

Grand Traverse County 2020–2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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> FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR:



This past year will go down in history as one like no other. As an organization who has been embedded in counties for over 100 years, our community education model changed and shifted like at no other time in our rich history. I am especially proud of the way our entire county team pivoted their educational efforts and provided online programming for our valuable stakeholders; which includes growers, families, youth, local businesses, and residents. Our content-rich programming allowed residents from across the state to access it from their homes, regardless of geographic location. This allowed individuals throughout northwest lower Michigan to access programming being taught from southern Michigan to the tip of the Upper Peninsula. This increased accessibility for all residents to access our outreach and education was an added value for our county partners. The most notable achievement this year was the way our local offices provided support to county departments and Boards of Commissioners to respond to emerging needs related to the pandemic and county operations. This speaks to our commitment to our counties, partnership with county government and ability to respond to critical needs in our communities. It is always my distinct honor to present this summary of our accomplishments and deeply value our partnership with Grand Traverse County.

Jennifer Berkey, District 3 Director

> MEASURING IMPACT:

324
UNIQUE
EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAMS
ACCESSED BY
RESIDENTS

**SOCIAL
MEDIA
REACH**
53,313

**ONLINE
REACH**
9,713

**PROGRAMMING
REACH**
3,251

**WHO WILL
HELP OUR
COMMUNITY
SOLVE
PROBLEMS?**
**SPARTANS
WILL.**

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DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Extension programs help children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness. They learn leadership and decision-making skills in 4-H that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active.

4-H is open to all!

- The 4-H Program year runs from September to the end of August and is open to all youth aged 5-19 years. During the last program year 751 youth were enrolled in 4-H in Grand Traverse county as traditional club members. These youth engaged in over 50 Grand Traverse County community clubs and Special Interest (SPIN) clubs. In addition to local club engagement, youth from Grand Traverse County had the chance to participate in numerous virtual 4-H clubs offered throughout the state. These statewide virtual opportunities included youth development in areas such as cooking, finances, and even comedy writing.
- 2,046 youth participated in Grand Traverse County 4-H Program Activities. Volunteers help run programs such as the Livestock Educational Event that took place at Great Wolf Lodge in early March of 2020 and engaged over 200 youth in 16 different educational sessions ranging from swine genetics to llamas and alpaca fiber 101. Throughout the month of May our traditional in person Horse and Pony Boot Camp clinic was hosted over five Sundays in May and engaged 30 different youth in topics ranging from Introduction to Jumping to Equine Body work.

Over 2,000
4-H Participants



4-H Youth Perform!

- Youth from Grand Traverse County competed at the State Level, including Hannah Gaither who won the state Rabbit and Cavy Award in the highest, and one might say, most competitive age bracket!
- The summer of 2020 was spent preparing for and hosting the First Northwest Michigan Virtual Showcase and Auction, run completely by 4-H volunteers and staff with support from Michigan State University. When the Northwestern Michigan Fair was cancelled, this event provided a platform to showcase animals as well as still exhibits. 4-H member, Sophia Ankerson noted: "I'm still happy that we have an opportunity to show off our hard work, whether it's in person or not. I will definitely do it next year." 100% of the youth who participated in the virtual showcase completed at least two hours of educational training before the event. The first ever virtual auction brought in an average price per animal comparable to previous years



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

when the 4-H auction was held in person. This new event gave 4-H youth a place to showcase project animals and still exhibits as well as auction their project animals.

Virtual Showcase and Auction:



- 100% of the 190 animals that went through the auction were sold



- Sales from the auction totaled \$291,387



- 270 local 4-H youth participants created 618 entries.



- Animals donated to local food pantries/charities: 8 swine, 1 lamb, 3 large beef cattle.

- For six weeks in the fall of 2020, students at Traverse City Central High School learned about nutrition using the Peak Health Performance curriculum and 4-H. This partnership with the high school introduced a new population of youth to opportunities 4-H can offer such as exploration days and club project areas.
- The 122 volunteers from Grand Traverse County lead 4-H clubs that vary in size from five to forty members, serve on councils, help run program activities, and serve on county councils, including the Grand Traverse County Horse and Pony Council, The Grand Traverse County Leaders Advisory Council, and the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council which oversees Livestock 4-H Projects in the five-county area (Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Benzie, Antrim, and Kalkaska).
- Grand Traverse 4-H received a 2% grant from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. This funding is covering the cost to hire an AmeriCorps service member to provide Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) learning opportunities in our community. The AmeriCorps service member will launch 4-H clubs of interest to our tribal populations in Grand Traverse and Leelanau County with a goal of growing STEAM learning and life skills for youth in our community. Our AmeriCorps service members started in October 2020 and will serve through September 2021.

