

Lake County



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Against a background of the snowy Mission Mountains, the Dupuis barn stands amidst harvested potato fields, by Breton Homewood.

Montana State University Extension partners with Lake County to provide quality, continued education programs and services by offering our residents everything that's available at the university through MSU Extension in Ronan. Extension responds to citizens and stakeholders by developing and implementing educational programs that address the needs and issues of our community.

Lake County MSU Extension targets goals and objectives that enhance agriculture, natural resource management, community economics, family and consumer science and 4-H youth development. The following statements summarize the program goals of Extension in Lake County.

Prepare youth with life skills for the future so they can be productive, positive, and contributing adults.

Supply the trainings, experience, and activities that develop youth and adult leaders necessary for a viable and engaged 4-H program.

Ensure sustainable agricultural enterprises on multiple levels.

Encourage healthier lifestyles and prevention of chronic diseases through promotion of positive health-related behaviors and self-care.

Enhance natural resource conservation and management by achieving defined objectives.

4-H members learn by doing, guided by hardworking volunteers

For more than 90 years, 4-H has been a presence in Lake County, educating young people and developing new generations of leaders and professionals, in all fields. First geared towards agriculture, the 4-H program continues to adapt to the times, giving kids throughout the county countless opportunities and experiences, and maintaining a strong dedication to young people's critical needs that help them become successful.

Lake County 4-H Program by numbers:

- 227 - enrolled youth ages 5-19
- 30 - enrolled volunteer leaders
- 76 - different educational projects youth participated in during 2020
- 12 - educational workshops offered to youth in 2020
- 3 - average number of projects completed by youth in 2020

Current Top Ten 4-H Projects in Lake County:

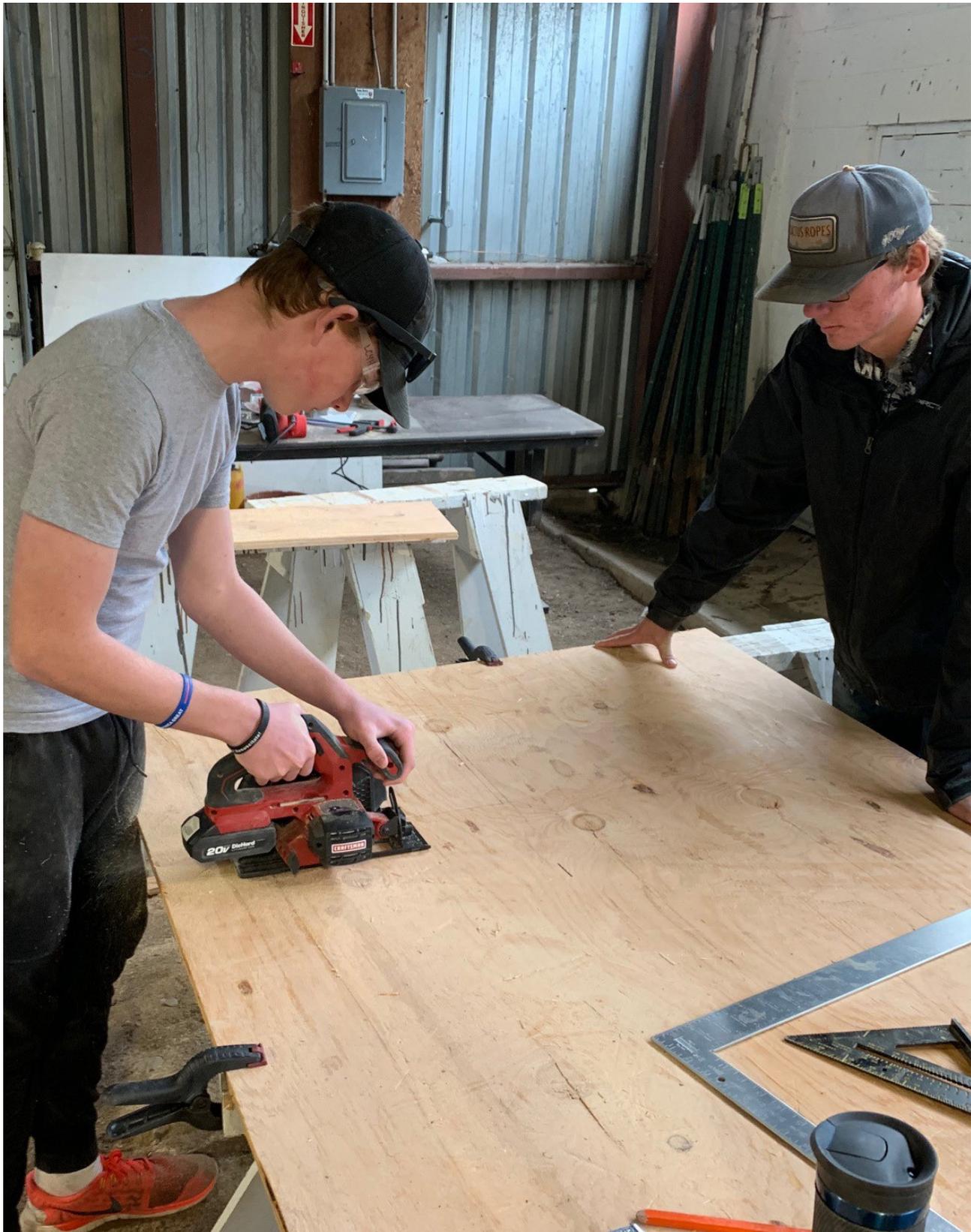
- Shooting Sports
- Market Swine
- Market Beef
- Breeding Beef
- Cloverbuds
- Sheep
- Sewing/Needleworking
- Woodworking
- Photography
- Visual Arts

