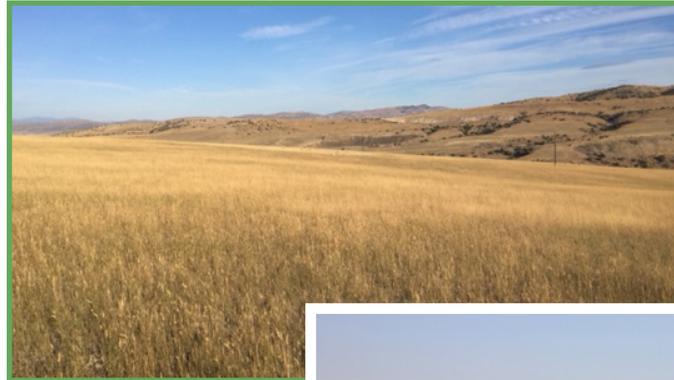




Welcome to Gallatin County

Gallatin County has a population growth rate of 10.06%, currently estimated at 107,810. With a high growth rate, the landscape of Gallatin County is in continuous change. Gallatin County MSU Extension is positioned to meet the current needs of the population while continuing to gather resources and partnerships to meet future needs of Gallatin County. In 2018 Gallatin County MSU Extension was once again fully staffed with the addition of Dominique Woodham serving as the Natural Resource Agent.



ABOVE: range monitoring on a property site visit.

RIGHT: a noxious weed seed-free forage inspection site.

Photos by Josh Bilbao.



Invasive weed tours, crop school and small acreage management

A new annual invasive grass took center stage this year in Gallatin County. MSU Extension agriculture agent Josh Bilbao worked diligently with the Gallatin County Weed District, MSU researcher Jane Mangold, and the Gallatin Valley Land Trust to host two tours to highlight a grass named *Ventenata dubia*. Tours were attended by more than 100 individuals. The tours informed attendees how to identify this new grass and what strategies can help mitigate its invasion. The second tour for Gallatin County livestock producers, led to five individuals finding the annual grass on their property and a small group was encouraged to apply for a Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant to help with control in 2019.

The annual Crop School continues to gain popularity with more than 90 attendees in 2018. This collaboration between Broadwater, Gallatin and Madison/Jefferson provides ag producers with information on current and relevant topics in agriculture.

Small acreage management is a continued need in Gallatin County. Bilbao hosts a small acreage management lecture series and made site visits to more than 40 landowners who requested land management assistance. Site visits often included identifying noxious weeds, advising on best vegetation/species for the landowners needs, and helping develop a site management plan to strategically reach property improvement goals.

Horticulture and Natural Resource Education

Horticulture

The Master Gardener horticulture program was very popular in Gallatin County again this year.

Almost 100 participants in Level I and Level II attended the courses, and also provided hundreds of hours of volunteer work. Volunteers manned a Master Gardener booth at the Gallatin Valley farmer's market while others were helping local gardens and non-profits with labor and educational needs.



One big project that began in fall, 2018, was the conversion of the lawn at Gallatin County MSU Extension into a large demonstration garden. The garden will provide the citizens of Gallatin County a place for hands-on learning about gardens and orchards that can succeed in our climate. This garden will also showcase Montana native grasses, forbs and agricultural commodities grown in the state.

MSU Extension agriculture agent Josh Bilbao facilitated and presented at a pollinators workshop in Bozeman in early 2018. The workshop introduced native and non-native pollinators to those who attended, as well as strategies for homeowners and land managers to attract more pollinators to their properties.

Garden management advice was highly sought in 2018. Bilbao was called to speak to the Brackett Creek women's club with an introduction to garden management, where 17 individuals learned about soil health/management and what vegetable species grow best in the Brackett Creek area.

Grant-funded programs help reduce wildfire risk

The Gallatin County MSU Extension natural resources education program is a diverse program that is very active with local, statewide and multi-state education. The program is 100% grant-funded, with grants helping determine the focus of education and outreach efforts. Grant funding is from various sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Montana Department of Natural Resources, Montana Farm Bureau Foundation, Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, the Northern Plains Climate Hub, and the National Science Foundation. Highlighted impacts include:

- Management of a cost-share reimbursement program providing over \$350,000 to private property owners in Gallatin, Park and Madison County who are taking steps to reduce wildfire risk through forest management

BELOW: MSU Extension agriculture agent Josh Bilbao teaches a class about native pollinators.

RIGHT: a Master Gardener project to clean up a flower bed.

Photos by Josh Bilbao.





LEFT: a round baler fire in West Park County. Photo by Dominique Woodham.

ABOVE: Dominique Woodham.

- Outreach and education for agricultural decision-making during climate variability, provided through membership on the MSU Extension Climate Science Team.
- Design of the Fire Adapted Montana Network and delivery of collaborative wildfire outreach and education programs.
- Production and distribution of Montana Wildfire Information Directories to improve capacity of Extension and local emergency response members to serve landowners before, during and after wildfire.
- Creation and distribution of 100 Wildfire Preparedness Kits to Improve Agricultural Sustainability; other state Extension programs expressed interest to adopt the idea for other natural disasters.
- Creation and offering of new pollinator and honeybee-specific outreach and education programs.

INTRODUCING THE NATURAL RESOURCES EXTENSION AGENT

Dominique 'Domo' Woodham joined Gallatin County MSU Extension in January 2018 after working in wildland fire management for the USDA Forest Service on various national forests in Montana, California, Nevada, Arizona and Wyoming, and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, in Crow Agency, MT.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in forestry (concentration on range resources management) from the University of Montana in 2007, and is currently completing courses for a Master of Science degree in Agriculture Education through Iowa State University (with emphasis in youth natural resources non-formal education). She is also nearing completion of the Master Beekeeper Certificate Program through the University of Montana.

As a former University of Montana Griz athlete, Woodham still enjoys trail running and hiking. She has been a beekeeper for three years and keeps bees at her home in Sweet Grass County. She enjoys travel and exploring new places, however most trips are to Lewis County, Washington where she and her husband help manage a century-old family farm.



4-H Youth Development

Communication Skills Through 4-H

Communication skills are vital to the future success of our youth. Whether through an interview, speech or simply giving directions, the ability to communicate thoughts and ideas to others in a clear and concise manner is important. Gallatin County 4-H helps youth grow their communication skills through the annual Communication Day contest and record book interviews.

In the past three years, participation in the Communication Day contest has gone from 30 youth to over 60 youth. Youth can select to compete in the following contests: speech, demonstration/illustrated talk, career communication, video, commercial or promotional package. The quality of presentations has increased through workshops dedicated to teaching communication skills. Gallatin County 4-H has been well-represented at the state Montana 4-H Communication contest, with youth finishing in first and second place in different events.



Survey results from 4-H member participants in Gallatin County Communication Day:

- 100% indicated they developed greater communication skills through 4-H
- 96% indicated they improved their ability to prepare presentations
- 80% indicated they are willing to speak in front of groups



2018 Gallatin County 4-H Communication Day Winners. Photo by Kathy Cheney.

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