

Glacier County



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Located in Glacier County Montana, St. Mary's Lake is an international tourist destination found in Glacier National Park, by Lisa Terry.

There are mountains. There are plains. Many regions can claim such rural landscapes, but Glacier County is unique among Montana's counties as this is where the Northern Great Plains meet the Rocky Mountains. For countless generations, the residents of the Blackfeet Nation have called this region the "Backbone of the world." With more than 150 mountain peaks rising above 8,000 feet, the name was aptly applied. And when you hear the phrase 'Going-to-the-Sun Road,' you have reached the place people from all over the world come to see the breathtaking beauty of Glacier National Park with their own eyes.

Encompassing 3,037 square miles, Glacier County is home to exceptional ranching, industrial, and recreational opportunities. Bordering 75 miles with our Canadian neighbors, Glacier's ranchers are winter-weathered and productive. Several thousand acres grow small grains, pulse crops, rangeland, and hay fields.

With the opening of the Glacier Wind Farm in 2009, our industrial base expanded significantly. Sharing space with neighboring Toole County, this facility generates 250 megawatts of power from 140 wind turbines. In addition,

several small, unincorporated towns dot the countryside, with the community of Cutbank serving as the county seat. Finally, the Blackfeet Nation tribal headquarters round out the diverse qualities of Glacier County.

Reimagining Rural participants win state award

Reimagining Rural is a program created by Montana State University for local volunteers and leaders passionate about creating vibrant, robust rural places. Participants are interested in revitalizing local communities. The group's mission is growing local capacity, learning about new ideas, connecting with others, and leading local change.

Recently, Glacier County volunteers received the first-place state "Community Impact Award" for their efforts to help revitalize downtown Cut Bank. Work on these projects began in May of 2022 and included site cleanups, restoration of flowerpots, and creative signage for local businesses.

All efforts begin with identifying needs within a community, covering a host of issues from dilapidated structures to ways

of visualizing what improvements will increase curb appeal to residents and visitors alike. After periods of economic disruption or outward migration, we may discover mild decay, such as peeling paint and empty storefronts. At this point, Reimagining Rural volunteers spring into action.

Inspired by the Reimagining Rural events sponsored by Glacier County MSU Extension, residents Rod and Lisa Cline led a team of volunteers to clean up around downtown and refurbish several concrete flowerpots along our main corridors of business.

Next on their agenda was increasing signage announcing local events, businesses, their locations, and contact information. Along Main Street, these signs provide crucial details for newcomers looking for local shopping, entertainment venues, and services.

Additionally, the group solicited the help of local Blackfeet artist George Grandchamp in painting a mural of Chief Mountain on one of our businesses, with a “Welcome to Cut Bank” sign above the mural. The most recent work, seen on Central, was painted by local art teacher Chesley Brown. Lisa Cline approached Brown to depict flowers reminiscent of the Cut Bank Wolves purple and gold school colors. The final project of the summer was collecting weathered barn wood to cover broken tiles on buildings along Central Ave.

All these efforts garnered the Clines and the Reimagining Rural group a first-place award from the Montana Association of Community Development Extension Professionals. MSU Extension Agents Kari Lewis and Lisa Terry were also recognized as state winners for the Reimagining Rural group facilitation.

Ten year 4-H'er earns trip to National 4-H Congress & teaches county 4-H Cloverbud program

Cut Bank High School senior Hadley Barbie is no stranger to MSU Extension. Her grandfather was an agricultural Extension agent in Pondera County for many years, and her mother was a 4-Her before her. The Picard & Barbie family have a long history of accomplishments in 4-H and MSU Extension, so it's not surprising that Hadley Barbie was selected to represent Montana 4-H in the 2022 National 4-H Congress's Career Communications Contest. Here is how 4-H has impacted her life:

”As a fourth-generation 4-H'er, I was excited to attend this year's 4-H Congress in Bozeman. This is my 10th year in 4-H, and I am proud to be a junior leader and ambassador in Glacier county. I have found rewarding experiences through 4-H as well as lifelong friendships. I also just finished my third 4-H camp as a camp counselor, easily one of the highlights of my 4-H year. I will graduate in May and attend Montana State University in Bozeman in the fall, where I will obtain a degree in nursing.

Montana 4-H Congress offers a wide range of topics to learn about, which excited me. The event I competed in was Career Communications. This event required me to create a

cover letter and resume, and I had to prepare for the interview portion of the contest. As this year's 2022 Montana 4-H Congress Career Communications winner, I have earned a trip to Atlanta, Georgia. Membership in 4-H has proven time and again to provide me with opportunities to improve myself, build life skills, travel, and create friendships. I also thank everyone who helped me fundraise for this fantastic trip. At this year's Marias fair, we held a Kiss the Pig contest, and with the help of my generous community voting for their lucky contestant, I could fund my trip completely.

