



Welcome to Sanders County

MSU Extension in Sanders County is a three-way partnership between Sanders 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 and Consumer Sciences. Sanders County is located in Northwestern Montana. It is bordered on the west by Idaho's Panhandle and is Montana's 18th most populous county with a population of about 11,336 (2015 estimate). The county was established in 1905 and named after Wilbur Fisk Sanders, pioneer and U.S. Senator from Montana. Sanders County encompasses 2,790 square miles and just over 1.7 million acres. There is a diverse mix of agricultural land, small acreage subdivisions, rural communities and range or forested land. The economy of Sanders County is specialized in agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining, quarrying, oil, gas extraction, and construction, which employ more people than what would be

expected in a location of this size. The largest industries in Sanders County are healthcare & social assistance, construction, and retail trade. Sanders County includes the city of Thompson Falls as the county seat, Plains, and the town of Hot Springs. The Clark Fork River, a tributary of the Columbia, runs the length of the valley in Sanders County. The county also encompasses the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness and two National Forests. MSU Extension provides a unique set of services and educational resources to meet the diverse and changing needs of local clientele. Sanders County MSU Extension is supported by Commissioners Carol Brooker, Anthony Cox, and Glen Magera.

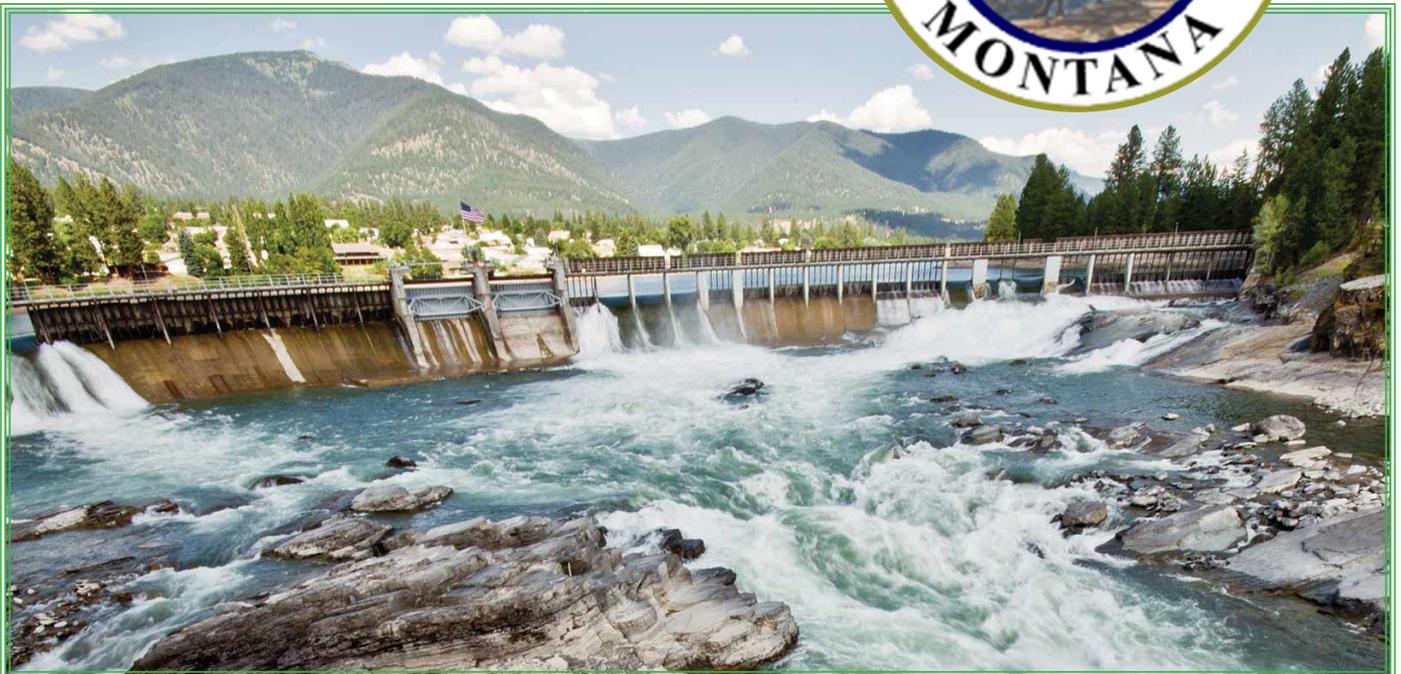


Photo courtesy of Glacier Country Regional Tourism Commission

Sanders County 4-Hers visit Hopkins County, TX

In July 2018, Sanders County 4-H members traveled to Hopkins County, TX, for their first outbound 4-H interstate exchange with five youth and one adult. An interstate exchange program is an exciting opportunity for youth and adults to experience the geography, culture and heritage of a local community of 4-H youth and leaders with a common 4-H identity yet potentially different perspectives. Participants learn how states are similar but also how they are different, such as weather conditions, geography, local industry, and history of each state. For example, some states are better suited than others for agriculture and produce a large part of our nation's food. Other states boast beautiful beaches and provide places for recreation. For one week, youth learned about the Hopkins County 4-H Program and the livelihoods of citizens throughout the county. Youth were guided through Caddo Lake in Jefferson, toured a local dairy museum, the historic courthouse and heritage park, fed calves and milked cows at a 1,000 cow dairy, and played at Splash Kingdom. They visited Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse, and the Arches National Park in Moab along the way as well. Youth

were surprised at the many differences in programs between the states such as Texas 4-H having several major state livestock shows in Fort Worth, Dallas, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and San Angelo. Members created new and lasting friendships. Youth from Sanders County will be fundraising to travel for future exchange experiences.

