**Arapahoe County Extension 4-H Youth Development Outdoor Education Internship Proposal**

**County Mentor and Application Contact**

Claudia Meeks, 4-H Outreach Program Supervisor

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**Extension Supervisor**

Lisa Mason, Interim County Director

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**Region Participation**

Arapahoe County

**Goals, Scope and Objective**

Arapahoe County Extension offers robust programs in 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, horticulture, community development, and outreach. The Arapahoe County 4-H program currently involves more than 3,500 youth participating in club, community, and outreach activities.

The internship will focus on the development and delivery of youth educational programming focusing on outdoor, environmental, and natural resource education. The internship will provide program planning, implementation, and evaluation of youth educational events, day camps, and events and activities at the Arapahoe County Fair.

**Applied Research**

The internship will support youth outdoor and natural resource educational programs and project initiatives in Arapahoe County. By using, research-based youth development curriculum this intern will support the needs of Arapahoe County in terms of natural resource education.

**Learning Outcomes and Professional Development**

This internship will provide the student with hands-on learning opportunities focusing on communication skills, teamwork, successful work habits, critical thinking and problem solving, professional resiliency and adaptability, and developing partnerships with community organizations and leaders. The internship will also be an excellent opportunity for a student to learn transferable skills related program development, delivery, and evaluation.

These outcomes align with the goals of engagement and extension as the intern will learn valuable skills they can use in the field of extension or other forms of engagement. Extension provides a unique opportunity for students to gain hands-on learning experience working with diverse audiences, building and developing community partnerships, cross collaboration within Extension programs, and program management skills that are transferable to any career.

**Stakeholder Support**

This internship will actively collaborate with Arapahoe County Open Spaces, Colorado State Forestry, South Suburban Parks and Recreation, High Line Canal Conservancy, Denver Audubon, Plains Conservation Center, Buckley Space Force Base, Aurora Housing Authority, Arapahoe County and Aurora libraries, school districts, and community entities throughout Arapahoe County. This intern will work with these partners to provide youth educational programs and community engagement opportunities.

**Mentorship Experience**

As the county mentor, Claudia Meeks, has over seven years mentoring interns through Extension programs in Colorado and Tennessee. She enjoys providing students with transferable skills in problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability. She believes that Extension provides a unique opportunity for students to gain hands-on learning experience working with diverse audiences, building and developing community partnerships, cross collaboration within Extension programs, and program management skills. Claudia’s approach to mentorship is to encourage creativity and ownership of programs, teamwork and collaboration, and provide support and guidance to support student’s professional growth.

**CSU Faculty**

We will reach out to Danielle Ardrey with the State Forest Service through CSU.

**Travel Funds**

Travel funds will be available through Arapahoe County Extension. Housing fund will not be provided by Arapahoe County Extension.