

CALS Cooperative Extension, Gila County Focus Group – August 14, 2013

I. Process

When the discussion group attendees were selected, our goal was to obtain a broad representation of Gila County. We tried to prevent domination by any program interest group. We contacted these individuals in July and asked them to respond to a Doodle Poll for an August focus group meeting.

We invited the 7 member Extension Advisory Board, 1 member of the Board of Supervisors, 4 each from each program area {e.g.; 4-H/Youth Development, Master Gardeners/Horticulture, Natural Resources (Farm Crops, Forestry, Ranching, etc.), Family & Consumer Sciences}, 3 youth, and 4 from the San Carlos Tribe. Additionally, we tried to select the four program area participants from different areas of the county. The final attendees (excluding Extension employees) totaled 24 people and included the following:

- 4 members of the Extension Advisory Board
- 1 member of the Gila County Board of Supervisors
- 1 Superintendent of Gila County Schools
- 4 from 4-H/Youth Development program focus area (selected by Lani Hall)
- 4 from Master Gardeners/Horticulture/AG Natural Resources (selected by Chris Jones)
- 2 from San Carlos (selected by Sabrina Tuttle)
- 4 from Natural Resources & Ranching (selected by Jim Sprinkle)
- 3 youth (selected by Lani Hall)

Participants were pre-assigned to four different discussion groups. We tried to balance program interests and locations among the different groups to make them as diverse as possible.

Extension employees were only there to observe and provide assistance with electronic clickers, registration, audiovisual equipment, etc. They did not participate in focus group discussions or voting.

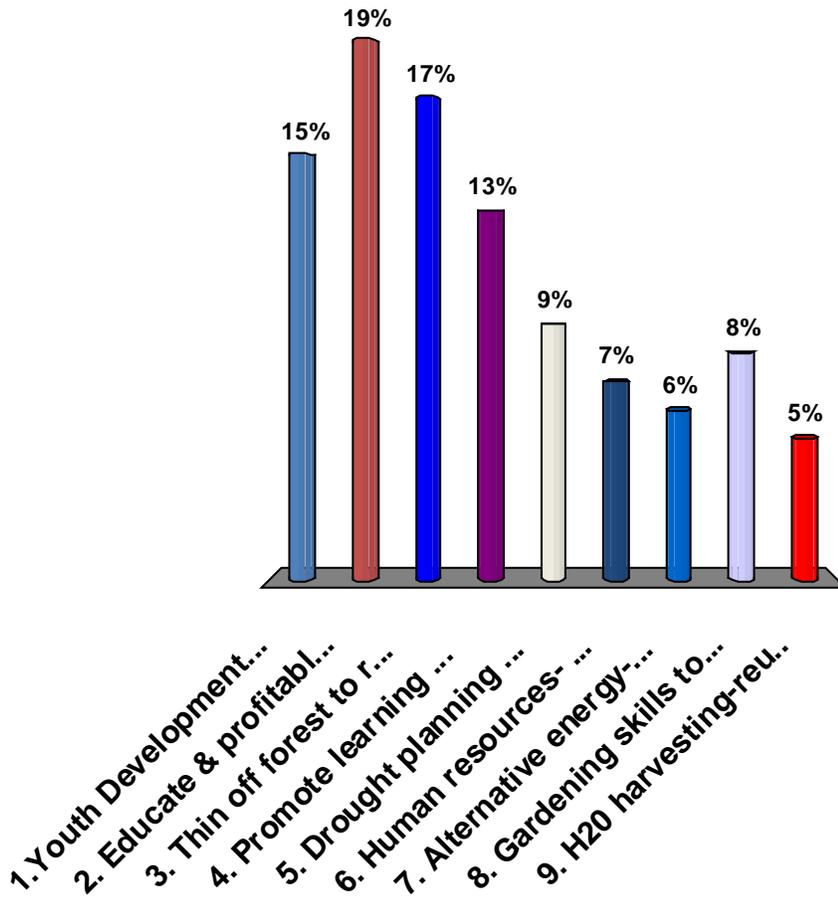
We did hire a professional facilitator to conduct the focus group meeting. We started the meeting with a general history and discussion of Cooperative Extension and an outline of what would be accomplished during and following the focus group meeting.

