The Gallatin County Extension office had many exciting changes this year. We moved into a new home and welcomed new employees.

Our office has been searching for new space for about three years as we had outgrown our old office. Thanks to the generous support of the Gallatin County commissioners we are happy to have settled back into the building on the Gallatin Fairgrounds known as the Ag Center. We now share the building with the Gallatin County Weed Department.

This arrangement is convenient for clients that visit both of our offices. One trip can be made to reach more expertise and assistance.

Our office also welcomed three new staff members this year.

Danielle Jones works one quarter time for Extension and three quarter time for the Weed District. Her Extension responsibilities focus on grant management and financial management.

Katie Robertson joined us in August as the SNAP-Ed Program Manager. SNAP-Ed is an evidence-based program that helps people lead healthier lives. She teaches free adult and youth nutrition curriculum to those eligible for SNAP and other assistance programs.

Ted Baker joined us in October as the 4-H mentoring manager. He works with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Greater Gallatin United Way and other local schools to provide educational opportunities for youth.

We are excited for the capacity our new office allows, including a large conference room for meetings. Our staff is fully equipped to meet our growing community needs; come visit us at 903 N. Black in Bozeman for a tour.

The new location of MSU Extension in Gallatin County on the Gallatin County Fairgrounds.

Expanding Capacity to Meet Community Needs

The 2016 MSU Extension intern in the Gallatin County Extension office was Jaylelyn Ruckman. She is studying Animal Science at the University of Wyoming in Casper and interested in becoming an Extension agent. Born and raised in Montana, she was familiar with Extension in the state and excited to experience the behind the scenes work of an Extension office.

Ruckman worked with Agriculture Agent Emily Lockard at various events and was able to interact with other county agents and broaden her knowledge in the agriculture field. The weekly plant clinic held in our office showed her what plant problems Gallatin County residents are dealing with. Ruckman enjoyed property site visits. The interaction of Lockard and the landowners was very educational, giving Ruckman the opportunity to learn more in the field than from a classroom setting.

Ruckman was a little apprehensive about working in Natural Resources, but Brad Bauer gave Ruckman a broad experience. With a little training, Bauer was able to help Ruckman understand more about hazardous fuel management and the importance of wetlands. Ruckman was able to take this knowledge and share it as Extension works to help landowners manage their resources. Again, on site visits, Ruckman learned more than she expected including: correct forest management, types of trees and forest, and also about plants and pests. Each visit was a different experience, and because of Bauer’s patience she gained knowledge to help others in the future.

As an eleven year 4-H member, Ruckman felt most experienced in the 4-H and youth development program. Kelton Jensen always looks forward to the assistance of an intern during the busy summer fair season.

In addition to working with Jensen, Ruckman also worked with Hayley White, the former 4-H mentoring coordinator. Together they held multiple day camps, assisted with 4-H summer camp, attended State 4-H Congress, and the Gallatin County Fair.

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See Intern, continued on page 3.
4-H Program Overview

The Gallatin County 4-H program continues to grow and adapt to fit the needs of Gallatin County youth. Enrollment was up slightly from the year before to 639 youth members and 130 adult volunteers. Shooting sports, Swine, Robotics, Horse and Dog continue to be the most popular projects.

Gallatin County Extension this year focused on helping new families navigate their first year in 4-H with greater ease. By hosting workshops and informational Q&A type sessions, new families have more information about what to expect and the life skills that 4-H is providing their youth. 4-H leaders have also had the opportunity to attend workshops on topics related to welcoming new families. As youth join from families without 4-H experience, educating the entire family on the values of 4-H became a priority.

Recruiting and training volunteers is essential to continue the growth of the 4-H program in Gallatin County. New volunteer orientations and volunteer workshops are offered to ensure volunteers are receiving training on positive youth development topics. Volunteer development will continue to be a top priority for Gallatin County Extension.

