



Flathead County Extension Hosts the President's Tour

Montana State University President and Faculty Visit Flathead Valley

Flathead County Extension was honored to host MSU president, Dr. Waded Cruzado, and 40 faculty members from Bozeman in June. The tour began in Bozeman, and stopped in Flathead County at the Northwest Agriculture Research Station in Creston, where MSU faculty were able to see the latest research being conducted on wheat and alfalfa while mingling with local farmers at a picnic lunch.

The next stop on the tour was a visit to Glacier National Park. Tracy Ammerman, Chief of Interpretation and Education, provided the historical background of the park and described the economic impact the park has on tourism in the Flathead Valley. The Flathead 4-H Interstate Exchange students met the MSU faculty at Apgar Village. Along with their Michigan guests, they entertained the crowd with camp songs and impromptu dives into Lake MacDonald fully clothed. After the highly recommended huckleberry ice cream cone, the group headed toward the hops research trial in Whitefish.

At the once-alfalfa-field renamed the Glacier Hops Ranch, the MSU group learned about the commercial hops feasibility study that is now in its third year. Ranch owner Tom Britz and his staff guided the faculty through the ins and outs of testing 48 varieties of hops from around the world. Research partners, the presidents of Great Northern Brewery and Tamarack Brewery discussed the value of this type of research to the burgeoning craft brew industry in Montana.



MSU President, Dr. Waded Cruzado, examines a new variety of hops being tested at the research plot established for the Commercial Hops Feasibility Study.

“Hildegard,” the first German hops harvester in the state, was showcased and created much interest from the manufacturing faculty. This type of machine is not currently being produced in the U.S. All of the cultivating and harvesting equipment on the ranch has been imported for use in the trial. The half-acre research plot has laid the groundwork for a \$1.4 million dollar expansion in 2016 to 27 acres and a processing facility.

Dinner was catered by the nationally renowned Chef Karp and his students from the Flathead Valley Community College culinary program. Two five-foot paella dishes and twelve tapas were created to the delight of the 65 guests in attendance. Spanish guitar music, floating under the massive pines, relaxed the audience as the sun set over the hops yard.

Specialty crop research has been designed and conducted by Flathead County Extension as an economic development tool. Traditional agriculture such as beef and wheat production has been declining each year in the Flathead. Smaller acreage farmers are looking for higher value, niche crops to remain viable.



MSU Extension Director Dr. Jeff Bader and Montana State University Faculty tour the Glacier Hops Ranch.

4-H Log Rolling & Interstate Exchange

Campers learn historic art of logrolling

Thanks to a \$3,870 Plum Creek Foundation grant, Flathead county 4-H campers had the opportunity to participate in a more than century-old sport — log rolling.

Instead of heavy timber, the 11-foot, 8-inch-long logs are made of durable, high-density plastic that is filled with water when ready to use. Empty, the logs weigh about 65 pounds and can be handled easily by 4-H members as they are maneuvered in and out of the water.

With a high perception of danger, but low actual risk, campers were able to jump on and fall off all week long without any incidents while waging friendly competitions.

During the winter months, the Flathead Valley Community College Logging Sports team house the logs in an indoor pool facility. This will afford them ample time to practice for their log rolling events throughout the winter months.



Flathead county 4-H campers compete in a friendly log-rolling competition.

Ohio 4-H Interstate exchange member observes the bison during a tour of the Spring Brook Ranch. (Aaric Bryan/Daily Inter Lake)



The goal of the Montana 4-H Program is to: educate youth and adults for living in a global and ever-changing world with the resources of land-grant Universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Objectives for the program focus on building the following life skills: foster a positive self-concept; learn decision-making and responsibility for choices; develop an inquiring mind; relate to self and others; acquire a concern for communities- local and global; learn tolerance and acceptance of others.

In addition to recreation, the 4-H members participated in community service at the Flathead Food Bank and Second Helping Thrift Store.

Flathead 4-H Exchanges with Ohio

In July of 2015, 15 4-H youth traveled to Flathead County through the 4-H Interstate Exchange, exploring the unique geography and lifestyle of Northwest Montana. Flathead County 4-H members hosted the group that hails from Mercer County, Ohio. The 4-H Interstate Exchange is a two-year commitment between 4-H organizations.



