Welcome to Powell County

My name is Jodi Pauley and I am your MSU Extension agent in Powell County. I am here to provide research-based knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of families, communities, and agricultural enterprises. Extension is an outreach of Montana State University and we are committed to the overall university goals of integrating learning, discovery and engagement. And, as always, GO CATS!

Clientele benefit from MSU Extension in Powell County in the areas of agriculture, youth development, horticulture, community development, 4-H and more. The MSU Extension office sits in the county seat of Deer Lodge, housed in the county courthouse. The office provides free publications to the public on a requested basis, provides workshops in several program areas, and works with school children and youth across the county.

Agriculture is the backbone of Powell County with approximately 263 ranches with the average size being 2,240 acres. The population of the county is around 6,800 people. The cattle population is around 39,000. We are home of the Montana State Prison and also Montana Correctional Enterprises, one of the larger landowners in the county (38,000 acres), where they provide daily training to over 500 inmates in the areas of vocational, agricultural and industry programs. They operate one of the larger dairies in the state and also have over 12 miles of handline gravity-fed irrigation lines to grow crops on 2,800 acres of farmland.

Powell County is home of the Spotted Dog Wildlife Management area which provides over 37,000 acres of public access, winter elk range, and wildlife habitat. Fish, Wildlife and Parks continues to work with surrounding landowners and the public on policies and management schemes to ensure the viability of the WMA in Powell County. MSU Extension has been very involved in working with FWP to help develop a wildlife management plan for the Spotted Dog WMA.

MSU Extension administers the 4-H program within Powell County with seven clubs, 22 volunteer leaders and 99 youth. MSU Powell County Extension takes pride in working with individuals one-on-one with horticulture issues, insect problems, weed recommendations and estate planning. The MSU Extension office provided newspaper articles locally, reaching over 3,000 homes this year with 11 articles of unbiased and research-based information for the clientele of Powell County and beyond.
Growing throughout Powell County

**Harvesting the Garden**

Powell County MSU Extension agent Jodi Pauley and Master Gardener Sheila Gill again embraced youth development, spending six weeks teaching fourth grade students of Deer Lodge the fundamentals of gardening. Students learned about soils, seed growth, planting, and ate pea plants, onion and garlic tops and several types of herbs, and visited the community garden where they planted sunflowers and beans.

Studies show that children who are familiar with growing their own food tend to eat more fruits and vegetables and are more inclined to continue healthy eating habits through adulthood. Utilizing this research, Master Gardener Sheila Gill expanded the program and included a harvest day in September that all the fourth graders who were now fifth graders could fully understand the components of garden harvesting. Sheila decided to also incorporate the high school nutrition classes into this project. Twenty high school students harvested produce out of Gill’s garden and then Pauley, Gill and high school family and consumer sciences teacher, Mrs. Perkins, spent time with the students cooking the produce to serve to the fifth grade students. They learned how to cook potato, tomato and squash soup. They made fresh salsa and a potato, beet and carrot salad. They also made desserts incorporating zucchini and green tomatoes. These students learned chopping skills, how to read a recipe, prepare tomatoes for salsa, making soups out of fresh products and much more.

On September 28, 48 fifth grade students and the high school nutrition students came together to harvest and learn about the vegetables and fruits of the garden. Extension agent Pauley developed educational materials and the high school students facilitated the learning at each station. Afterwards, the high school students played garden jeopardy with the fifth graders about all they had learned that day in the garden. The day ended with eating a huge lunch made completely from the garden. The high school students served the lunch and everyone loved it. One fifth grade student commented it was the best day ever and she learned so much. One of the high school students noted how much they learned and really liked interacting with the younger students.

Sheila Gill volunteered over 50 hours towards this educational project plus over $500 dollars of produce and supplies throughout the entire project. High school students and their teacher volunteered over 170 hours in preparation and facilitation of the harvest day.
Deer Lodge Community Garden

To get from farm to fork, food in the United States travels an average of 1300 miles, changes hands half a dozen times, and consumes 10 calories of fossil-fuel energy to produce a single calorie of modern supermarket food (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson and Stevenson, 1996, Pollan, 2008).

Producing food locally greatly reduces the greenhouse gas emissions related to transportation of food. With that said, it was once again another fabulous year for the Deer Lodge Community Garden which saw growth with more vegetables and more community involvement. The project was started in 2012 and has proved it is sustainable. Extension Agent Jodi Pauley feels this is one of the most positive community development projects that Deer Lodge has embraced. Volunteers spent over 300 hours of service at the garden, planted flowers for the library and also did flower pots for the main street bridge. This year the garden size stayed stable with 45 outside plots and the greenhouse is at capacity with 24 boxes.