Gearing up for Centennial in 2017

Gallatin County is excited to celebrate 100 years of 4-H in Gallatin County in 2017. In 1917 the Gallatin County Pig Club under the direction of W.J. Hartman was started and the swine were exhibited at the Gallatin County Fair.

Gallatin County 4-H has come a long way in 100 years. In 1917 the Pig Club was just for boys. Now more girls participate in 4-H projects than boys. Gallatin County 4-H will work with youth members and volunteers to connect with our past as we look forward to another 100 years.

Silent Auction at 4-H Market Sale

The 4-H & FFA Market Livestock Sale is a tradition when it comes to the fair and 4-H. Gallatin County 4-H has tremendous community support at the market livestock sale. A silent auction was added as a new opportunity for buyers to bid on indoor projects that were made by 4-H youth.

Youth in projects such as photography, woodworking, cooking, and sewing now get to showcase their talents and sell one item of their choice. The youth that participate in the indoor projects work very hard learning their craft. Items sold included a wooden chest, framed photographs, a table runner and a cake.

Each youth included a short introduction about their project and their participation in 4-H for the buyers to read while bidding. One unexpected outcome was educating the buyers about the different opportunities that 4-H has to offer. One buyer said “I had no idea kids could do all that in 4-H”. The silent auction was a great success and the program looks to build upon that success for next year.

Leaders Appreciation Dinner

4-H relies on volunteer leaders to lead it’s many clubs and programs. Thanking volunteers and letting them know they are appreciated is very important. The Gallatin County Unlimited Leaders Council and the Extension Office put on a Leaders Appreciation Dinner to thank all the volunteers for their service to 4-H. The dinner provides a chance to recognize many of our volunteers with county and regional awards they have earned. The Friends of 4-H Award was awarded to community members in recognition of their support of Gallatin County 4-H. Big Sky Archery, Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen and Nancy Ferrier were awarded the Gallatin County Friends of 4-H Award.

Leaders and community members who attended the dinner enjoyed the evening and recommended the dinner become an annual event that all volunteer leaders should attend.
4-H Newsletter Wins Regional Award

4-H Agent Kelton Jensen and JaNaie’ Veca won the Western Region Communication Award for the ‘Clover Post’ monthly newsletter. The award is sponsored by NAE4-HA (National Association of Extension 4-H Agents). State award winners in each category compete at the regional level, and Jensen and Veca were one of four finalists for the national award.

The ‘Clover Post’ is a monthly newsletter sent to all 4-H families in Gallatin County. Jensen highlights different youth development topics for the front page. Veca works closely with volunteers to ensure families receive all the information needed for their clubs and projects. Jensen and Veca take great pride in developing a newsletter serves Gallatin County 4-H well.

Gallatin County 4-H Mentor Partnership

The 4-H Mentoring program partners with several community organizations to bring 4-H programming to students who wouldn't be exposed otherwise. Current partnerships include the Greater Gallatin United Way (GGUW), within their kidsLINK after school programs in two schools in the Gallatin Valley; and the Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Gallatin County (BBBS), to provide their Bigs and Littles with Family Night Out experiences.

Gallatin County 4-H has additional plans to provide school enrichment programs for local schools.

The after school program at Belgrade Middle School is flourishing with strong student turn out. Typically serving 10-20 students daily, the program provides opportunities to complete homework, participate in craft projects or compete in outdoor activities. Twice a week, Montana State University Pre-Service Teachers host book and tech clubs where students are afforded the opportunity to learn new and exciting curriculum from young people in our local community.

Program accomplishments over the past year:
- These programs allow over 375 youth to engage in learning, skill development, character building, and community engagement - free of cost.
- Evaluations show all youth have an increase in self-confidence and an improved outlook on life. They make more positive choices after enrollment in the program.

Summer Day Camps

Gallatin County 4-H launched a new summer day camp program during the summer of 2016. The camps were coordinated by Hayley White, the 4-H Mentor Coordinator. The camps helped fill the need for affordable summer activities in Gallatin County, especially in Belgrade. Camps were held in both Bozeman and Belgrade and participants ranged in ages from 5-12.