4-H gives back to our community!

- 4-H youth and volunteers made and donated cloth masks to our community
- The 4-H Leaders Advisory Council ran a food drive for youth who attend Traverse City High School. 4-H youth, volunteers, and clubs in Grand Traverse County donated food and vital supplies. These items were collected in the county office and delivered directly to the school by our 4-H volunteers.
- Youth raised extra animals and partnered with the Northwest Food Coalition to provide 70 pounds of protein (meat) to local food pantries.



KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY & ENSURING SAFE FOOD

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn safe food handling practices, increase their physical activity and improve the quality of their diets. Extension programming also helps decrease incidents of violence and bullying. Encouraging these healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

Fostering Health through Nutrition and Physical Activity

Michigan State University Extension supports individual and community level, or public health approaches, to prevent obesity. Through the United States Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), we provide a combination of educational strategies, accompanied by supporting policy, systems, and environmental change interventions aimed to increase the likelihood for limited resource youth, adults, and seniors to make healthy choices.

Healthier Lives through Nutrition Education

MSU Extension facilitates **Voices for Food**. This initiative is a pantry-based Policy Systems and Environmental (PSE) change intervention designed to help local food pantries promote health and food security within the food system. This work increases the likelihood that food insecure individuals can choose healthy options. The food pantry environment is a great opportunity to make meaningful impact. 2020 was the second year for the Father Fred Foundation Food Pantry to participate in this type of initiative.

As part of this partnership, the Father Fred Foundation Food Pantry has established a pantry task force that includes volunteers and supporting community organizations. The task force helps to gain a variety of perspectives on what changes are most needed and beneficial to the pantry. It will also help to sustain the changes by establishing policies to support future changes.

Even though our efforts were impacted by the pandemic, changes continued throughout 2020. Recipe cards and meal kits provided ideas and guidance to families. Our collaborative effort reached over 300 families and exposed all who work and visit the Father Fred Foundation Food Pantry to healthier food choices.

Les Hagaman, the Director of the Father Fred Food Pantry values the importance of nutrition and the positive impact healthy food choices can have on an individual and family's health. The pantry encourages fruits, vegetables, and other whole foods when it can. Volunteers have shared that they are trying to make healthier choices for themselves and are more willing to try a new vegetable because they have seen it offered at the pantry.

Over 300 Pantry Families Reached



Keeping People Healthy, continued

Making the Healthy Choice Easier - Supporting Changes to Policies, Systems, and Environments (PSE)



MSU Extension partners with Grand Traverse County schools to facilitate the **Fuel Up to Play 60** program. This free, in-school nutrition and physical activity program allows teams of students to make PSE changes that encourage other students, staff members, and administrators to lead healthier, active lives. The changes within our schools cause a ripple effect of positively impacting our communities as students incorporate their leadership skills to motivate and encourage family and community members to properly fuel their body so they can be active every day.

This year marked a big change in how Fuel Up to Play 60 is implemented at local schools. Several Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) agreed to participate in a pilot program along with MSU Extension and the United Dairy Industry of Michigan (UDIM). With funding provided by UDIM, four TCAPS elementary buildings were awarded \$4,000 to assist with making healthy changes, a total of \$16,000 for the district in grant funding. These schools include Willow Hill, Silver Lake, Blair, and Eastern.

Using a team of students, teachers, food service, administration, and other staff, they assess and decide what changes can be made to assist students in making healthy food choices. Using student input, these schools purchased milk coolers covered in black and white cow spots, bright colored lunch trays, cafeteria decorations, and more. The system in which school food is served has changed due to COVID-19 and these teams are working hard to make sure students are fueled with nutrient-rich foods.

Another component of Fuel Up to Play 60 is to promote being active for 60 minutes a day for our youth. This pilot program resulted in a partnership with **Playworks**, a national organization that helps schools and youth organizations create recess and play environments where every child can join in. During this four-part training, staff learned quick and easy to play games and worked together to evaluate and rejuvenate recess and play time at their schools. In the Spring, each building will receive personalized consultations to assist them in making positive changes. As a result of participating in Fuel Up to Play 60, students at these schools are more likely to become leaders in demonstrating new healthy lifestyle initiatives.

“We often forget that the playground is the biggest classroom we have in our schools. With the Playworks training and their models, our staff is now set-up for success in creating predictable, consistent recess routines, and mixing in fun chants and new games for students to explore.” - Biz Ruskowski, Principal at Eastern Elementary.