Canning Class Teaches Students How To Safely Preserve

Community members were eager to learn new skills for preserving their harvest during the three-week canning series: You Can! held in May of 2018. This series included learning basic principles of food safety, avoiding foodborne illnesses, water bath canning and canning in a pressure canner. As participants were just beginning to get their local gardens started, this class came at an ideal time to prepare for the bounty the gardens would produce.

Participants varied from those who frequently canned and were in need of a refresher to those who had never before canned. All participants learned how and why low acid and high acid foods are preserved using different methods. Students were able to bring family heirloom recipes to class and analyze them to determine if they were safe under current safety standards.

Master Food Preserver, Sarah Cooper, served as the guest instructor after completing a food



4-H members toured Caddo Lake during their visit. Photo by Juli Thurston.



Master Food Preserver Sarah Cooper. Photo by Jeanette Allday



4-H members toured the local historic county courthouse in Sulphur Springs. Photo by Juli Thurston.

preservation instructor class offered through MSU Extension. Cooper walked students through canning green beans and triple berry jam. Each student left with a knowledge of proper canning tools, canning supplies, tips for successful canning and some delicious products to start their own supply of home preserved foods.

SNAP-Ed Reaches Families County Wide

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) offers classes teaching the importance of good nutrition, physical activity, food resource management and food safety. Classes are free of charge and available to SNAP eligible adults and elementary students in first, third and fifth grades.

This year, 113 SNAP-Ed classes were conducted, reaching 212 adults and children. Classes were taught in partnership with a variety of organizations including a community hospital, mental health center and five school districts. In addition, a class was held for adults who access a local food bank but often return items like dried beans and rice for lack of knowing how to cook these types of foods. In class, participants were taught knife skills and how to prepare dried foods, in addition to basic nutrition and food safety.

Participants showed positive behavior changes in a variety of areas including improving their diet, increasing physical activity and putting into practice safer food handling principles. Students have reported leading their families in making healthier choices like purchasing lower fat dairy products and whole grains instead of refined grains.

In addition to classes, SNAP-Ed works within the community to develop changes that make the healthy choice the easy choice for community



Source: snaped.fns.usda.gov

members. Current campaigns in this regard include partnering with a local school that participates in Montana's Harvest of the Month program, exposing the students to locally-grown products, helping a local school district begin school wellness policies, and assisting a local farmer's market in accepting SNAP cards.