Thriving Master Gardener Program

Master Gardeners Volunteer in the Flathead Valley

The master gardener program continues to thrive in Flathead County. Master gardeners donate thousands of hours to city, county, state and national parks, local school gar-

dens, community gardens, beautification projects, weed management programs, research trials and natural resource conservation activities. This year, the master gardeners set up a booth in Lawrence Park and taught hundreds of fifth grade students how to identify common tree species. Cones, bark, tree cookies and needles were examined by the youth during their fun filled lesson.

Master gardeners worked with Kila Elementary students on the Rails to Trails tree planting project in commemoration of Arbor Day. Collaborating with the Flathead Conservation District and Montana State Parks, the MG's have been helping students with this program since the bike trail was established 10 years ago. The trees and shrubs planted will restore the native vegetation to the disturbed area and provide shade to bicyclists.

The first annual master gardener potluck dinner was held as a harvest celebration in September. Over 50 gardeners from the past eight years attended and were able to swap challenges and success stories of growing in a short season climate. A field trip to visit each other's gardens was suggested. A core group of members volunteered to organize future educational opportunities.

The 2016 master gardener class will be held in the science lab at the Vo Ag Center. This will allow for more hands on learning and collaborations with Flathead High School faculty.



Fifth grade students learn to identify common tree species from Master Gardener volunteers.



Master Gardener Mary Byers instructs youth on composting.



Kila Elementary School students participate in Rails to Trails tree planting project to commemorate Arbor Day.

Workshops Address Flathead County's Needs



Montana Wine and Grape Grower Assoc. board member Steve Cummings gives a tour of his vineyard.

Flathead County Extension meets the needs of its residents through offering a variety of educational programs and workshops. Montana State University Forage specialist, Dr. Emily Glunk, discussed forage nutrient requirements with local hay growers in January at the annual Northwest AG Research Center meeting. Glunk provided research data that may help growers conserve nitrogen and cut crop costs.

A Farm Bill training was conducted in collaboration with the Farm Service Agency and MSU faculty to help area farmers understand changes in the federal farm bill. Methods for deciding proper crop insurance and consequences were provided. Advisors were able to answer questions from growers and simplify a process that can be complicated.

Cecil Tharp, MSU Pesticide Specialist, joined Pat McGlynn, MSU Extension Agent and Kima Cadell, Montana Department of Agriculture in providing a full day private pesticide applicator training. A capacity crowd of area producers and business owners attended with their employees. Attendees received hands-on demonstrations of proper calibration techniques and the use of personal protective equipment. This training helped area businesses meet the federal Worker Protection Standard. Safe handling of pesticides prevents contamination of our natural resources and human injury.

Invasive weeds and insects continue to trespass into Montana. An Emerald Ash Borer workshop was held in collaboration with MSU faculty and Kalispell City Parks to make residents aware of how to identify this pest and what precautions to take. A two-night weed workshop was hosted by Flathead Community Valley College. Over 200 residents attended each evening and took home boots, measuring cups, spray goggles and weed identification booklets. The Flathead National Forest, Montana Department of Agriculture, MSU Extension, the Flathead Conservation District, Glacier National Park, Flathead County Weed Department and the local CHS store joined forces to educate the public on noxious weeds and their control.

The first annual Montana Wine and Grape Grower Association meeting was held in June and was a direct benefit of the Flathead County Extension Cold Hardy Wine Grape Trial. Experts from North Dakota and Nebraska provided best management practices for the hybrid grapes and announced new varieties soon to be released.

Dr. Marsha Goetting, MSU Family Economic Specialist, partnered with Flathead Extension and Flathead Agency on Aging in offering two estate planning workshops to over 100 county residents. Goetting described the repercussions of dying without a will in the state of Montana. She emphasized the importance of prior planning and described numerous options that are available to all. Attendees were grateful for a free workshop offered by an expert that provided non-biased information.

