

Message from the District Director



MSU Extension is a catalyst for creating a lasting impact that ripples across the Upper Peninsula, the state, and beyond. Our programs reach all audiences and age groups—from youth learning essential life skills and farmers exploring ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness, to older adults accessing healthier foods and local communities discovering ways to boost economic impact. The possibilities for making an impact with Extension are endless.

Through partnerships, we can create exponential ripples that change the lives of our neighbors, family, and friends. For over 100 years, MSU Extension’s goal has been to “bring knowledge to life.” By connecting with organizations and agencies across the U.P., we bring the knowledge and research from Michigan State University to our communities and empower them to improve their lives. Alone, we can cast a small stone to create ripples; together, our stone grows to produce a larger impact than any one organization could create on its own.

I have been with MSU Extension for ten years, serving as a district director in the Western and Central Upper Peninsula. As I continue in this role, I look forward to exploring new ways to collaborate with our partners to create ripples of impact across Iron County and beyond.

Paul Putnam
District 1 Director

Iron County Staff

- Rebecca Krans, Consumer Horticulture Educator
- Anne Kretschmann, 4-H Program Coordinator
- Libby Hansen, Community Nutrition Instructor
- Liz Slajus, Consumer Horticulture Program Assistant

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72

EXTENSION PROGRAMS
INCLUDING IRON
COUNTY RESIDENTS

343

IRON COUNTY
RESIDENTS ATTENDED
EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Program Highlight

Exotic Aquatic Plant Watch Side x Side: Lake Ellen This was direct education and training with individual Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program volunteers at their lake in July of 2023 conducted by **Erick Elgin**, Water Resource Educator.

A joint program between MSU and Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy provides volunteers with training, guidance and useful tools to successfully identify and map invasive aquatic plants in their lakes.

10

Extension programs held in the county

346

people attended programs held in the
county



REPORTING

31

Extension educators, specialists and program staff reported data for Iron County

39

county direct one-to-one education contacts

Smart Gardening Outreach Booth at the Iron County Fair

Rebecca Krans set up a Smart Gardening outreach booth at the Iron County Fair. Fairgoers were able to provide their county and email addresses to receive future MSU Extension garden program notifications. **100** attendees visited the booth.

51

youth enrolled in county 4-H

187

youth participants



Program Highlight

Iron County Sharpshooters 4-H Club received one of two statewide **\$500 On-Target Shooting Sports grants** from the Michigan 4-H Foundation.

From Club Leader: *"Yay! I'm excited! Thank you for all of your work on this grant. It will help us keep the legacy of shooting sports alive in Iron County!"*

Staff Success Stories

West District Public Library Parenting Fair - Seed Starting

Rebecca Krans and Anne Kretschmann collaborated to offer this event to Iron County residents. The following issues were addressed:

- Environmental Stewardship and Natural Resource Management
- Human Health, Youth, and Families
- Plant and Animal Production and Health
- Secure Food and Fiber Systems

82 participants received education during this event.



**Rebecca Krans,
Consumer
Horticulture
Educator**

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Down on the Farm at the Iron County Fair

Rebecca Krans helped to coordinate a "Down on the Farm" family-friendly activity at the Iron County Fair. It consisted of various organizations around the area providing an educational activity at a booth in the fair's rotunda.

We had **Northern Beekeeping** (two volunteers) with a live hive demo, beekeeping supplies and resources, **Iron/Baraga Conservation District** (two volunteers) providing a butterfly house activity along with pollinator and invasive species information, the **UP Rodeo Princess** with her western saddle and a roping activity, **Buttons the Clown** with fun giveaways, **Iron County 4-H Program Coordinator, Anne**, with fun activities and 4-H giveaways and information, and an **Extension Master Gardener Volunteer** and **three Miss Iron County participants** assisting youth with coloring and fun farm activities. **180 participants** at this event.





Stephanie Ostrenga-Sprague
Food Safety & Supervising Educator
ostrenga@msu.edu

ServSafe® Program

Michigan State University Extension offers ServSafe®, a national certification program for those working in food service, specifically managers and other leaders.

ServSafe® teaches about foodborne illness, how to prevent it and how to train employees about the latest food safety issues. The ServSafe® Manager course uses proven techniques, provides new Food & Drug Administration food code rules and content related to the food industry. This course provides participants education to successfully pass the ServSafe® Food Protection Manager Certification exam.

Topics include: providing safe food, forms of contamination, the safe food handler, the flow of food, food safety management systems, safe facilities & pest management, cleaning & sanitizing.

Stephanie Ostrenga-Sprague led this **8-hour ServSafe® class** in Crystal Falls at the Iron County Courthouse for **9 participants**.

4-H Highlights

UP Regional 4-H Shooting Sports Tournament

U.P. Regional 4-H Shooting Sports Tournament held on June 11 in Escanaba, MI. The tournament was almost cancelled due to low registration. Iron County volunteers were very motivated to have their 4-H club members attend. Their additional registrations allowed the event to be held. **Four volunteers from two clubs attended with Iron County 4-H members.**

Michigan State 4-H Shooting Sports Tournament

The **two Iron County 4-H clubs** subsequently competed at the **Michigan 4-H State Shooting Sports Tournament** in August 2023 where they earned **two, first place finishes; one, third place finish, one, honorary mention individually; one team first place, one team third place**. They were accompanied by a youth club reporter who submitted articles to the newspapers.



Anne Kretschmann,
4-H Program Coordinator
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"Thank you for supporting our Iron County kids! The state shoot was a success! Thank you again." - 4-H Club Leader

"Thank you for taking time out of your day on a Saturday to help get our kids registered when we had trouble with the registration system. If it weren't for you taking care of this, our kids wouldn't have been able to go!" - 4-H Club Leader

4-H Continued...

Iron County 4-H Exploration Days and Local Scholarships

37 youth and seven adults (including two program coordinators) from the Western UP counties of Houghton- Keweenaw, Ontonagon, Gogebic, **Iron**, Dickinson, and Marquette attended **4-H Exploration Days**. This included eight youth from Houghton-Keweenaw Counties and **three youth from Iron County**. The group enjoyed a side trip to the Great Wolf Lodge. They also enjoyed a **pre-Exploration presentation and tour of Michigan State University's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory** where they got to try out various clinician training stations.

The **Iron County 4-H Council** offered **\$100** scholarships to youth attendees who met scholarship criteria (**two Iron County youths** were recipients of this scholarship).

"Thank you so much for the Exploration Days scholarship. It means a lot. Expo Days was amazing & I met so many new people. Thank you again." - Exploration Days participant

"Thank you so much for the experience here. I loved every day! I have made my best friends here and I'll never forget how much fun I had. Thank you for helping fund me and helping me experience reuniting with everyone." - Exploration Days participant



Iron County 4-H Volunteers Honored for Their Service: Recognition on Statewide Level

Two long-time Iron County 4-H volunteers were recognized by Michigan State University Extension for providing **50 or more years of service** to Michigan 4-H and youth in their communities. **Carol and David Callovi** lead young people and grow their skills through the **Young Pacesetters 4-H Club**.

"It's nice to be recognized!" - volunteer

According to research completed by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, 4-H'ers are four times more likely to make contributions to their communities, twice as likely to be civically active, and twice as likely to make healthier choices.