

# EXTENSION TRENDS: KOOTENAI COUNTY

University of Idaho Extension, Kootenai County • [www.uidaho.edu/kootenai](http://www.uidaho.edu/kootenai)



## 2021 By the Numbers

- 23,435 direct contacts
- 2,199 youth participants
- 51 volunteers
- 3,472 volunteer hours
- \$309,725 extramural funding

## Our Advisory Council

Special thanks to our volunteers who help shape programming and inform the work we do for UI Extension in Kootenai County.

## UI Extension Educators



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## 2021 Impact

UI Extension, Kootenai County offers forestry, family and consumer sciences (FCS), home horticulture, water quality, and 4-H youth development programming and education.

FCS programs focus on nutrition, wellness and obesity prevention. The UI Extension Northern District's Eat Smart Idaho program is managed in Kootenai County and focuses efforts on access to healthier foods for low-income families. Programming includes the Smarter Lunchroom Movement in three local school districts and Healthy Food Pantry/Healthy Food Drive initiatives supporting many North Idaho pantries. In 2021, FCS programs helped over 2,600 youth and adults establish healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle. Participates showed improvement in dietary knowledge or practices, use of food resource management, food safety, physical activity and an improved sense of food security.

FCS Educator Shelley Johnson has implemented meaningful access to healthy food through various healthy food drives and Christmas for Kids with the Boys and Girls Club of Kootenai County. The Post Falls School District food drive that Johnson plans a major role in revamped their competitive school vs school food drive to a Stuff the Bus Campaign. Johnson was asked to film the [kick off of the event](#). She also secured internal funds to offer a new Pantry Project in which 52 weeks of healthy nudges and nutrition education are being developed. Five partnering food pantries have been recruited for the project and their input was gathered, materials developed and is currently in the review process. This tool will be offered in partnership with Second Harvest and the Idaho Food Bank and will be available to all food pantries nationally as a downloadable educational resource once approved.

4-H in Kootenai County continued to thrive and a new educator will be hired to lead the program in 2022.

The Idaho Master Gardener (IMG) program opened accessibility and evolved the IMG program into a broad, diverse audience through a pilot program of the IMG Certification program, a new digital interactive book and online/hybrid labs with Top Hat Educational Platform and NC State Extension. This allowed for interactive engagement online. This pilot program ran from January-April with online videos created to assist current IMG volunteers with their annual CEU requirements. The program has gained international recognition and coordinator Kara Carleton has been asked to speak in three states and an international conference. The program was developed with NCSU; however, Kootenai County and UI Extension were the first location to use it in the U.S. Carleton is advising other states on the use and effectiveness of the program and has met with the Idaho State Board of Education about the usefulness, affordability and scalability of the project. This same program can be altered to appeal to the green industry professionals in the area as they take it asynchronously, learn best practices and help fund the local program.

The program has allowed Carleton to attract a younger and wider demographic to the IMG program while continuing to engage longtime volunteers. An 82-year-old volunteer said he now has a "renewed sense of involvement and excitement about our program." He has been a volunteer for over 30 years and was ready to move on to something else with his

time, but after completing the program he is more involved than. Carleton also attracted a broad audience of volunteers planning to move to Kootenai County and could follow along with training in real-time or with the video collection and hit the ground running once they arrived in the area. The IMG program also contributes a bi-monthly column to The Coeur d'Alene Press.

Fifty-three forest owners, loggers and professional foresters attended UI Extension forestry programs held in Kootenai County in 2021, including the Forestry Shortcourse and Logger Education to Advance Professionalism. Many Kootenai County residents also attended UI Extension forestry programs held in adjacent Idaho Panhandle counties. Zoom-based forestry programs on forest health, fire risk reduction for homes located in the wildland urban interface, forestry cost sharing, backyard forests, and a multi-faceted program titled 10 Acres and a Dream reached over 631 participants, including many from Kootenai County. Thirteen Kootenai County residents served as certified volunteers with the Idaho Master Forest Stewards. Collectively, Idaho Master Forest Stewards provided over 530 hours of volunteer service to over 1,000 contacts in 2021.



UI Extension Water Outreach provides youth and adults with science-based programs related to water quality in Idaho's 10 northern counties. Educational events include learning how to protect drinking water, how to avoid polluting the sole-source Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer, understanding how to protect streams and lakes with best management practices, to learning how to scientifically assess the water quality of streams and lakes.

Area Educator Jim Ekins partnered with multiple organizations and agencies to engage with 300 north Idaho high school students to learn about watershed science. An entirely hands-on education is implemented, including field trips to engage students in real world data collection and the development of research-based solutions to local water issues for The Confluence Project's Youth Water Summit.

More than 75 adult citizen scientists learned how to scientifically assess their local stream or pond. More than 80 K-12 teachers learned how to use the activity-based Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) curriculum in their K-12 classrooms. And the wonderful world of aquatic

macroinvertebrates, as an important link in the food chain for fish, was brought directly to hundreds of youth in a variety of settings including watershed festivals.

A peer-reviewed 4-H Wildlife and Water Habitat Curriculum was published, which can be downloaded at: [www.uidaho.edu/extension/idah2o/resources](http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/idah2o/resources).

## On the Horizon

Johnson has been working with the Idaho FCS Physical Activity Collaborative with other Extension faculty on development for the Five for Five - Five Minutes for Better Health curricula. The goal is to increase the rate of physical activity in all age groups. The physical activity add on curricula consists of components of mindfulness, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance and bone strengthening, muscular strength, and flexibility in balance.

The IMG program has initiated partnerships with the 4-H program and the City of Coeur d'Alene Parks and Recreation Department for certification as a Bee City USA participant with the Xerces Society. Through a multi-generational learning framework, the group will work together to conserve native pollinators by increasing the abundance of native plants, providing nest sites and reducing the use of pesticides. This project will be laid out in a resolution adopted by the Coeur d'Alene City Council in 2022. City staff and community members will work together to carry out commitments and make Coeur d'Alene a better place for pollinators. A regional specific seed mix has been developed for Northern Idaho supporting local, native bees. This seed mix will be sold to the public in 2022 and will be showcased in a new city park along the river and utilized in 4-H curriculum. A new summer camp, Bee City, also incorporates educational requirements for this certification while monitoring for the health of bumble bee populations along with scientists and the Xerces Society through the PNW Bumble Bee Atlas Project. This STEM science camp will allow youth to participate in field science learning from insects and IMG volunteers. Youth will also incorporate technology into this experience while documenting the camp for a marketing video and utilizing the IMG wood shop to create habitat for native bees in their home gardens and city parks.

Upcoming IDAH2O workshops will be held in Cusick, Washington, Boise and Sandpoint. Additional training workshops for Project WET and Crayfish and Freshwater Ecosystems are also available online at various times throughout the year.