Volunteers ran the Community Garden Farmer’s Market for seven weeks during August and September. Volunteers planted garlic, onions, tomatoes, carrots, potatoes, green beans and lettuce in 10 boxes at the garden. The market is designed to be pick-your-own for a donation. This generated $431 for the community garden, with the money used for insurance and maintenance of the greenhouse, boxes and grounds around the garden. The garden also donated several pounds of green tomatoes to the high school nutrition classes for making salsa and other items.

CAREER FAIR

Approximately 350 high-school-aged children from Philipsburg, Drummond and Deer Lodge were exposed to MSU Powell County Extension at their first annual career fair. Jodi Pauley, agent for Powell County had display items about Extension ranging from 4-H to agriculture. Students played the thumb ball game with a soccer ball and attempted to answer questions about Powell County, state and national agriculture. Other questions were about Extension in Montana and the 4-H program in Powell County. Most did not realize that agriculture brings in $34 million dollars to Powell County, cows outnumber people 5 to 1, and that currently there are 60,000 job openings in the field of Agriculture and only 35,000 graduates coming out of college with agricultural degrees. Pauley visited with the students about the vast amount of jobs that are related to agriculture.
Several educational events were held at the greenhouse. MSU Extension agent Jodi Pauley and the Deer Lodge Valley Conservation District hosted a full-day gardening workshop and part of the day was spent on educational programs at the garden. Thirty-one participants learned the benefits of raised bed gardening, how the garden is managed and the benefits of a hoop house. Fourth grade students toured the garden and planted all the flower boxes and also planted beans in some of the other raised beds. The community garden hosted the largest garden tour they have ever had with 48 participants.

Informal education happened at the garden between gardeners, this included watering tips, planting care, helping each other and sharing produce. The garden averaged 72 pounds of produce per 4x8 box and over 50 pounds of tomatoes in the 4x4 boxes in the greenhouse. Folks who take advantage of the garden come from all walks of life: from families, the elderly living on a fixed income, young individuals who do not have a space for a garden and many who have the desire for fresh, local-grown produce. Extension looks forward to many more years of education and community gardening.

**My Plate Nutrition**

Jodi Pauley, MSU Extension agent, spent three weeks working with fifth grade students on My Plate education and nutrition. All students were tasked to keep a journal of what they ate and did in a day before the first class session. Then they learned the components of My Plate and what it looks like. They read labels and played nutrition jeopardy during the last class. Some of the goals written down in their diaries after the three classes included:
- I want to shoot a basketball 100 times per day;
- I will work on eating more vegetables as I eat lots of fruit;
- Be more active at home for at least an hour and play with my cousins;
- Be willing to try new foods.

First grade students were exposed to My Plate education with a brief description of My Plate and an exercise in naming foods that come from each category. Then all students were given parts of a giant cheeseburger that contains all parts of My Plate, and as they put the cheeseburger back together, they named which items fit into My Plate food categories.

**4-H Highlights**

It is a once in a lifetime opportunity in the career of an Extension agent to be able to present a 50 year 4-H leader award. 2017 marked the 50th year that Shirley Thomas has been a leader for Powell County 4-H. Not only was she a leader, but also a member of the Golden Nugget 4-H Club from 1949 to 1959. Back then there were boys and girls 4-H clubs and Shirley, being a rebel, joined both so she could show animals, which the boys did, and also take cooking and sewing, which was done in the girl’s club. She became a leader of the Golden Nugget club in 1967. She was instrumental in teaching kids about livestock judging, helping with livestock projects and also had a passion for cooking and sewing with her 4-H members. In 1978 she became the main livestock superintendent at the Tri-County fair and has held that role ever since. If someone had kept track of all the volunteer hours Shirley has given to Powell County 4-H for the last 50 years, the amount of time she’s given would be outstanding. She was awarded a belt buckle at the 4-H year-end celebration, where over 70 members and families honored Shirley Thomas for her years of service.

4-H Show camp was held in June for our members from the Tri-County area and Butte-Silver Bow. This camp, held locally by Extension agent Jodi Pauley, gives large animal project...
members who are in their first to third year of the project a chance to learn how to fit and show their animals. This was the first year that past members of show camp taught all of the learning stations. This peer teaching method has been a goal of Pauley’s all along for this camp. 4-H teen leaders taught participants how to get their animals ready for show from A to Z. Animals are bathed, clipped, fitted and shown in the ring to give the 4-H members the skills needed to get ready for fair and other shows. The peer-to-peer teaching went great, giving the teen leaders new skills in teaching and the younger kids the ability to work in-depth with their animals. One of the members did a skill-a-thon for others at the end of the day and all the participants took home prizes of fitting supplies and items they could use with their animals. Many of the members participated in the local jackpot show the day after camp, using the skills they had just learned.

4-H Show camp participants.