



Center for Outdoor and Agricultural Learning

Prairie Loft

EDUCATION PROGRAM REPORT

2024

Prairie Loft's Mission is to teach agriculture appreciation, outdoor education, cultural connections, and the wise use of natural resources.

A major goal of programs in 2024, was to evaluate our current offerings and ask, "What does our community need?" This led to trying some new programs and shaking up some old ones. We also learned the importance of outreach and that we need to be in the community to share what we do and why we do it.

The amazing team of staff, volunteers, participants, and other supporters, allowed for the ability to be creative while keeping our mission at the center of all we do, resulting in a very successful year of programs!



2024 HIGHLIGHTS



YOUTH FOCUSED PROGRAMS

- **Summer Camp:** Provided 255 campers with the opportunity to learn and explore outside in a screen-free environment
- 47 field trips, schoolyard lessons, and outreach programs were taught to 1,441 students
- New Programs were added including **FORT Friday (16)** and **Winter WonderCamp (14)** allowed students to come enjoy their day off at Prairie Loft
- Formed a relationship with a **school in Ghana** and shared information about different agricultural practices and ideas of how to implement that knowledge in programs
- Worked with **enCourage Advocacy Center** to provide 25 4th-8th graders the opportunity to get outside and connect with others through the Bloom After School, and two-day summer camp programs

COMMUNITY EVENTS/OUTREACH

- **Family Outdoor Club:** 3rd Saturday every month with 221 participants throughout the year
- **Springfest:** Free annual community celebration in April with 741 visitors and volunteers
- **Harvestfest:** Free annual community celebration in October with 657 visitors and volunteers in attendance
- **Tales on the Trails** was held again after a year off due to weather, and brought 128 characters and creatures to the non-spooky Halloween event
- **Women, Wine, and Wilderness and Homestead 101** were offered to 18 adult participants throughout the year
- Collaborated with the **Hastings Public Library** to host the first **Digital Detox Day** with 42 visitors
- Two evenings of **Winter Night Hikes** brought 44 hikers of all ages out to experience Prairie Loft after dark while 11 folks began their day with a **Sunrise Stroll** in the Spring

OTHER GOOD NEWS

- **Regular volunteers** were able to assist with multiple programs which enabled them to run smoothly and efficiently
- **Program committee** was reestablished and goals for the upcoming year were set
- Incredibly **solid team of Program Guides** were able to help with events throughout the year, allowing us to better serve the community
- Went **off-site** to share the mission of Prairie Loft at 8 events either as a table at a **community event**, or as a presenter for an **educational opportunity**, reaching an additional 1,199 people



4,302 people served through the Prairie Loft mission (not including Flatwater Music Festival)

2024 Programs	Number of Participants	Number of Service Days
Community events (SF, HF, Tales)	1,526	3
Summer Camps	268	35
Field Trips	918	42
Other Programs	391	26
Off-Site Programs	1,199	8

Challenges

-While it is a good problem to have, increased community opportunities and scheduling conflicts made it difficult to grow camper participation during the summer. This also may have affected community event attendance.

-Lack of recorded feedback from participants makes it difficult to pinpoint program strengths and weaknesses



In 2025

- Design at least one new field trip theme
- Create more virtual field trip offerings
- Add new camp options
- Explore new ways to gather data and responses from participants



Number of participants for the last 4 years (for large/reoccurring programs)

YEAR	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS PER PROGRAM					
	Camps	Field Trips (includes off-site presentations)	Family Outdoor Club	Springfest	Harvestfest	Flatwater
2021	220	721	175	640	893	1,320
2022	235	1,091	169	512	965	1,500
2023	231	1,701	192	605	900	1,000
2024	268	1,441	221	741	657	1,300

Number of participants for all programs and number of service days for the last 5 years

Year	Number of People Served (includes Flatwater)	Service Days
2020	Less than 3,000	Approx. 46
2021	4,287	121
2022	4,088	116
2023	4,606	125
2024	5,602	116