Raising chickens has become popular in Flathead County. Kalispell has an ordinance that allows residents to own six hens within city limits. Outside the city limits, poultry production has contributed to wildlife management challenges. The avian flu prevented many youth from exhibiting their chickens at the county fair. A workshop was held to educate the public on best management practices to keep flocks and people healthy. Electric fencing was recommended to avoid injury to wildlife and poultry.



Flathead County youth learn about poultry at the Poultry Workshop.

Longtime 4-H Leaders and Jr. Livestock Show

Longevity in Flathead Volunteer Leaders

Thirty-four years ago Linda Stewart jumped into the Swan River Buttons & Bows 4-H Club and hasn't looked back. She was a 4-H member in the Bigfork area where she was raised and she knew about all the benefits and opportunities 4-H had to offer, so she wanted her three children to become involved. "It's such a good program," says Linda. So she got all of her children involved and now she has nine grandchildren, with five of them involved in 4-H.

As the superintendent for the 4-H home economics and general projects for the past 14 years or so, Linda is a fixture at the Northwest Montana Fair. In a typical year there are more than 800 home economics and general project entries. Her mother, Sherry Caverly, 84, helps out daily at the fair, watching over the ex-

hibits and visiting with the crowd. Sherry also teaches sewing to Swan River 4-H members.

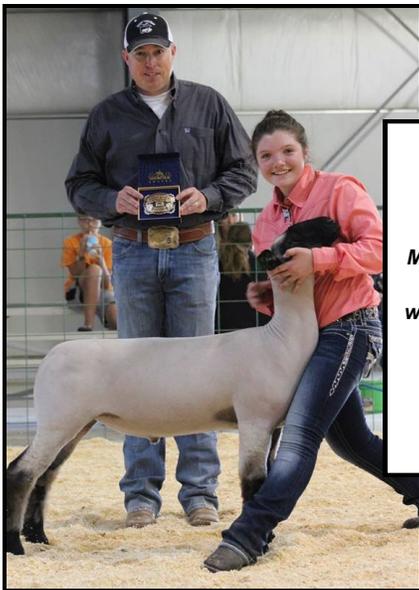


Linda Stewart helps her granddaughter with a huckleberry muffin recipe for the NW Montana Fair.

Linda's husband Bill is also involved with 4-H. He serves on the Loon Lake 4-H Camp committee and provides leadership for club members in the leathercraft project. He also helped chaperone this year's 4-H Interstate Exchange group that came from Ohio (see page 2). Next year, he and Linda will be traveling to Mercer County Ohio during the summer of 2016 as 4-H chaperones.

Additionally, for more than 20 years Linda has been heavily involved in the States' 4-H International Exchange Programs, a global citizenship and cultural immersion experience for 4-H aged youth. When her daughter was 14, the Stewart family hosted a girl from Japan, and three years later that same daughter stayed with the same girl in Japan.

3rd Annual Flathead Agape' Classic 4-H Junior Livestock Show



4-H Livestock Member with her award winning lamb and belt buckle sponsor.

The third annual Flathead Agape' Classic 4-H Junior Livestock show was held in Kalispell, in July 2015 at the Flathead County Fairgrounds. The event saw a record number of entries including: 30 market hogs with 23 hog showmen, 60 market lambs, 15 breeding ewes and 40 sheep showmen, 26 market steers, 9 mini market steers, 8 breeding heifers, 3 mini breeding heifers and 27 beef showmen. The total number of entries increased by nearly 20% over the previous year and exhibitors came from all across Montana to participate.

Chad Murnin of Bar Star Cattle judged the show and is said it was the "deepest set of market lambs" he'd ever judged. He went on to tell the Montana exhibitors to be proud of themselves and the animals they are raising. Judge Murnin's commentary and teaching efforts with the exhibitors reinforced the purpose of the event. This junior livestock show was created with the intent of providing an educational opportunity and experience for youth livestock exhibitors outside of the traditional county fair. By attending our show, pre-fair, exhibitors had the opportunity to enhance their showmanship skills and receive feedback from a livestock evaluator on the

marketability of their project.