Westwoods Elementary School continued their participation in Fuel Up to Play 60. Using a student leadership team, food service, and adult coaches, the group decided to promote healthy eating by focusing on healthier snack options. Through Fuel Up to Play 60 and with assistance by MSU Extension, Westwoods used grant funding to



**Grant funds
to date to Grand
Traverse County
Schools through MSUE
partnership with United
Dairy Industry of MI:
\$61,372**



Keeping People Healthy, continued

purchase equipment to help serve snacks in each corner of the building, including colanders, bowls, and fruit slicers. The student team also worked together to provide more opportunities for students to be active. Fit Club is an after-school program for 3rd – 5th grade students who want to learn new and fun ways to be active. Using community partners to help instruct classes, students discovered new ways to move including yoga, bootcamps, high intensity interval training, and more! With nutrient-dense foods and more options for being active, Westwoods Elementary School is better equipped to help students succeed.

The 2020-2021 school year marked the first year of Fuel Up to Play 60 participation for **Cherry Knoll Elementary School**. This team, made up of administration, school food service, physical education teachers, and six motivated students has been working hard from day one! Starting with a Kickoff to hosting a school-wide healthy bingo competition, to promoting school breakfast, this team is doing all they can to make sure their students have lots of healthy options. With funding, the team purchased bright-colored meal trays and new cafeteria decorations to help students feel excited to be in the cafeteria space. The student team also advocated for the purchase of new recess equipment including an outdoor volleyball net, badminton set, Gaga balls, and more! These Wildcats are well on their way to making the healthy choice, the easy choice at their school.

In Spring 2020, **Blair Elementary** was recognized for their hard work in helping to make their school a healthier place for their students. For the third year, Blair received a Silver School Wellness Award. The School Wellness Award recognizes schools who are making significant policy and environmental improvements to their environment related to healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco-free lifestyles.

Educational Programming – Adults and Youth

In Fall 2020, MSU Extension partnered with Mike Gle and Doug Gle of Traverse City Central High School and their physical education strength classes. Over 250 students participated in Peak Health and Performance, a six-lesson curriculum designed to provide young athletes with sound nutrition education aimed at improving athletic performance as well as overall health. Topics include healthy nutrition practices, timing of intake, hydration, and more. To conclude this interactive program, students were invited to attend a live Q&A session with former Detroit Red Wings player, Justin Abdelkader, provided in partnership with Milk Means More – a non-profit dedicated to nutrition education to youth on behalf of Michigan's dairy farm families.

When asked about his alternative plan if professional hockey had not panned out, he emphasized the necessity of completing an education. Abdelkader had made a promise to his parents that no matter what success hockey would bring him, he was determined to finish what he set out to do – complete his education. While training with the Detroit Red Wings, Abdelkader's studies didn't miss a beat. Balancing his course work with getting paid to play a professional sport, he finished his requirements

Throughout the session, Abdelkader stressed the importance of preparation: preparing to eat nutrient-dense foods, plans to stay hydrated, stressing the importance of getting enough sleep, as well as practicing their sport. "If you want to be at the top of your game, prepare," said Abdelkader.



Keeping People Healthy, continued

for a general business management degree from MSU's Eli Broad College of Business in 2015. "You may never become a professional athlete and one day, I won't be playing professional hockey. School is important. Communicate with your teachers, make sure to ask for help," he said.

Video recipes for local food pantries

Videos were created for social media during the Spring and Summer months to encourage and educate on the use of seasonal fruits and vegetables. Videos featured a recipe and information on how to prepare or store the produce. MSU Extension partnered with the Northwest Food Coalition to develop and create video recipes with produce procured by the Farm2Neighbor program using local professional video production company, iSee Communications. Videos featured vegetables that are distributed at local food pantries to increase use of these locally grown foods. You can watch the videos here: <https://northwestmifoodcoalition.org/farm2neighbor/videos/>

Eat Healthy, Be Active virtual programming

During a virtual series of Eat Healthy, Be Active, a participant shared ideas and recipes of how her family ate healthy on a budget. Other participants were very interested in what she had to share with the group. This type of discussion throughout the series help bolster others confidence with trying new ways to eat more fruits and vegetables. After a lesson on whole grains and learning to read a nutrition label, a participant stated, "I looked at the labels for whole wheat bread to try. I found a brand with the first ingredient that says whole wheat flour and had very little added sugar."