Forest restoration and thinning, family and parent education, youth mentoring, life skills, and early childhood literacy were big priorities for Gila County. The results of this focus group meeting will be combined with those from the other 14 Arizona Counties and a mail out survey will be sent out to a larger audience for response. The participants in the focus group meeting will be allowed a chance to respond to the mail out survey.

II. Results

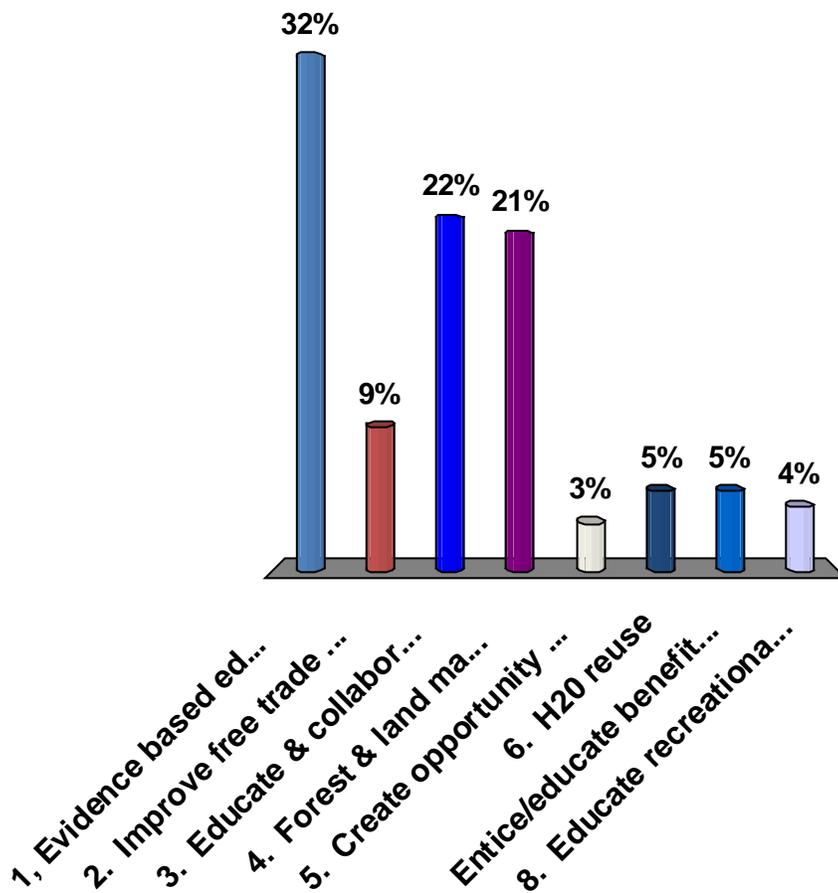
Goal #1. Educate and equip people and communities to manage and utilize natural resources to improve economic sustainability. (Priority Ranking)

	Percent	Weighted Count
2. Educate & profitably optimize use of NR eg: 4 FRI thinning firebreaks	19.45%	107
3. Thin off forest to reduce fire hazards=Financial gain	17.27%	95
1. Youth Development-ecosystem/financial impact	15.09%	83
4. Promote learning opportunities-collaborating & cooperate with agencies, optimize	12.91%	71
5. Drought planning & education, re-use of H2o, reclaim stations homes	9.45%	52
8. Gardening skills to be more sufficient	8.18%	45
6. Human resources- kids & tourism	6.55%	36
7. Alternative energy-wind + solar + wind +fossil to provide remote areas	6.36%	35
9. H20 harvesting-reuse of H2O.	4.73%	26