Keeping the cost low was a priority with most camps costing between 12 to 20 dollars. Available scholarships made sure no youth were unable to participate due to cost. The camps covered a variety of topics from robotics, basketball, and cooking to natural resources. Camps were connected to a 4-H project that would allow the youth to continue their interest by joining the related 4-H project.

Intern

Continued from page 1.

Ruckman’s main job within 4-H was to assist in preparation for fair: with 4-H fair entries, record book interviews, setting up the 4-H promotional booth, and coordinating 4-H fair events. The fair has very long days, but it was some of the most rewarding time of the internship. Even with her 4-H experience, she was surprised at all the time put in by Jensen and volunteers to make each event successful. By including Ruckman in decisions and meetings, she was better able to understand the everyday work of 4-H agents.

In addition to the work of the agents, Ruckman worked with support staff member, JaNaie’ Veca. Working with Veca, Ruckman learned about all parts of a successful Extension team.

The internship offered real job experience for Ruckman to use as she continues her education. She said she hopes to make a personal impact for community members much like all the staff in the Gallatin County Extension Office.
Program Areas and Capacity
The Natural Resource Program works in several program areas that have been developed primarily through grant funding. Additionally, in-kind support has come from MSU, MSU Extension, Gallatin County, and community volunteers. The program strives to meet areas of need within the community while also developing the required funding capacity. The majority of funding has been project specific which has precluded the development of several program areas. Funding requests in the form of grant proposals and foundation solicitation have been developed for these additional areas.

This year the program focused on several project areas, including: (a) assisting private landowners manage their forest to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk, (b) supporting the State of Montana efforts to monitor the extent and scope of aquatic invasive species, (c) improving our management and understanding of our high elevation forest, (d) monitoring the condition and function of our wetlands, and (e) developing climate science education and tools.

This year we supported two Natural Resource temporary positions. One of these positions was an MSU intern, while the other was an educator. The two positions worked in the same programmatic area with distinct roles. Their dedication and skill greatly improved the programs capacity and developed an extensive network of volunteers which we hope to continue to engage.

Program Area’s Abstract
(A) Assist Private Landowners—provide technical assistance and cost share to manage private forest across Big Sky and the Bridger/Bangtail mountains. This consisted of one-on-one consultation with property owners/managers, the development of forest management plans, and the delivery of cost share funds to help private landowners manage the health of their forest while reducing the risk of wildfire.

(B) Aquatic Invasive Monitoring—monitor portions of the Missouri River, Fishing Access Points, and several lakes for the presence of aquatic invasive species. This consisted of surveying miles of rivers, lakes, and ponds for the presence of aquatic invasive species. Additionally, outreach focused on community events and social media.

(C) High Elevation Forest—work with Big Sky to form a working group and develop project capacity to address the declining condition of whitebark pine. This consisted of contracting a local partner to develop prioritization for land conservation in Big Sky with an eye towards reducing human/wildlife conflict.

(D) Wetland Monitoring—implement a monitoring tool to capture the long term trend in wetland condition and function in Gallatin County. This consisted of engaging community members and citizen scientists to collect information regarding wetland condition and function. Additionally, outreach focused on community events, tours, hikes, public presentations, newspaper articles, social media, and education materials.

(E) Climate Science—work with Extension Faculty at a statewide and regional level to improve climate science outreach and education. This consisted of working with Extension faculty and partners on the development of outreach and education events and materials for use to communicating climate science and adaptation.
A Volunteer Coordinator’s Experience

Evan Barrientos spent the summer recruiting and training volunteers for Wetland Environment Teams (WET).

I was drawn to this position by the potential to engage people in natural resource management through hands-on experience. In my eyes, raising public understanding is the most impactful way to address these natural resource issues. Coordinating volunteers for WET showed a new and exciting way to do this through citizen science.