4-H programs wouldn't have nearly the reach or impact that they do without volunteer involvement. Thirty volunteers served as certified leaders for 4-H clubs and projects throughout Lake County and contributed more than 1,000 hours of time during 2020 despite Covid-19 restrictions. Volunteers helped organize and run club meetings, provided project instruction, as well as coordinating and contributing to events, fundraising for activities, record keeping, training and numerous other leadership opportunities. Most importantly, adult volunteers offer a caring adult in the lives of 4-H youth. Monetarily, the dollar value of the hours contributed by these adult volunteers, according to an Independent Sector wage estimator is more than \$45,000.

Beekeeping with Family and Consumer Sciences on the Flathead Reservation

Teaming with Flathead Reservation MSU Extension in Polson, Lake County MSU Extension Agent Breton Homewood initiated an afterschool program aimed at teaching Flathead Reservation youth about beekeeping in Elmo, Pablo, and Arlee. Homewood, a third-generation beekeeper, is working with afterschoolers to teach them entrepreneurship as well as pollination and sustainable gardening. The project kicked off in April 2020 with the hiving of the bees. Tribal youth painted beehives and learned about how to bee keep under instruction from Homewood, and his colleague, Brenda Richey. It is the project's goal to have permanent programs in place in each of the tribal schools, giving youth access to a fun project that teaches them skills to utilize outside of the classroom. While elements of the project have slowed due to the onset of Covid-19, Homewood has since adapted his courses to Facebook live and online videos to help the youth continue their education about honeybees. The future of the project will teach tribal youth how to market and sell honey, as well as make bee-related products such as soaps, candles, and lip balms.





Previous Page: (top) Extension Agent Breton Homewood unloads hives in Elmo, by Bernie Azure; **(bottom)** Pistols & Ponytails leader Spring McKee lists awards earned by club members during 2020's 4-H Achievement Day Program, by Berl Tiskus; **This Page:** 4-H Ambassadors Micaiah Mitchell, left, and Logan Smith cut plywood to build mini libraries, by Breton Homewood

Giving back to the community during the time of Covid-19

Lake County 4-H Youth Ambassadors teamed up with MSU Extension to bring mini, free libraries to the county. The project, aimed at providing a community service, was funded by a grant from the Montana Department of Agriculture and the Lake County 4-H Council. Through the efforts of assembly and donations, Lake County Ambassadors and MSU Extension Agent Breton Homewood have built four of the eight libraries and are well on their way to installing them across the county.

Mini libraries, while often thought of as a free book box, are also used as donation points for canned goods, toiletries, and helpful items for the community. The project's goal is to provide the Lake County community a chance to beautify their towns, help with literacy, and provide needed goods throughout the county. The mini libraries also work well in the ongoing dilemma of Covid-19, as they give 4-Hers a way to help their community while practicing social distancing.

By the project's end, there will be one mini library in each community in the greater Lake/County area, stocked and supplied by our 4-H youth groups.

Lake County Staff



Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.

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