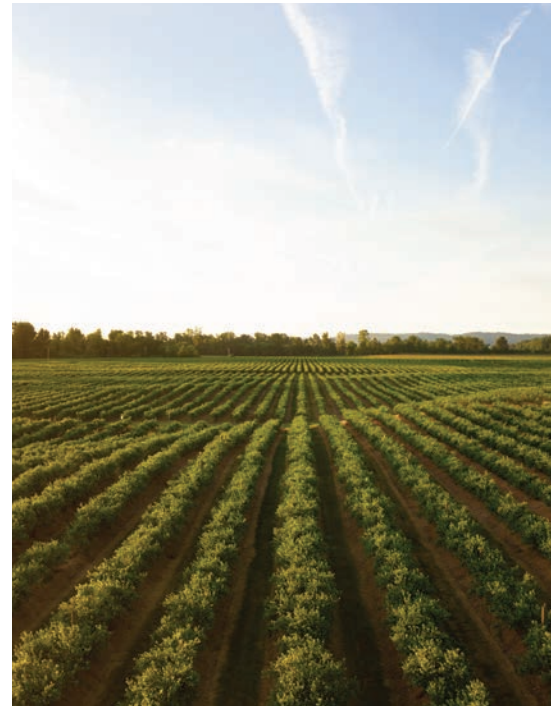
Farmers



Home and residential gardeners



Ornamental landscape business managers



## Extension Workshops Advertising:



**11,000+** subscribers reached through the IPM Pest Advisories email list.



USU Extension calendars.



**6,000+** subscribers reached through the Utah Pests News Quarterly newsletter.



Utah Pests Facebook and Instagram sites.

## Workshop Results:

**8**

half-day workshops.

**131**

individuals participated in the workshops.

**50**

CEU credits were awarded to attendees with a pesticide applicator's license.



## Participants' Mean Knowledge Rating on IPM Topics

