



# Illinois 4-H | Spark Ideas. Ignite Possibilities.

Learn the skills necessary to pursue your passion for the outdoors! Large game; small game; waterfowl; map reading; wildlife identification; as well as camping and outdoor cooking all reside here. Come on outside with 4-H!



## Exploring 4-H Hunting & Outdoor Skills

### Spark Activity: Spark a Flame that Pops a Balloon

With adult supervision, find a safe place to build a small fire. You only get these modern items to use: a book of matches or lighter, a knife, and a balloon. That's it. Blow up the balloon and tie it off to keep the air in. Now find a way to hang it 6-7 inches directly above the location you will build a small fire. Use a stick or something else to suspend the balloon in this spot. Then take all the time you need to look around you for fuel to build your fire. You'll need tiny, dry tinder materials with lots of fragile edges (leaves, needles, frayed shaved dry bark, etc.) as your base. Then very slowly add slightly bigger kindling pieces to grow a flame. Go slow and have patience, as this isn't easy. Your goal is to build a fire that will pop the balloon! Once you master this task, then challenge a friend to a race to see who can pop their balloon first! Make sure your fire is completely out before you quit. Then clean up the area and leave it in good condition. You'll need many a fire in your lifetime, so it's smart to learn this skill now!



## 4-H Project Levels and Goals

### Beginner

- Find out why we hunt
- Learn basic camping skills
- Explore different camping gear
- Learn basics of firearm and archery safety

### Intermediate

- Learn the history of hunting
- Practice outdoor cooking recipes
- Learn stalking and hunting techniques

### Advanced

- Plan and execute a 3-day camping trip
- Practice orienteering and map reading skills
- Identify birds, fur bearers, and wildlife using different methods

## Put Your Project Into Action

### Show Your Skills

- Display outdoor gear (no firearms, bows or ammunition – only pictures of these) used for a one-day vs. 3-day outdoor adventure
- Display pictures or video of an outdoor pursuit or adventure you conducted or participated in during the past few months
- Set up an orienteering course or geocache game and show how it works on a map
- Demonstrate how to use different camouflage hiding techniques used in hunting (layout blinds for waterfowl; bow hunting vs. rifle hunting blinds; elevated stands; etc.)

### Service and Leadership

- Organize a park or conservation area clean up day
- Assist with a local IDNR hunter safety class
- Build and donate some bird nest boxes to a park or school
- Talk to your club / class about hunting ethics
- Take friend your next outdoor adventure
- Be a 4-H Camp counselor and teach others the outdoor skills you've mastered

### Entrepreneurship

- Video production filming an outdoor adventure
- Make outdoor gear such as leather cases, paracord gun slings, design a new hammock, etc.
- Adventure outfitter or hunting guide

### Technology Connection

- Use computer mapping tools to plan an outdoor adventure or hunt
- Experiment with trail cameras to find the best place to observe animals or hunt
- Create video documentaries of skills you've mastered or outdoor adventure you've done

### Connecting with a Mentor

- Join a conservation organization, such as Pheasants Forever, White Tails Unlimited, or Ducks Unlimited, to meet people with common interests in the outdoors.



### Careers Related to Hunting & Outdoor Skills

Forest Ranger  
Park Worker  
Wildlife Researcher

Soil and Water  
Conservation

## Start a Conversation

Have you ever wondered how Native Americans, settlers, and explorers got the food they needed before we had grocery stores?

Can you explain the food chain from the sunshine to a coyote? How many steps can you name in that chain?

In America no one owns our wildlife and we cannot sell wild game but it's not like that in other countries. Why do you suppose that is?

## Want to learn more?

[go.illinois.edu/4Hhuntingskills](https://go.illinois.edu/4Hhuntingskills)

Explore more at Illinois 4-H!  
[4-H.extension.illinois.edu](https://4-H.extension.illinois.edu)



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**Credits:** University of Illinois Extension staff and volunteers that contributed to this resource include Curt Sinclair and Mike Claypool, Level II 4-H State Instructor in Hunting and Outdoor Skills | 4-H Spark Sheets are a collaborative effort of 4-H staff, volunteers, alumni and teens from across Illinois. A big thanks to the many contributors and reviewers!