Welcome to Broadwater County

MSU Extension in Broadwater County is a three-way partnership between Broadwater County, Montana State University and the United States Department of Agriculture. This partnership provides educational programs in the areas of Agriculture/Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, Community Development and Family Consumer Sciences. The office houses one full-time Extension agent and a part-time administrative assistant.

Broadwater County is a fast growing county with a population of 5,936. The county encompasses 796,000 acres of agricultural land, small acreage subdivisions, rural communities and range or forested land. About 45% of the county is public land, making the area a popular choice for recreation. Primary industries include agriculture, manufacturing, mining and services. Townsend is the county seat and home to the MSU Extension office.

Bitterroot flowers in the Big Belt Mountains of eastern Broadwater County.
Welcome New Office Staff

In May, Tammy Rauser joined her husband in retirement after nearly nine years with the county including over two years with MSU Extension. In July, we welcomed the new Administrative Assistant, Katria Shindoll. Shindoll grew up on a farm in Milton-Freewater, Oregon, that had a variety of animals, a garden and hay fields. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Visual Communication Design and a minor in Journalism from Eastern Washington University. She lives with her husband in Townsend with their two dogs, two guardian dogs, two cats and their herd of 20 black Angus cross cattle. In her free time, she enjoys photography, baking and movies. Shindoll jumped in head first, just weeks before the fair, and hasn’t slowed down since! Welcome Katria!

For the first time, the office had the opportunity to host a summer intern. Mikayla Hudson, a senior at Montana State University, joined the office from May to August to assist with summer programming. Mikayla is a native of Potomac, MT, and a 10-year 4-H alumnus of Missoula County. Throughout the summer, she coordinated the insect crop monitoring program, chaperoned 4-H Camp and Congress, taught youth educational programs, assisted at the fair and jumped in wherever needed. With the changes in office staff, she was a welcomed addition to the team for the summer!

Sustainable Lands in Broadwater County

MSU Extension in Broadwater County provides services in the areas of agriculture, natural resources, and horticulture to a unique mix of commercial agricultural producers, small acreage landowners, and home gardeners. A diverse selection of programs was offered in 2018 including rancher roundtables, crop school, Master Gardener class, and water rights workshops. MSU Extension also provided services for forage and soil analysis, weed management, nitrate testing, pest identification, and crop insect monitoring.

The county continues to see an increase in subdivisions and small acreage landowners. Extension agent Allison Kosto provided one-on-one support and site visits in several subdivisions to help landowners with weed management, revegetation, and grazing management. A landowner in Lazy HM Estates in northern Broadwater County shared his experience working with the office, “My wife and I recently built a house in Broadwater County and Allison has been extremely helpful in educating us on noxious weeds versus other wild foliage and providing recommendations for herbicides and other forms of weed control to manage vegetation on our property. Having a resource like Allison is critical if we hope to be effective in managing noxious and invasive species.” A landowner in the Rolling Glen subdivision in southern Broadwater County credited a 70% reduction in weeds as a result of utilizing the services and resources of MSU Extension in Broadwater County.
Gardens & Backyards

Improving the home garden continues to be an area of interest in the county. Several programs were provided this year including Master Gardener class, fruit tree care and pruning, and the Backyards of Broadwater garden tour. Additionally, MSU Extension agent Allison Kosto responded to more than 65 inquiries on lawn, garden, and tree care in the county, assisting with issues including soil analysis, nutrient deficiencies, pest identification, tree care, and gardening.

In the spring, Master Gardener Level 1 was offered. Thirteen individuals successfully completed the course. Many participants choose to participate in the volunteer service portion of the program by assisting with school programs, working with the Townsend Tree Board, pruning trees for the Heritage Orchard Program, and serving as a 4-H leader. Together, they provided nearly 75 hours of community service. Upon evaluation, participants indicated they will make the following changes because of the program:

- use integrated pest management, read pesticide labels, use more efficient watering, make informed choices on how and where to plant vegetables, and informed lawn care.

Backyards of Broadwater is a program organized by local Master Gardeners. This event is a self-guided yard and garden tour highlighting community members with unique and innovative landscapes. It also provides an opportunity to network with others and share lessons learned. This year the tour featured eight gardens on the east side of Canyon Ferry Lake and around Townsend. Proceeds were donated to the school’s Wyse Acres garden, Townsend Garden Club & Study, and Townsend Tree Board. Nearly 70 people attended the event.

RIGHT: Patrick Plantenberg teaches pruning techniques to Master Gardener class participant Jan McAlpine.

BELOW: Broadwater County experienced a large amount of winter kill in alfalfa this year. MSU Extension provided guidance to help growers make management decisions.
4-H Grows Here

Growing by 40% in the last four years, Broadwater County 4-H had a record enrollment of 125 members in organized clubs. An additional 23 youth participated in the Babysitter Training and National 4-H Youth Science Day organized by MSU Extension.

The county program is supported by 41 certified volunteers who lead 4-H clubs, organize project work, serve on committees and coordinate events and activities. On average, leaders spent eight hours per month volunteering for the 4-H program. This commitment equates to a value of $87,325 of time given by 4-H volunteers to support the youth of Broadwater County.

Through 4-H, members learn life skills including leadership, communication, critical thinking, goal setting and healthy choices. In their 4-H stories, youth shared how they have grown during the past year:

“…I don’t mind what color ribbon I receive because in my mind I am already a winner because I raised my animal into the showring.”
- Cassidy Flynn, 11 years old

“Every year of my 4-H experience brings a new life lesson. … There were things that I had to prepare for, and when they finally arrived, they came and went in a blink of an eye. From this, I learned to not wish things away.”
- Kadyn Braaten, 15 years old

“…the skills and career-preparedness that it [the 4-H program] gives us is one of the biggest impacts that will last 4ever.”
- Taylor Noyes, 16 years old

“I know that the memories and skills I have learned through 4-H will continue to benefit me for the rest of my life, and I hope that I can someday give back to this wonderful orga”
- Tyler Noyes,