Connecting kids to healthy food in schools – FoodCorps service

MSU Extension continues to serve as one of seven FoodCorps service sites in Michigan. FoodCorps is a national organization working to connect kids to healthy food in school. Through this program, MSU Extension provides leadership, guidance and financial support to AmeriCorps service members supporting two Northwest Michigan schools. Service members support farm to school strategies through hands-on nutrition and food systems education in classrooms and gardens, support healthy school meal, and work with the whole school community to support a school wide culture of health.

We are proud to continue our partnership with Traverse Heights Elementary School. During the 19-20 school year, service member Erin Baumann provided hands-on lessons with all ten Traverse Heights educators. She also completed five cafeteria taste tests and continued to support the vitality and sustainability of the school greenhouse. With the arrival of COVID-19 and closures of in-person school from March – June 2020, our service member adapted by transforming classroom-based lessons to video. The video lesson library is housed on a YouTube channel and made available to our partner schools for continued, virtual engagement. This creative and quality work of our service member was featured in a new digital hub of video lessons created by a handful of service members throughout the country and rolled-out nationwide in May 2020.



Over **2,400**
Viewers Reached



77% of students
engaged in FoodCorps
experiences showed
improvement in
preferences for trying
new vegetables.



SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.

Supporting Fruit Production

Tree Fruits

In agriculture, farmers expect unique challenges to arise each year, and 2020 was no exception. The year tested our agility and adaptability as we shifted Extension programs to virtual settings with little advanced notice.

- MSU Extension Tree Fruit Educators, Emily Pochubay and Nikki Rothwell, worked closely with their colleagues to develop and deliver a webinar series to serve fruit growers across the state. The series, **2020 Spring Tree Fruit Webinars**, were held over the lunch hour, Monday through Friday, for two consecutive weeks. The series attracted 478 participants from across the state, 86 of whom resided in and around Grand Traverse County. The Spring 2020 MSU Tree Fruit Webinar Series was a true team effort with overwhelming positive responses from fruit growers and stakeholders.
- The annual **Tree Fruit Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Updates** also went virtual in 2020 to continue offering tree fruit producers and crop consultants in the region timely pest and disease information. Lead Educator, Emily Pochubay, and co-host Nikki Rothwell, hosted weekly hour-long webinars for 11 weeks during the growing season. The program attracted 629 participants comprised primarily of northwest Michigan fruit growers and local crop consultants, which was the greatest attendance in six years of hosting these meetings. Respondents to a post program survey represented approximately 4,297 acres of apples and 4,628 acres of cherries in Michigan, and all participants reported they improved their knowledge of practices to reduce production risks by attending the meetings. While the program overall was a success and opened doors for virtual meetings in the future, there are challenges to address including more training opportunities for growers to learn how to use the technology and limitations such as access to a smart device and reliable internet and/or cellular connectivity.

Wine Grapes

Over the past three decades, Michigan's wine grape industry has begun to cultivate significant acreage of European *Vitis vinifera* cultivars, such as Riesling, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Cabernet Franc. These varieties are more recognizable and thus more marketable to consumers. This viticultural change has fueled the industry's recent

"It was a great method to deliver important and timely information in today's environment."

"I think MSU has done a great job adapting with the times. I'm very thankful for our extension agents and what they do to help out our fruit industry."

~Tree Fruit Webinar participants

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

exponential growth and has led to the industry contributing more than \$5.4 billion to the state's economy. However, the major downside to growing vinifera is their greater susceptibility to low winter temperatures and extreme cold events, and subsequently low -temperature stress. Due to Michigan's northerly latitude and focus on vinifera production, low-temperature stress is now the greatest roadblock to annual grape and wine production. Grapevine buds can be damaged by low winter temperatures that drop below a critical value.

In the past few years, there have been multiple extreme cold events, the most recent of which was a polar vortex in February 2021, where the temperature dipped below -5° to -8°F in the northwest Michigan grape growing areas.

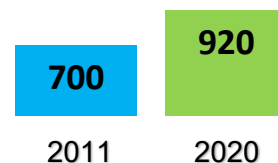
Indeed, such extreme events can decrease the quality and quantity of grape production dramatically. In order to minimize year-to-year grape production variability due to cold damage, Andy Fles from Shady Lane Cellars, Anna Atanassova from Mari Vineyards, and Nathan Kulpa of Kulpa Farms, are partnering with Michigan State University Extension to monitor grapevine bud cold hardiness during the dormant season 2020-21. This monitoring consists of weekly measurements of 10 common grape varieties, as well as measurements after any cold events below 5°F. Ultimately, this information can be used to make in-season management decisions such as pruning based on the severity of the cold damage, as well as provide local recommendations for site and cultivar suitability for future planting decisions.