As someone active in the 4-H leadership project, I am very excited about the opportunity to fine-tune my leadership skills and acquire ideas for use on a local and county level. I plan to bring the ideas and 4-H energy I gain to help me lead the Glacier County 4-H Cloverbud program. This is where it all starts! Being able to share my love for 4-H with these young members and hopefully provide an opportunity where they are eager to learn more, build friendships, and have a memorable experience are my ultimate goals.”

Drought and hail prompt increased need for nitrate testing of forages

For the second consecutive year, northcentral Montana was in extreme drought with extremely limited forage available. Producers turned to any available forage resource to provide hay for their livestock. Numerous crops in the county were hailed-out, which resulted in thousands of acres of hail-damaged wheat and barley crops baled for forage. These stressed grain crops tend to be high in nitrates. Nitrates pose a significant risk to livestock, including potentially decreased performance, abortions, and even death.

In 2022, Glacier County MSU Extension performed 94 individual nitrate tests on numerous forages including durum wheat, barley, canola, oat/barley mix, triticale, triticale/oats/peas, Willow Creek winter wheat, and winter rye. These in-office tests provided producers with critical decision-making information to know if forage was suitable to be cut for forage or if harvest should be delayed until nitrates declined to a reasonable level. With fuel costs at unprecedented levels in 2022, it was critical that producers have the best information available to prevent spending resources on harvesting high nitrate forage that would later be low quality or unusable.

Of the forages sampled, 20% had nitrate levels that would necessitate limited feeding of that forage, while 10% of forages were at a toxic level. This knowledge allowed producers to delay harvest until nitrate levels declined to a safe level and would produce usable, quality forage. By providing an in-office nitrate test, producers could have information the same day, versus waiting multiple days to send a sample to a lab while forage quality matured and declined. Providing forage nitrate tests is an extremely valuable resource to aid local producers.



Top Row: (left) Glacier County residents Rod and Lisa Cline were awarded the MSU Extension Community Impact Award from the Montana Association of Community Development Extension Professionals, by Lisa Terry; **(right)** In addition to being the nutrition educator, Jodi Duncan has been an active 4-H leader in Glacier County for over 20 years, by Lisa Terry; **Center:** StrongPeople participants enjoy class at the Joe Meagher Memorial Civic Center in Cut Bank, by Lisa Terry; **Bottom Row: (left)** In 2022, Glacier County MSU Extension completed 94 nitrate tests for local producers, by Kari Lewis; **(right)** Hadley Barbie, 10-year 4-H Member, Cloverbud Leader and winner of the 2022 Montana 4-H Career Communications Contest, by Sage Brush Photography

StrongPeople class brings strong impact

This year saw the addition of a new staff member at the Glacier County MSU Extension office. Lisa Terry, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Agent, began work during the county fair week. On her choice of starting dates, Terry stated, “People said I was crazy to start fair week, but I wanted to jump right in with both feet!” And jump right in, she did. That week she logged more than 85 hours working in the Marias Fair food booth serving customers from four counties.

In addition to overseeing the quad-county fair food booth each summer, Terry’s mission is to bring research-based FCS programming to Glacier County. A priority identified by the newly-established FCS Advisory committee is the need for health-related programs for senior citizens. Glacier County’s population is roughly one-third senior citizens, and that age range continues to need health-related services provided through MSU Extension.

The StrongPeople strength training program in Cut Bank doubled in participants during the second week, prompting the need for an additional class. One class member shared, “I had been seeing my doctor for pain in my neck and the inability to sleep. Since starting StrongPeople, I am no longer in pain and can sleep like a baby!”

Additional FCS programs are currently in the planning stages. They will consist of diabetes education, in which Terry is a certified instructor and trainer, ServSafe food safety program, 4-H workshops, and Youth Aware of Mental health, to name a few. The public is encouraged to contact the Glacier County MSU Extension office for more information on FCS-related classes or content.

Healthy Highlights in Glacier County

Glacier County SNAP-Ed Instructor Jodi Duncan serves youth and adult residents of the Blackfeet Reservation, Cut Bank, and Shelby communities. The SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) program teaches adult participants how to budget their SNAP dollars, cook healthy meals, and how to stay physically active. Each lesson taught to youth participants focuses on both nutrition and physical activity. Students are given the opportunity to sample a healthy snack during each class, exposing them to foods they may not normally try.

In 2022, outcomes of Duncan’s work included a 100% behavior change in diet quality and a 75% increase in physical activity in adult graduates. Youth graduates showed an 83% behavior change in diet quality and a 37% improvement in physical activity practices. The SNAP-Ed program is another example of healthy and positive impacts made by MSU Extension in Montana communities and reservations.

Glacier County Staff



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Agriculture & 4-H Agent

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