Agape' Home Care, Inc., was the major sponsor and promoter of the event for the third year. Approximately \$2,000 was paid to exhibitors for top placing in their respective market classes, a 100% payout of market entry fees. Mark Campbell, Tim Harmon and the crew at the Flathead County Fairgrounds were instrumental in providing a beautiful facility for the event. Last, but certainly not least, Open Horizons 4-H Club donated hours of time cleaning the trade center building.



4-H Livestock Show Cleaning Crew

Small Dark Fruit Trial Established



Aronia

Montana State University Extension in Flathead County has partnered with Flathead Valley Community College on a small dark fruit study. This is a research project to identify high value, niche crops for the smaller acreage farmer in Northwest Montana. Extension Agent Pat McGlynn interviewed a number of business owners that produced Made in Montana agriculture products. These businesses were using fruit in their candies, cookies, jams, salsa and wines that were sourced from other states. They were unable to find the quantity and variety of fruits in Montana. McGlynn recognized that most of these



Haskap

fruits were native and very cold tolerant.

The dark fruit needed by the Made in Montana businesses are also the healthiest foods available, often called “super foods.” These fruit are high in anthocyanins, vitamin C and flavonoids that are natural anti-oxidants. Anti-oxidants remove free radicals from the body and offer protection from infection, cancers and aging. Aronia has antibacterial, antiviral and antidiabetic characteristics. Elderberry is being used in Austria to lower cholesterol and fight cardiovascular disease. The tart cherry has been used to treat gout and arthritis due to its anti-inflammatory properties.

The MSU research station in Corvallis was dedicated to horticulture research and a new superintendent, Zach Miller, was hired in 2014. Miller and McGlynn teamed with Extension faculty Brent Sarchet and Toby Day to write a grant and were awarded \$110,000 for this study from the Montana Department of Agriculture. The trial includes four replicated locations: Kalispell, Corvallis, Helena and Bozeman. The Kalispell trial has been planted on FVCC property under the supervision of the Sustainable Agriculture Program faculty. Students will learn how to do research and collect data while caring for the half-acre plot. The dark fruit were planted in May 2015 and harvest is expected in fall 2017. Workshops will be held to share the successes and challenges of this new crop for Montana growers.

Production of these fruits will set the stage for future processing opportunities. A juicing facility could develop healthy fruit blends for direct consumption or to create syrup to be used to flavor ice creams, candies, or distilled products. These fruits could be grown commercially or as backyard family garden plants. Data will be collected and evaluated to determine survivability, tons per acre harvested, rates of growth and disease and pest resistance.

The varieties being tested:

Amelachier – 6 varieties

Black Currants – 4 varieties

Red Currants – 2 varieties

Aronia – 2 varieties

Dwarf Sour Cherry – 4 varieties

Haskaps – 5 varieties

Elderberry – 8 varieties

Gogi Berry – 3 varieties



Goji Berry



Elderberry

Flathead County 4-H Restructures Foundation and Builds NEW 4-H Council

Now situated to better serve 4-H community

4-H Restructures Foundation

In the Fall of 2014, Flathead County Extension underwent an extensive review of programmatic efforts. Fundamental to this effort was a process of assessing current program progress and identifying emerging opportunities.

When considering the 4-H Youth Development program, one of the identified opportunities was found within the 4-H Foundation. It was determined that the foundation was not functioning in a traditional foundation manner. Typically, foundations function as an entity to encourage current and recruit new funding sources in support of a specific effort. Conversely, the Flathead County 4-H Foundation was situated more to pursue a role of advising faculty on matters of program planning, administration and community engagement, which is an unusual role for a foundation.

In order to better serve the Flathead 4-H community, Extension staff brought together existing members from the 4-H Foundation and outside community leaders, with the goal of establishing a more fiduciary-minded 4-H Foundation. One that could steer the organization toward a more sustainable future by adopting sound governance and financial management policies, and ensuring adequate resources.

Duties of the new 4-H Foundation board members are to:

- (1) Take care of the 4-H community by ensuring prudent use of all assets, including facility, people, and good will; and provide oversight for all activities that advance Flathead 4-H's effectiveness and sustainability. (*Duty of due care*)
- (2) Make decisions in the best interest of the larger community of Flathead 4-H members; present and future. (*Duty of loyalty*) and
- (3) Ensure that the 4-H community obeys applicable laws and acts in accordance with ethical practices; that they adhere to its stated purposes, and that activities advance the 4-H mission. (*Duty of obedience*).