Volunteer programs provide excellent opportunities to connect people to local issues, raise community support for them, and provide personal learning experiences, all while increasing an organization’s capacity. As a volunteer, you see first-hand the realities of an issue, get connected to people working to resolve it, and learn new skills.

During my time with MSU Extension I conducted dozens of wetland surveys in order to prepare the protocol for volunteers. Already very familiar with natural resource management and conservation, the surveys still changed the way I look at a landscape. For example, when looking at a road, I now can’t help but visualize the flow of water that it blocks, redirects, and channelizes through a culvert, likely adding sediment in the process. After training 24 volunteers, leading six hikes, giving four presentations, writing nine blog posts, and creating a wetland video series, I could recite the values of wetlands in my sleep. But what mattered to me most was seeing other people learn these things too.

Our volunteers were students, parents, professionals, and retirees, but they all brought enthusiasm to the project. These people enjoyed spending three hours in a wetland completing a complicated survey, and I think that the beauty of the survey is that it helps people see and think about things that they wouldn’t normally. Most residents love Gallatin County and they want to do something good for it. Wetlands Environment Teams and its volunteers have created an excellent way for Extension to serve Gallatin County’s residents and for residents to serve the county.

A Summer Technician’s Experience

Savanna Stendahl spent the summer on various projects. Her work with aquatic invasive species was supported by a DNRC Aquatic Invasive Species Grant. The project worked within areas identified by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks as priority survey areas. Known populations of aquatic invasive species species have been located in and adjacent to the region. Prevention and early detection and rapid response (EDRR) are important tools in controlling populations of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

Through this grant she surveyed portions of the Missouri and Madison Rivers. The Missouri River was surveyed from Toston Dam to Indian Flats (22 miles) and the Madison River from Raynold’s Pass Fishing Access to Valley Garden Fishing Access (49 miles). Additionally, Ruby Reservoir, Quake Lake and a series of ponds in Bozeman, Belgrade, and Big Sky were surveyed. Savanna surveyed for Eurasian watermilfoil, curly leaf pondweed, zebra mussel, quagga mussel, and New Zealand Mudsnail.

“Many of the boat launches were full of other boaters. Many boaters would ask us what we were doing when we were looking for New Zealand Mudsnails off the ramps. It was interesting how concerned many of the fellow boaters were, yet I rarely saw anyone actually checking their boats for hitchhiker weeds. Many invasive weeds can survive days out of the water and don’t need much to set up roots in new areas underlining the importance of checking your boats each time you take them out and put them in the water. “
One of the most enjoyable teaching experiences for Agriculture Agent Emily Lockard was when she led a Rangeland Plant Identification walk. Extension partnered with Gallatin Valley Land Trust on their Discovery Walk series to use local trails as a place for fun educational walks. Over 20 individuals came on the walk to learn how to identify grasses, forbs and shrubs. Lockard identified plants, spoke about grazing management, the value of different plants for natural ecosystem value as well as grazing value.

New and beginning farmers are important to agriculture in Gallatin County as the average age of farmers and ranchers continues to increase. To meet the needs of these new farmers and ranchers, for the second year, Lockard offered workshops based on the Planning for On-Farm Success workbook. Three separate workshops were offered: financial management; marketing and land access; and financing and land access. Participants gained tools to help create agricultural business plans. They also became more connected to local resources that can assist them as they develop and manage their agricultural businesses.

Working with the Gallatin County Weed Department, Lockard finalized two Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grants to help control noxious weeds on private land. Two areas were identified to contain noxious weeds, and with willing participants we were able to help landowners start or expand their current control efforts.

