



Building Community Capacity Through Leadership Development



Paradise Valley ranch tour



2015-2016 Leadership 49 participants



Showing sheep at the Park County

Knowledgeable and engaged leaders are a critical component of strong, healthy, vibrant communities. Research shows that successful communities invest in the development of their people. This is why all three Park County Extension agents incorporate leadership development across their discipline areas.

From Leadership 49, to building leadership capacity within Extension agents and citizens serving on local government boards, to the many youth leadership development programs, we recognize that by building the capacities of the people and youth in Park County, we are increasing the number of engaged citizens and effective leaders. Whether a program participant steps into a leadership role in their school, home, business, or community, we value that participation and the positive impact it has on our communities.

Leadership program impacts:

- Park County 4-H Council volunteer leaders focused on youth development best practices when making policy decisions
- Park County 4-H members learned budgeting, financial management, product quality assurance, and marketing skills culminating in a \$225,000 Park County 4-H Fair Sale
- Six people became board members of nonprofit organizations
- Retention of 20 jobs, an estimated payroll of \$830,000, \$1.6 million in private business revenue
- Citizens have a greater understanding about the statutes, policies, and principles that guide effective and ethical service on local government boards
- Extension professionals are improving their abilities to plan effective programming in their counties

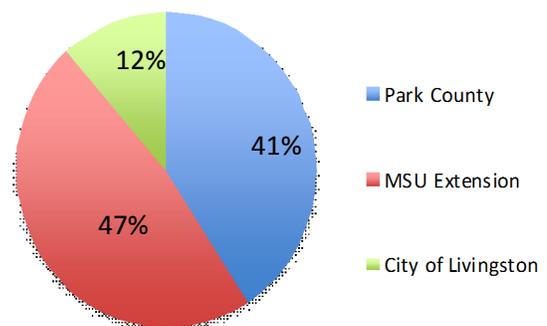
Welcome to Park County

Park County, MT, spans nearly 85 miles from north to south and encompasses just under 1.7 million acres of land. Nearly 16,000 residents live here and enjoy the vast expanses of scenic beauty the landscape offers. Agriculture, healthcare and social services, and tourism are major economic drivers.



County Tri-Funded Support

Funded jointly by the City of Livingston, Park County, and Montana State University, Park County Extension maximizes taxpayer investment by leveraging funds and resources to improve lives, landscapes, and livelihoods. For every \$53 dollars invested by Park County taxpayers, Montana State University invests \$47—an 89% return on investment.



Promoting Healthy Landscapes: Partnerships to Control Noxious Weeds

MSU Park County Extension and the Park County Cooperative Weed Management Area group have been partnering since 2013 to provide a means for private landowners to more effectively control noxious weeds on their property. The groups have secured three grants totaling \$124,644 for use in the West Boulder-Mission Creek watersheds in eastern Park County and an additional \$10,979 grant for use along the Yellowstone River corridor from Livingston to Springdale. The West Boulder-Mission Creek and Yellowstone River Corridor project areas encompass 81,000 acres and 5,800 acres, respectively.

The grants are designed to offer landowners and land managers

50% cost share to either the purchase herbicides for private



REAL Montana in Park County: Agriculture and Natural Resource Leadership

MSU Park County Agriculture Extension Agent, Tracy Mosley, was selected as one of 20 individuals to participate in Class II of REAL Montana. REAL (Resource Education and Agriculture Leadership) Montana is a two-year leadership program offering in-depth education and training on agriculture and natural resource industries in Montana. Mosley is the first representative from Montana State University Extension to be accepted into the program.

The mission of REAL Montana is “to build a network of informed and engaged leaders to advance the natural resource industries in Montana.” The program takes the class through Montana to discuss a wide variety of resource-related topics, such as crop production, oil and gas development, livestock and coal production, water, and timber. Additionally, participants

use on their property or to hire a licensed commercial applicator to treat weeds on their properties. Additionally, these grants provide an opportunity for education and improved neighbor relations centered around the issue of noxious weed management.

Participation in the grant was very high, with 31 landowners in the West Boulder-Mission Creek watersheds and seven along the Yellowstone River corridor participating. These 38 landowners represent 76% of the land area in the two project areas.

In the West Boulder-Mission Creek watersheds, 10,661 acres of Priority 2B noxious weeds were treated between Spring 2013 and Fall 2015. Along the Yellowstone River Corridor, 1,133 acres of Priority 2B weeds were treated in 2014 and 2015.