Preserving Family Heritage

Sanders County MSU Extension through partnership with Kaniksu Land Trust and Idaho Forest Group hosted a 'Ties to the Land Initiative' workshop for local landowners. The Ties to the Land Initiative assists landowners in addressing communication, emotional and legal aspects of succession planning. A succession plan is a more effective means for land owners to pass on their legacy than a traditional estate plan. An estate plan is just one step in succession planning. A good estate plan will ensure heirs receive the land with lowered tax obligations. Good succession planning is a way of building shared vision and passion for the land among the current owners and the heirs, as well as passing on the land with reduced estate taxes. We recognize there are differences among family members' values, goals, and skills, and help owners form an effective plan to keep land in the family or identify alternative paths when continued family ownership is not an option. The workshop provided the essential tools and resources to help landowners make the decisions necessary to achieve objectives and pass their land to succeeding generations. During the week concluding the session, many participants requested another workshop, so they could bring additional members of their family as well as friends and neighbors who would be interested in the tools provided. They had already started implementing what they had learned during the workshop.

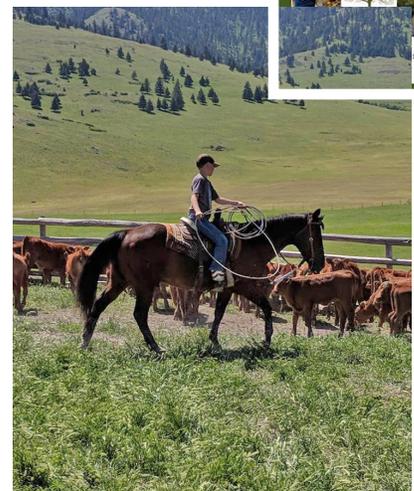
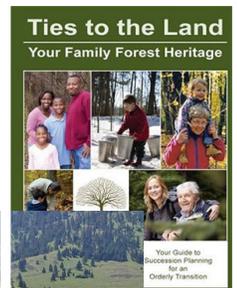


Photo by Tammy McAllister

Assisting Landowners with the War on Weeds

With the vast weed and invasive grass infestations and the difficulty in controlling these populations, much time is spent by the local agriculture Extension agent to assist landowners and producers in managing their plant communities on their property. Advice is provided on weed identification, management and integrated control methods in pastures, hay fields, range, garden and yards. In addition, the agent coordinates the county pesticide education program under the umbrella of Montana State University Extension and Montana Department of Agriculture. This education program promotes the proper use of pesticides to protect public health and the environment. This includes

providing educational resources regarding pesticide use, pest management, reading the label, pesticide law, health, safety, and the environment. Programs support all applicators, businesses and homeowners by combining educational resources and knowledge from scientists, governmental agencies and the public. Currently Sanders County has 74 applicators whose license will expire this year. Pest Management continuing education workshop opportunities were provided in October and an Initial training for new applicators will be offered in April of 2019. Landowners can benefit greatly from implementing weed control practices, such as enhanced property value, improving wildlife habitat, providing increased forage for horses and other livestock, and increase profits through higher yields.

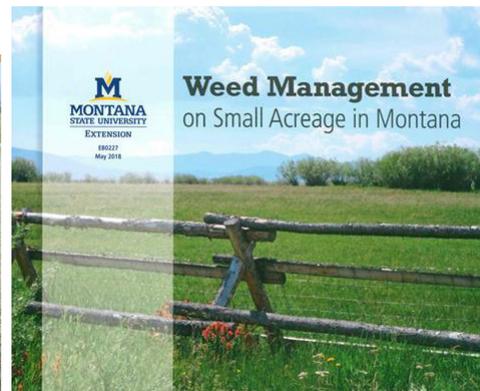


Photo by Jane Mangold

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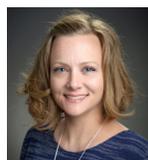
EXTENSION

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