Yearly workshops and gatherings continue to be popular events. The annual Crop School has an attendance of 80, the Beef Producers Educational meeting also has an attendance of 80, the Beef Producers Annual Banquet tops out at 220 and the Annual Beef Producers and Farm Bureau Summer Picnic rounds out at 40. Producers hear presentations such as this summer’s talk by Rachel Endecott, Beef Extension Specialist on the Veterinary Feed Directive. These important events help producers receive the information they need to improve their management.
Small Acreage

The growing demographic of small acreage management is a large part of the job in Gallatin County. Working with Natural Resources Extension Agent Brad Bauer, Lockard organized the third annual small acreage management course facilitated by the Gallatin Extension office. With 20 participants, it was the largest class to date. Speakers were brought in from MSU Extension, Gallatin County Weed District, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Natural Resources and Conservation Service, Fish Wildlife and Parks, and the Gallatin Local Water District. Participants learn methods for managing their land, resources that can help them accomplish goals, and how to create a management plan for their property. On the final night they presented their management plans. Many follow-up after the class by requesting a site visit from Lockard or Bauer. While Lockard and Bauer both perform many small acreage site visits to those that haven’t attended a class, the class gives a multidimensional education to those that wish to actively manage their land.

Master Gardener Classes

Master Gardener classes in Gallatin County continue to be very popular. Nearly 100 participants in the Level 1 and Level 2 classes performed volunteer work in the community. Volunteer opportunities include the Master Gardener booth on Saturdays at the Gallatin Valley Farmers Market, working with local non-profits to design and maintain their gardens, assisting with workshops and helping to maintain educational gardens.

Plant Clinic

This year, funding allows us to hire part-time staff to work at the Gallatin Extension office Plant Clinic. Dara Palmer, Assistant Master Gardener coordinator, worked Tuesday and Thursday afternoons in the Gallatin County Extension office. Palmer answered phone calls, assisted walk in clients, responded to questions via email and helped to facilitate five workshops. The workshops held this summer helped to supplement knowledge of Master Gardeners and other clients to improve their horticulture skills.

Canning Classes

This year we held three canning workshops: hot water bath canning; pressure canning; and drying and freezing preservation. Partnering with the MSU Dietetic Internship program for the second year was very successful. With 25 participants in the workshops, we were able to promote safe preservation of local foods while offering teaching experience to the dietetic interns.
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)

Adult Education Series: Eating Smart, Being Active

The SNAP-Ed program provides lessons to adults as well as youth on understanding MyPlate (the nutrition guidelines set by the USDA) and physical activity. The goal of the program is to not only to provide direct education, but also to create community environments where making the healthy choice is the easy choice. Working with committees and schools, the program manager provides knowledge and assistance to address the needs of low-income populations. They will continue to work toward fostering healthy environments where those on a budget work, play, eat, learn, live, and shop. The program devotes time towards meeting with services around town that are already serving this population and collaborating to bring the educational series to them. With specialized lessons and teaching tools, the program manager travels to multiple locations for recruiting and teaching.

The adult curriculum includes ways to plan and shop for a healthy, balanced diet while on a budget. Classes have been held at the Bozeman Senior Center, Community Café, and various other locations throughout Gallatin and Park Counties. The lessons include information on nutrition facts label reading, identifying whole grains, and why each food group is so important. With continued community interest, the program manager continues to provide adult education in Gallatin and Park Counties.

Online Resources

Please check out the website BuyEatLiveBetter.org for recipes, meal planning tips, and physical activity ideas, as well as the information to sign up for local, public classes. A Facebook Page and Pinterest have been added this year to provide digital content, especially to those who have completed the class, and want a consistent source of research-based information about eating and living healthy.

Contact Us

Emily Lockard
Agriculture Extension Agent; Department Head
Brad Bauer
Natural Resources Extension Agent & Extension Climate Science Team Chair
Kelton Jensen
4-H Extension Agent; Youth Development
Theodore Baker
Mentoring Partnership Program Coordinator
Kaitlin Robertson
SNAP-Ed Program Manager
JaNaie’ Veca
Administrative Assistant
Danielle Jones
Program Assistant

Gallatin County Extension
903 North Black Ave, Bozeman MT, 59715
Phone (406) 582-3280
E-mail gallatin@montana.edu
Web www.gallatinextension.com

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