

# Gallatin County



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*Bridger Mountain range with "M" landmark in Bozeman, Summer 2022 by Molly Yurdana.*

**G**allatin County has been one of the most rapidly growing counties in Montana over the last decade with a population of approximately 123,000 in an area of only 2,632 square miles. Over 53,000 residents live within the city limits of Bozeman, also home to Montana State University. As part of Montana State University and the land-grant university system, Gallatin County MSU Extension provides unbiased, research-based university resources to meet needs identified by the people in the areas of agriculture, natural resources, horticulture and 4-H youth development.

With the urbanization of the county and many new residents from other states, Gallatin County MSU Extension has been shifting programming in response to community needs. The work done by Gallatin County MSU Extension could not be done without the support of MSU and the Government of Gallatin County. Their support of our office and personnel has allowed us to expand and improve programming throughout the county, specifically funding a full-time 4-H Program Assistant position in 2022 to aid our growing 4-H program.

## Change in Leadership

In March of 2022, after almost a decade with Gallatin County MSU Extension, JaNaie' Finn (Godin), former agent, transitioned into a role with the Montana 4-H Foundation as their Business Operations Manager. With the Gallatin County 4-H Agent position vacant, Agriculture/Horticulture Agent Molly Yurdana took over the county 4-H program in the interim. Prior to becoming an agent in 2021, Yurdana was both an intern and the 4-H Assistant under Godin's guidance.

After a jam-packed summer juggling all Extension programming, Yurdana made the decision to officially transition to the 4-H Youth Development Agent. With a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Education, and as an FFA Alumni and MSU Leadership Fellow, Yurdana is excited to be back working with local youth programming. She jumped in to organize and oversee the 4-H/FFA events of the county fair, assisted with 4-H Summer Camp, and taught various community-wide youth workshops. Furthermore, as mentioned above, county funding was secured to increase the 4-H Program Assistant position from part-time to full-time for FY23. Colyn Wiening

has filled that position since June of 2021, providing support to the 4-H programs, families, and 4-H financials. Keep an eye out for Gallatin County 4-H staff at local events throughout the year.

## Breaking Records with Generous Community Support

In the 2021-2022 4-H year, the Gallatin County 4-H program had 520 active youth members ages 5-18, enrolled in more than 50 educational projects and 15 clubs, with 107 adult volunteers. 4-H programming returned fully this year, and youth could get involved in various county-wide events such as Animal Quality Assurance Workshops, Communication Day Contests, county cooking contests (Stir Ups), outreach activities, 4-H Summer Camp, and various state 4-H events.

The Gallatin 4-H livestock programs continued to grow exponentially at the Big Sky Country State Fair which is held annually in July. There were 315 4-H/FFA youth members that entered animal and/or still exhibits at the 2022 Fair. The Gallatin 4-H/FFA Market Livestock Auction set county records this year by selling 344 animal lots and grossing more than one million dollars for the second year in a row. The success of this program would not be possible without the generous support from our countless volunteers, donors, sponsors, community buyers and businesses that invest in the local youth in Gallatin County.

## Master Gardener Program Reinvigorated

Due to Covid restrictions, Gallatin County MSU Extension wasn't able to offer Master Gardener courses to the community for two years. While Molly Yurdana was the Agriculture/Horticulture Agent, she worked to reinvigorate Master Gardener within the Gallatin community. The Level 1 workshop series, held March-April, educated 56 participants, 35 of whom pursued official certifications by passing an exam and completing 20 horticulture-related volunteer hours within the community. The Level 2 course, held September-November, hosted 13 participants with avid home gardening or professional green industry experience. With the proximity to MSU's campus, Yurdana recruited outstanding specialists and faculty guest speakers who generously taught various topics for both levels of the curriculum. The Gallatin County Master Gardener volunteers work in various community and senior center gardens, at local farmers' market informational booths, or assist with city improvement projects.

## Cultivating Community Education

To reach the larger-scale agricultural producers of Gallatin County, Agent Molly Yurdana worked with various Agriculture Lenders to provide an educational luncheon for the Gallatin Beef Producer Association in the winter of 2022. With representatives from MSU Extension, Gallatin County Commission, and Montana Stockgrowers Association, speakers





**Previous Page: (top)** Master Gardener Level 1 lecture in Spring 2022, Museum of the Rockies - Bozeman by Molly Yurdana; **(bottom)** Thistle in alfalfa field, Bozeman Summer 2022; **This Page: (top)** Gallatin County MSU Extension Staff (pictured left to right: Colyn Wienen (4-H Program Assistant), Kari Ballenger (Administrative Assistant), Molly Yurdana (4-H Extension Agent), by Molly Yurdana; **(bottom)** 4-H Summer Camp participants - Bozeman Summer 2022 by Molly Yurdana

educated producers on local news in agriculture, strategies for grazing after drought, and addressed statewide challenges for cattle producers.

In February of 2022, Gallatin County MSU Extension offered programming to crop producers, agricultural businesses and industry employees through a tri-county Crop School seminar in conjunction with Broadwater and Madison/Jefferson counties. MSU Extension Specialists from various departments and a panel of local producers provided discussion on irrigation management during drought, forage nitrate concerns, utilizing cover crops, and strategies for using herbicides to avoid resistance in crops. Throughout 2022, Yurdana administered seven exams and licenses to landowners, certifying them as Private Applicators through the Pesticide Education Program, and conducted 13 hay field inspections, certifying 350 acres as Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage through the Montana Department of Ag program.

To serve urban and small-acreage clientele, the Gallatin County MSU Extension office provided services and resources in plant and insect identification, soil and nitrate testing, pasture and lawn management, and disease and abiotic diagnostics for home gardens, shrubs and trees. Just as in 2021, the Gallatin office saw an increase in client inquiries again in 2022 by phone, email, and/or physical samples brought into the office. Agent Molly Yurdana, with assistance from Admin Kari Ballenger, received more than 250 calls and/or emails from residents looking for assistance. Gallatin County MSU Extension collaborated with the Schutter Diagnostic Lab on 24 of the submitted samples and Midwest Labs on 28 soil tests for additional diagnostic services.

## Gallatin County Staff



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

**Molly Yurdana**

4-H Youth Development Extension Agent

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4-H Program Assistant

**Kari Ballenger**

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