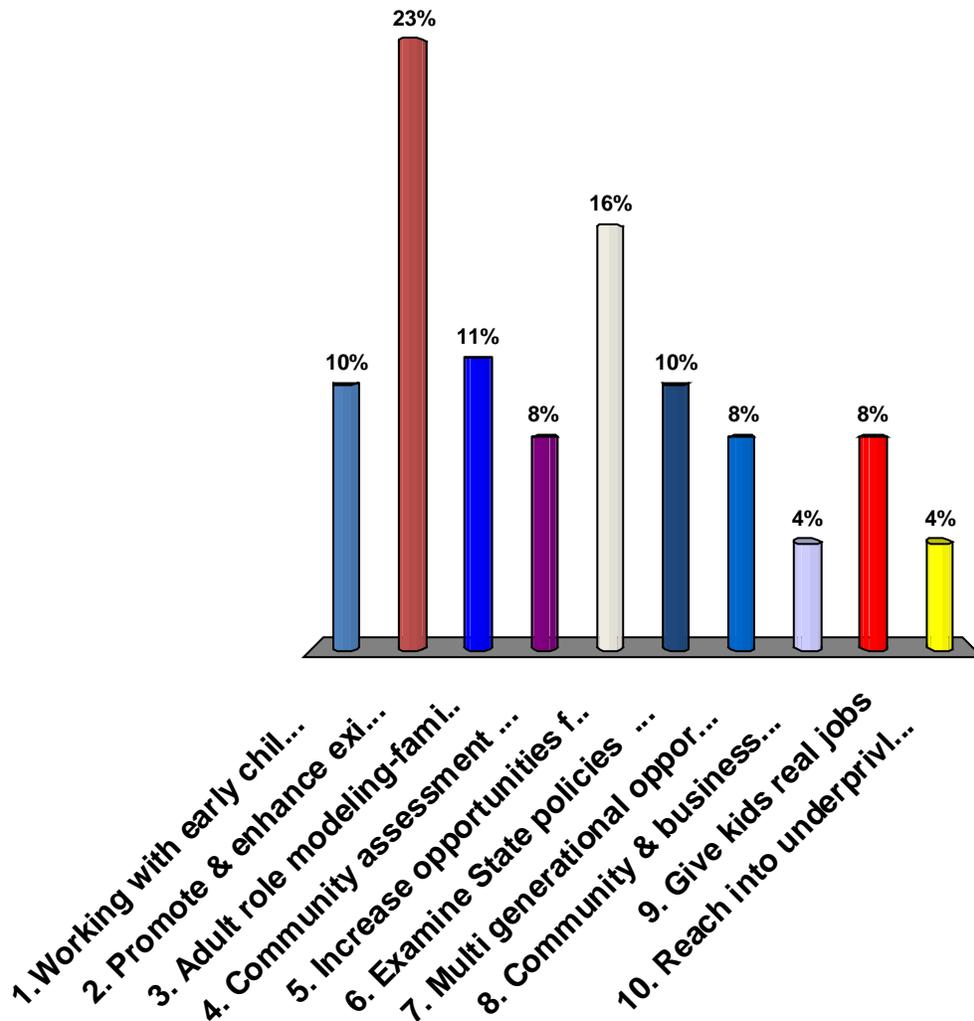
Goal #2. Promote safe, profitable, and sustainable plant and animal systems. (Priority Ranking)

	Percent	Weighted Count
1. Evidence based education for the consumer, rancher & public from the “pasture to the plate” (government & USDA)	31.62%	160
3. Educate & collaborate-working field trips on ranches & mines for middle school student; gardening for youth; septic system education; community gardening (coop); fair & farmer’s market; USFS & broad collaborations	21.54%	109
4. Forest & land management for better grazing & return water to the streams (through thinning)	20.75%	105
2. Improve free trade & commerce	9.29%	47
6. H ₂ O reuse	4.94%	25
7. Entice/educate benefits to vegetables for youth	4.94%	25
8. Educate recreationalists about cattle grazing	3.56%	18
5. Create opportunity with tribal communities	3.36%	17