Participants increased their knowledge of herbicides available to control specific noxious weeds, appropriate rates and timings of application, the importance of using a surfactant to improve effectiveness, and the value of using an integrated approach to weed management. Several participants have reported a qualitative difference in forage production in areas sprayed. Additionally, landowners reported a positive response among neighbors across the life of the grant. Some who had historically implemented minimal noxious weed control strategies were reported to reach out to neighbors for guidance in implementing a more rigorous weed management plan. The increase in the number of participants over the life of the grant indicates that landowners became interested in the benefits of noxious weed management to improve the landscape.

learn how to work with the media, traveling to Washington D.C. to learn about federal policy, and will participate in an international trip to observe and learn about agriculture and resources abroad.

Mosley is excited to gain more in-depth knowledge about each of the industries which rely on natural resources and contribute to Montana’s economy. This information will be highly valuable to her as she serves the agriculture and natural resources clientele in Park County.



Class II visited the KTVQ-Billings studio while learning how to effectively work with the media.

My Hands to Larger Service:

Teaching Generosity through Community Service

“If I don’t teach my 4-H kids to give back to their communities, who is going to?”, asked Park County 4-H volunteer leader Patti Hoyem. Patti is one of many leaders who believe that generosity and the value of service is learned at a young age. Whether cleaning up sections of local highways, providing meals and fellowship opportunities for senior citizens, or organizing food drives, 4-H members are living out their pledge of “My hands to larger service.”

Service is central to the 4-H mission of making the best better. In 4-H, youth assess community needs, determine possible solutions, and do the service work. In one example, the roadways outside of Gardiner, Emigrant, Clyde Park, and Wilsall were littered with trash. The Bracketteers, Dome Mountain, Paradise Experimenters, and Wilsall Wrangler 4-H Clubs wanted to change this. These club adopted highways in their communities and now, twice a year, they clean eight miles of roadside highways.



Dome Mountain 4-H Club members and organizational leader, Rob Stermitz, take a break from their road-side clean-up activity near Gardiner, Montana.

Rob Stermitz, Dome Mountain 4-H Club leader, helps his club coordinate an annual Christmas dinner for Gardiner senior citizens. Rob commented, “If the 4-H club stops doing this, there is no one to take it over. This is the only opportunity for a community Christmas Dinner here. Our club feeds 150 people.”

My Health to Better Living:

Improving Nutrition by Teaching Cooking Skills



Geyser Farms owner, Caroline Rehder, digs carrots during the camp tour of the farm.

“When I visit ask the kids who are here what they ate last night, they respond chips and pop,” relates Livingston Food Pantry Director, Michael McCormick. McCormick observed that youth needed to learn the basic food preparation skills to feed themselves

healthy meals because their parents either were not in the home or didn’t know how to themselves. Out of that observation, the MSU Park County Extension Office and Livingston Food Pantry created Kids Cooking Camp. The camp is a half-day, week-long

camp designed to teach youth how to prepare basic, nutritious meals. Twenty-two kids ranging in age from six to twelve participated in the camp, learning food safety and knife skills, meal preparation, etiquette and manners, all while preparing lunches and touring a local farm and grocery store. Parent responses included comments like: “Thanks for inspiring my kid to try new things!” and “this is the best camp. Cooking is life-long skill. I need to keep my kids involved in life-long activities! In a follow-up survey after camp, all campers said they prepared at least one meal for their family to enjoy.



Camp counselor, Logan Tecca, helps his campers prepare an entrée for the celebration meal.

Engaging the People of Park County

Impacting Lives and Livelihoods:

Varied Economic & Community Development Efforts

The challenges and opportunities for communities across Park County are as varied as the landscape. While the strategic direction is clearly outlined for the economic & community development program, the ability to be flexible and work with communities in the areas where they have need is its real strength.

From supporting the return of the Shields Valley Farmers Market in the north, to assisting Cooke City and Gardiner on affordable housing and marketing in the south, to working with and providing training to businesses and entrepreneurs county-wide, the program saw many positive impact in 2015.

The Business Expansion and Retention program worked with 25 business resulting in:

- Nine jobs created and 19 jobs retained with estimated wages of \$830,000
- \$18,360 in training grant dollars for 17 people
- Over 300 volunteer consulting hours valued at \$6,000

One-on-one consulting with over 100 entrepreneurs, businesses, and organizations providing:

- Recruitment assistance to four businesses considering Livingston and Park County for new or relocated operations
- Assistance to six successful business startups
- Referrals to over 25 partners, programs, and agencies

Development of a workforce partnership and hiring of an AmeriCorps VISTA to provide capacity for its work.



2015 saw the return of the Shields Valley Farmers Market to Clyde Park



Gardiner community members exploring housing issues



Entrepreneur fwd. Business Series participants at a financial planning workshop

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