

2022 MSU EXTENSION HIGHLIGHTS

Lewis & Clark County



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L to R, Shae Bruursema FCS/CD agent, Sophie Kolb Fair Assistant, Mat Walter Ag Agent, Chloe Lundquist SNAP-Ed Instructor, Lexi Foust Admin Support, photo by Logan Gustafsen.

Lewis and Clark County comprises Helena, East Helena, Augusta, Lincoln, Wolf Creek, and Craig. The county contains one of the larger urban environments with Helena's population of 32,000 making up less than half the total county population of 69,000. The Helena Valley is a large sweeping valley between the Big Belt Mountains and the Boulder Mountains. Wolf Creek is located along the Interstate 15 corridor, and Augusta rests against the Rocky Mountain front at the county's Northern Edge. Lincoln is a forested haven nestled amidst the Garnet Range to our West, with Craig to our East along the Missouri River. Lewis and Clark County has an agricultural foundation of cattle, sheep, and hay producers. We have a strong 4-H membership with 400 youth enrolled and 114 volunteers in over 19 clubs in the county.

New Family and Consumer Sciences/ Community Development Agent Shae Bruursema

Coming to MSU Extension from the Family & Consumer Sciences classroom, Shae Bruursema has been utilizing her connections with the schools to ensure FCS teachers know the information and resources MSU Extension can provide. In September, 12 FCS teachers from Lewis & Clark County and five surrounding counties met at Lewis & Clark County MSU Extension to receive an update from the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and hear Bruursema speak about how they can use MSU Extension in their classrooms. These educators learned about programs in food and nutrition, mental health, family finance, and leadership. In addition, Bruursema is also serving on the Financial Literacy Steering Committee through OPI to help develop standards for required Financial Education in Montana schools. She hopes to continue to bridge the gap between MSU Extension and FCS classrooms to ensure all ages have access to research-based education and information in Family & Consumer Sciences.

As a new agent, she has been working to create connections with the people in Lewis & Clark County communities. By attending local Chamber of Commerce meetings, Government Days, and volunteering for community events, she hopes she can better understand the individual needs of each diverse community. Since starting with MSU Extension, she has attended training in Ripple Effects Mapping, Teambuilding Activities and Strategies, Facilitating Uncomfortable and Difficult Conversations and Using Storytelling and Creativity in Leadership, in hopes of better serving the people in Lewis & Clark County once Community Development needs have been identified.

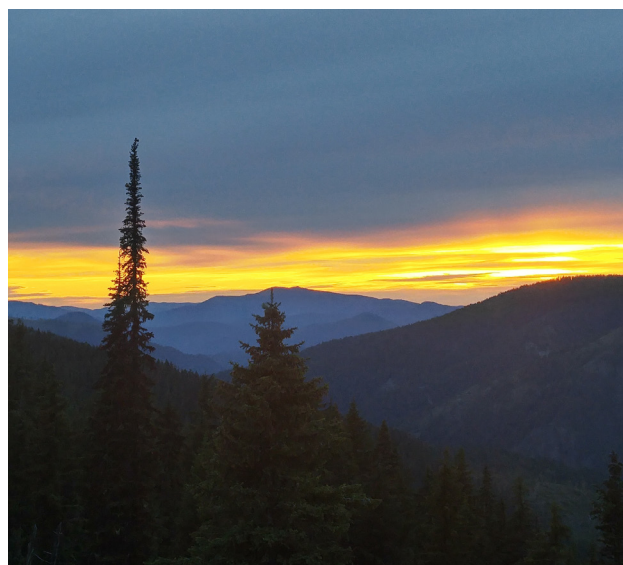
Double SNAP Dollar Coupons

Throughout the 2022 Helena Farmer's Market season, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) Instructor worked with the market to increase awareness and utilization of the Double SNAP Dollars (DSD) Program. The DSD Program, administered by the Community Food & Agriculture Coalition (CFAC), doubles the purchasing power of SNAP benefits at participating retailers. When SNAP recipients use benefits at participating retailers, they receive a dollar-for-dollar match that can be used to purchase fresh, local produce. Through a partnership with CFAC and MSU Extension's Nutrition Education Program, Buy Eat Live Better, SNAP recipients attending Buy Eat Live Better nutrition education classes can now receive a \$10 DSD coupon for each class they attend.

SNAP recipients who attended 'Eating Smart Being Active' and 'Creates' lessons taught by Lewis & Clark County's SNAP-Ed Instructor received a DSD coupon for each class attended during the 2022 Helena Farmer's Market season. In June 2022, after an online 'Eating Smart Being Active' series, the SNAP-Ed Instructor led a farmer's market tour for interested participants, and the first DSD coupon was used. Throughout the farmer's market season, 59 DSD coupons were distributed. The SNAP-Ed Instructor will continue to work with the Helena Farmer's Market and CFAC to increase awareness and utilization of the DSD Program during the 2023 market.

Mid-Mountain Pest Series

The Mid-Mountain Pest Education Series was a five-session pesticide applicator training held from January through March 2022. The series focused on providing applicators with subject matter beyond what is commonly found at most PAT continuing education programs. During past programs, applicators have indicated through evaluations that they would prefer to learn a greater variety of subjects. The series included presentations on weed control, vertebrate pest control, pasture management, range systems, entomology, and drought considerations. Six guest speakers were invited to present on fifteen subjects. Speakers included MSU Extension Specialists and Agents and partners from the Montana Department of Agriculture and the Lewis and Clark County Weed Department. The





Previous Page: (top) Strong People Program weights, by Mat Walter; **(bottom)** Scenic Views in Lewis and Clark County, by Jason Badger; **This Page:** Pesticide Education Specialist Cecil Tharp speaking at the Mid-Mountain Pest Series, by Mat Walter

Montana Private Applicator Training program requires license holders to obtain six continuing education credits over the course of five years. By ensuring that multiple opportunities are provided over three months, applicators have multiple chances to acquire their six credits. Our five-year cycle ends in 2024, and this program provided 15 credits. In total, 64 applicators attended the series, with 36 attending two or more classes to obtain six credits. This attendance is roughly half of Lewis and Clark County's 125 licensed applicators. The popularity and convenience of the programs mean they will be provided regularly for area applicators.

Lewis & Clark County Staff



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

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