4-H Builds New 4-H Council

In light of restructuring efforts of the 4-H Foundation, the next challenge in the Flathead was to develop an entirely new Advisory Council. 4-H councils have been around almost as long as 4-H itself. Most counties have a 4-H council composed of adult volunteer leaders and youth members who give guidance to the county 4-H program. An effective county 4-H council, with diverse membership, can be a source of strength for a county 4-H program.



The county 4-H council is an advisory group to the county Extension agent. The council works with the Extension agent to develop, implement, and evaluate educational programs based upon the changing needs of the youth in the county. The partnership between youth, adult volunteers, and Extension professionals is vital to the success of the 4-H program. The county agent has responsibility to ensure that a viable council is functioning, in partnership with the county Extension Office.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF 4-H COUNCILS ARE:

- To promote and strengthen the county 4-H program and advise program development.
- To provide a communication link between the county Extension office and 4-H clubs.
- To advocate for the county 4-H program.
- To develop and encourage leadership, decision-making, communication and teamwork in both youth and adults.
- To prepare a budget of funds to carry out planned 4-H activities.
- To support education and leadership development for youth and adults.

MEMBERSHIP

How councils define their membership also varies from county to county. In most counties, all 4-H leaders can be members of the county 4-H council and can vote. In some counties, youth comprise 50% of the council membership while adult leaders form the other 50%. Some ways that counties have defined membership include—

- President of each 4-H club or an alternate
- One adult leader of each club
- Members-at-large. The county 4-H council may select additional youth (such as ambassadors) or adults to serve on the council as necessary and desirable. This may be helpful in counties with less than 10 clubs.
- County Extension agent(s) provide support and advice.

SNAP-Ed Changes Lives Across the Flathead

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education program (SNAP-Ed) is available to SNAP recipients in the Flathead. Goals of this nutrition-based program include healthy food choices and money management for food budgets. SNAP-Ed serves families with children, seniors, singles, individuals with developmental and mental disabilities and youth.

Nancy Roberts, the nutrition educator, has been working with Community Action Partnership's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients to demonstrate the importance of good nutrition for young adults. These eight week classes advise clients how to stretch food dollars and learn the basics of 'cooking from scratch' for healthier eating.

SNAP-Ed has developed new partnerships with Sunburst and Lamplighter House. These are both mental health clinics in Flathead Valley. Roberts taught her eight week course at both facilities enjoying a positive response from the clientele there. Many clients reported that they have used the information to improve their daily lives.

The Kalispell Women's Recovery Home participates in the SNAP-Ed program also. In a home setting, this program for women struggling with chemical-dependency teaches healthy eating habits. Roberts does two SNAP-Ed sessions at the home during the year.

Roberts collaborates with Project Homeless Connect. This yearly event is sponsored by 40 service agencies to connect with the valley's homeless population. This event connects needy families or individuals with different agencies that assist with medical, dental, food aid, financial, legal, veteran services and pet needs.

The SNAP-Ed program has designed classes specific to youth. Roberts teaches at 10 area schools. She teaches first, third and fifth grades about good nutrition, food safety, and physical activity. In the 2014-2015 school year 555 students participated in SNAP-Ed classes. One round of classes lasts for six weeks and each student gets a certificate of completion.

The SNAP-Ed program is expanding across the Flathead, and is continuing to seek out new agencies to partner with in order to help families and individuals learn about healthy eating habits.



Nancy Roberts chops fruits and vegetables for a SNAP-Ed nutrition class for youth participants.

Contact Us



EXTENSION

Flathead County

Patricia McGlynn
Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension Agent

Tammy Walker
4-H and Youth Development Extension Agent

Dee Dryden-Cooper
Administrative Assistant

Nancy Roberts
SNAP-Ed Nutrition Assistant

www.msuxtension.org

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Flathead County Extension
1108 South Main Street, Ste.#4, Kalispell, MT 59901

Phone (406) 758-5553

E-mail extension@flathead.mt.gov

Web www.flathead.mt.gov/extension