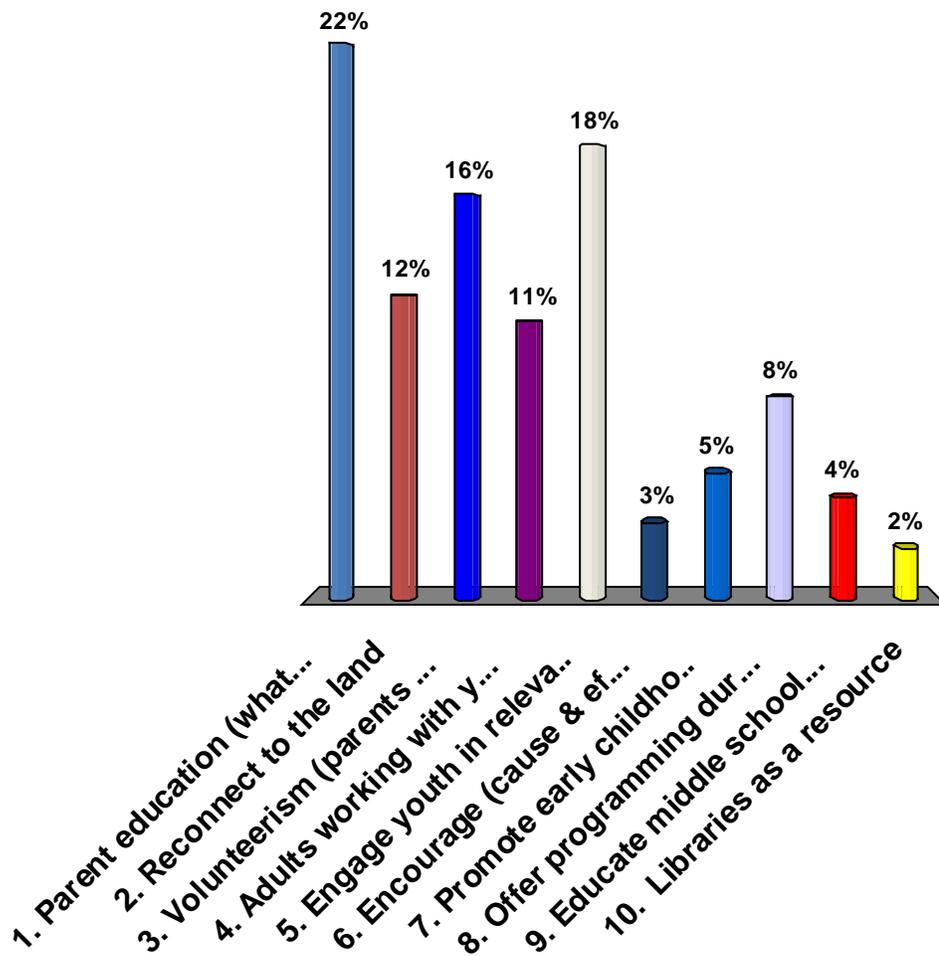
Goal #3. Strengthen economic vitality of communities by developing leadership, workplace skills and life skills of youth and adults to assist them to be contributing community members. (Priority Ranking)

	Percent	Weighted Count
2. Promote & enhance existing programs w/ an emphasis on life skills	23.01%	104
5. Increase opportunities for collaboration on issues that cause barriers to existing programs	16.15%	73
3. Adult role modeling-family & volunteering opportunities, retirement mentoring; using the farmer's market as a tool for management skills	10.62%	48
6. Examine State policies & regulations that might impact programs (example: JTEC)	10.18%	46
1. Working with early childhood education 0-5/school preparation, 4-H Cloverbuds	9.73%	44
7. Multi generational opportunities (workshop/interviews)	7.74%	35
9. Give kids real jobs	7.74%	35
4. Community assessment for basic skills (example: San Carlos-career planning)	7.52%	34
8. Community & business awareness (example: awareness of the extension programs)	3.76%	17
10. Reach into underprivileged populations	3.54%	16



