Questions for discussion from the Clackamas County 4-H Summit

1. What community trends and issues are most important for 4-H to address in the next 10-20 years?

2. Take a few minutes to review the Best Practices handout and the “This we believe” section of the Understanding 4-H Judging handout. They talk about the philosophy of competition in 4-H. How do you feel about these statements? With what aspects do you agree or disagree?

3. How closely, in general, does our program adhere to this philosophy? How well do we communicate this philosophy to youth and adults?

4. If we can’t offering everything, what should determine which events and classes to offer? What factors should be considered?

5. 4-H competition is a way of evaluating the skills members have developed. Thinking about some of the community issues we heard this morning, what kinds of skills should be emphasized in 4-H competition? Which of our current classes and events best let us evaluate those skills? What other things could we do to evaluate those skills?

6. What kind of awards philosophy would support our competitive programs best?

7. How important is it that 4-H activities be held during the county fair? What kinds and how many competitive events should be held outside of fairs?

8. Should a fee be charged to members participating in a competitive event? How much is reasonable? What things does it make sense for a fee to cover?

9. What are the best educational opportunities that we offer now, and what makes them successful?

10. Think about our needs for providing education over the next 10 years. What education is most needed for: members, parents, club leaders, middle manager volunteers, or other stakeholders? Think about both project skills and life skills.

11. Review the chart of educational delivery methods that we are currently using. Where are there missed opportunities? If we provide the educational opportunities we talked about before, how would they best be delivered?

12. What is the 4-H program’s obligation to educate the general public? Are there educational events that should be open to both club members and youth not enrolled in 4-H? How else could we share knowledge with non-4-H families?

13. The last few questions have helped us identify gaps in our education and outreach plans. What should our educational priorities be?

14. Should fees be charged for educational events or workshops? How much is reasonable?

15. What do we want our 4-H Club program to be known for?
16. How do we keep 4-H Clubs relevant and competitive with other youth opportunities in tomorrow’s world?

17. Who is not being reached in our club program, and how might we better involve them? Do we reach a diverse cross-section of the community? Can all youth be reached through 4-H clubs?

18. Is our current list of available project areas limiting the youth we attract to 4-H? What changes to our current projects should be priorities?

19. Can a quality club program be managed without a large, year-round time commitment from every volunteer? If so, how might that work?

20. How do we recruit additional club leaders and other volunteers? How do we retain the ones we have?

21. Are our current enrollment and participation fees a barrier to getting families to join 4-H? How might we serve those who cannot afford the fees?

22. What do we want the Clackamas County 4-H Program to be known for?

23. One of our Service District goals is to double the size of the 4-H program. What ideas do you have for doing that, and why do you think those ideas will work?

24. Who is not being reached in our club program, and how might we better involve them? Are there methods besides volunteer-led clubs that we could use to reach more youth?

25. What additional roles could volunteers play? How could we recruit people for those roles?

26. What kind of partnerships would you like to see between 4-H and local schools? What sorts of things should we do with schools? What should we avoid, or what is not a priority?

27. What is 4-H’s role in working with other youth-serving groups in the community? If we want to be seen as a leader in youth development in Clackamas County, what should we be doing?

28. How might we think about funding the different engagement activities we’ve talked about? What is the role of the district, families, and partners?

29. What things can the Extension Office and the 4-H staff do that make volunteers feel supported?

30. How effective is our new leader orientation session? What changes would make it more helpful? What do you wish someone had told you when you first started volunteering with 4-H (or joined 4-H)?

31. How important is continuing education for volunteers? What kinds of trainings are needed most? What could we do to encourage volunteers to attend these trainings?

32. How effective are our advisory committees in supporting the 4-H program? Are there others ways of involving volunteers, youth, parents, and the community in decision making?
33. What ideas do you have for encouraging people to become involved in the advisory committees or volunteering more at county events? What makes people want to help with the county program and not just their club program?

34. Episodic volunteerism is on the rise and we are getting requests from people interested in volunteering episodically. What current opportunities do we have for short-term volunteers? What roles could be adapted or changed so that they could be done by episodic volunteers?

35. We currently have no fees for club leader training or volunteer enrollment. Is this an important philosophy, and does it encourage people to volunteer?

36. What are the best examples of youth leadership in our program? What new opportunities, or changes to current opportunities, would encourage more youth to try them?

37. What are some of the barriers to increasing youth leadership in our program? Are they people, attitudes, the program structure, or other things? How might we overcome these?

38. How could we involve more youth in the decision making that takes place at Advisory committee meetings?

39. If we want 4-H to be known as a youth leadership program, what is the unique role our program can play in developing youth leaders? What is important about developing leadership skills and having youth leadership roles?

40. Given all the opportunities in the community that are available to older youth, what makes 4-H stand out? What could make 4-H even more of a priority for youth?

41. What are the most important roles that youth could play in 4-H? In our community?

42. Does our new club participation fee seem reasonable and fair? Why or why not? How might we serve those who cannot afford the fees?

43. We currently have no fees for club leader training or volunteer enrollment. Is this an important philosophy, and does it encourage people to volunteer? Is there a reasonable fee that would encourage and not discourage volunteers?

44. We often charge a fee for county competitive events and educational workshops. Are these fees reasonable? What amount is reasonable?

45. We currently have a reciprocal agreement with surrounding counties where we accept members who live outside our county into our program. Now that we have established a service district, does that policy need to change? Should fees be the same for members who live outside the county?

46. What is going well with fundraising (at both the county and club level) and what could be changed?

47. How can the Extension office better support fundraisers and other club financial needs? (i.e., trainings, change the form, share fundraiser opportunities)