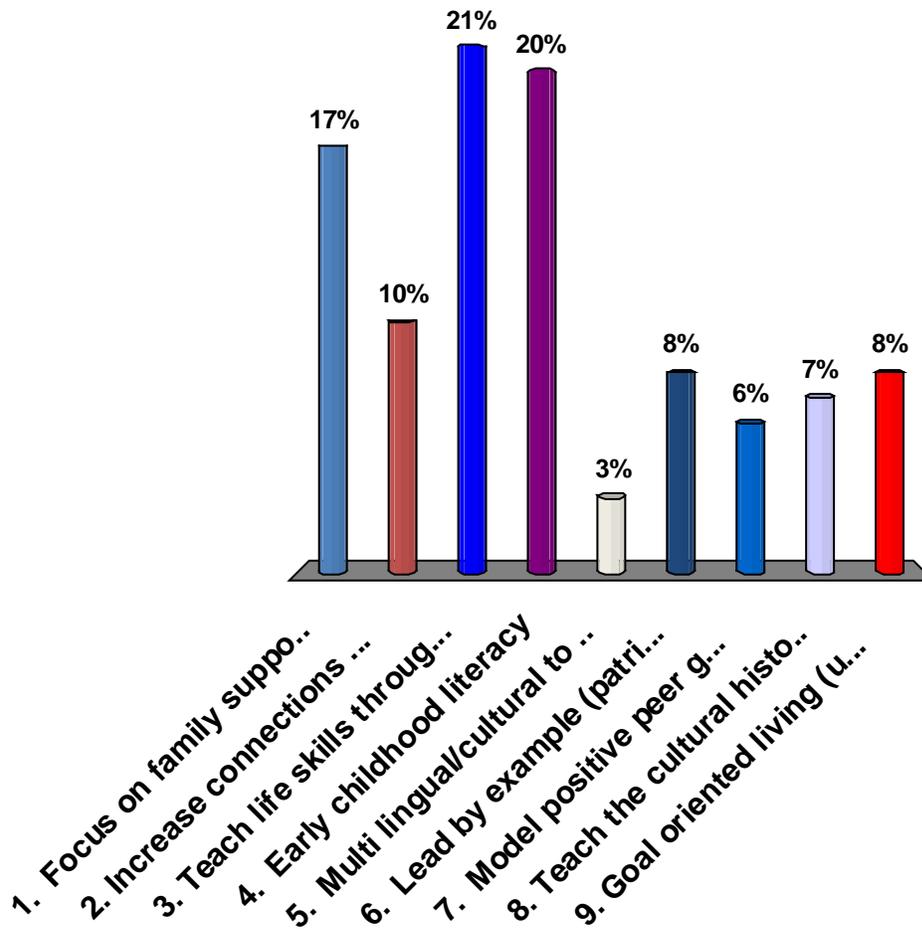
Goal #4. Enhance the growth and development of Arizona children and youth so that young people will contribute positively to the community. Priority Ranking

	Percent	Weighted Count
1. Parent education (what their role is, education of their child mentoring) leading by example	21.89%	130
5. Engage youth in relevant learning activities	18.01%	107
3. Volunteerism (parents & caring adults, giving back to the community)	16.16%	96
2. Reconnect to the land	12.29%	73
4. Adults working with youth to sustain themselves (skills + protection + jobs, community non-profits)	10.94%	65
8. Offer programming during school hours (program to student not student to program)	7.74%	46
7. Promote early childhood programming & collaboration (0-5)	4.55%	27
9. Educate middle school children (career killers)	4.04%	24
6. Encourage (cause & effect) leadership	2.69%	16
10. Libraries as a resource	1.68%	10



**Goal #5. Improve the physical, mental, emotional, and financial health of individuals and families.
Priority Ranking**

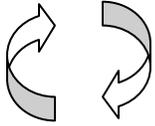
	Percent	Weighted Count
3. Teach life skills through family education using volunteers, instill values, project based learning (emphasis on record keeping)	20.86%	111
4. Early childhood literacy	19.55%	104
1. Focus on family support (what resources are available)	17.48%	93
2. Increase connections to community (eg: chefs to kids, community culture centers)	9.77%	52
9. Goal oriented living (understand and adopt)	7.89%	42
6. Lead by example (patriotism, healthy living)	8.27%	44
8. Teach the cultural history to everyone in the community (eg: mining history, primitive Indian history)	6.58%	35
7. Model positive peer groups	6.39%	34
5. Multi lingual/cultural to #1 priority	3.20%	17



Other Ideas for Goal #5:

Complete Communities

Reason to Stay



Reason to Return

- Activities for all ages
- Jobs to Support a family – varied
- Community support network
- Volunteerism – help those who need it

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

WHAT SHOULD WE DO

For all the goals discussed today, what should Cooperative Extension and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences do with respect to these issues?

1. Educate public
2. Readdress mission statement
3. Put them into action
4. Report back to government entities
5. Conduct outreach/messaging about Extension

BARRIERS

For all the goals discussed today, what are the barriers to implementing the action plan discussed above? This will be answered together at the end of the focus group meeting.

1. Lack of funding/leveraging funds = engage population in funding
2. Knowledge of alternative outreach approaches
3. Accessibility/visibility of Extension Agent to go to for service
4. Existing policies and regulations
5. Changes in roles
6. People are resistant to change