According to the result of the cold hardiness project, there was no significant bud mortality nor severe vascular tissue injury was observed and the local growers should continue to prune as normal. We are monitoring samples from Leelanau Peninsula and Old Mission Peninsula vineyards weekly from mid-December 2020 until mid-April 2021.

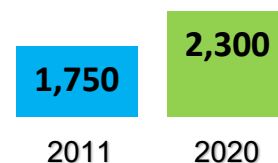
Several virtual presentations were held over the past year for local wine grape growers and producers to meet the unique needs of northwest lower Michigan.

- Parallel 45 Vines & Wines / MSU Extension Educational Meetings: Throughout the year, P45 and MSU Extension hosts events on a variety of topics relevant to the needs of Northwest Michigan grape growers and winemakers. Over 80 Grape and wine producers in the northwest Michigan region joined the meetings. MSU Extension specialists and educators, as well as guest speakers, reviewed cool-climate viticulture techniques for canopy management, insect and pest management, Biochar, vineyard floor management, and a variety of enological topics.
- 2020 Great Lakes EXPO virtual conference: At the 2020 Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, and Farm Market Expo & Michigan Greenhouse Growers Expo ("GLEXPO"), MSU educators and specialists organized 67 educational sessions. The MSU grape team educated Michigan's 114 grape producers on methods of controlling pests and diseases and presented about northwest Michigan grape production challenges.

Wine Grape Acreage in Grand Traverse County



Estimations of Wine Grape Production in Grand Traverse County (2.5 tons per acre)



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

- 2021 Orchard and Vineyard Show: Over 120 grape and wine producers, both across the state and internationally, attended the Orchard and Vineyard Show. The grape educational sessions were held on the 19th and 20th of January. MSU Extension specialists and educators and university experts from Cornell University and the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Summerland Research and Development Centre in British Columbia, Canada educated Michigan's grape and wine producers on the chemistry of storing wines in cans and grapevine trunk disease management at the Wine and Grape Sessions.
- Parallel 45 Vines & Wines and Michigan Wine Collaborative (MWC) associations hold their annual meeting in conjunction with the sessions on January 19th and 21st respectively.

Home Horticulture

2020 was a year like no other for the Consumer Horticulture Program in Grand Traverse County. Locally, MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture staff provided 15 free online educational opportunities last year to local residents. These were available to stream live or to watch later as a recorded webinar, and in addition to many more free online educational options that were provided by the statewide MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture team.

Additionally, through volunteer outreach, Extension Master Gardeners continued to share science-based gardening knowledge, engaged citizens and empowered communities in environmentally responsible gardening practices, improving food security, improving community, and developing youth through gardening. This past year, Master Gardeners volunteered for over 1,600 hours in Grand Traverse County, a time contribution valued at more than \$43,500. The bulk of these hours were spent on projects benefiting the community like environmental stewardship, therapy gardens, community beautification, and growing food for donation to local food banks. The remaining hours were spent sustaining the program with volunteer management and recruitment and/or supporting MSU Extension in its mission to bring the university's resources closer to our local residents.

Last year also saw the creation of a brand new MSU Extension Master Gardener citizen science project in collaboration with Traverse City's Downtown Development Authority and the Master Gardener Association of Northwest Michigan. Area residents and visitors were able to participate in the project by reading signs placed in the flower planters along E. Front St. in downtown Traverse City. Each sign contained a QR code that could be read by a smart device, which would allow



This past year,
Master Gardeners
volunteered more than
 **1,600 hours**
on various projects in
Grand Traverse County
valued at over
\$43,500.



Master Gardeners
working on the
planters on Front
Street in downtown
Traverse City

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

participants to count pollinators visiting the flowers in the planters. Eighty-nine participants took the time to pause and count pollinators at the planters in downtown TC last summer, and we are hoping to engage even more residents and visitors next year as this project continues into 2021.

Supporting Grand Traverse Residents with Research Based Horticultural Info

County residents are always welcome to call, visit, or email the office for assistance with horticultural issues. Additionally, and new for 2020, MSU Consumer Horticulture staff and MSU Extension Master Gardeners hosted a virtual diagnostic clinic via Zoom that was open to all area residents. These virtual plant diagnostic clinics were held every Wednesday, June through September of 2020. Residents were welcomed to Zoom in with samples of plants, insects, diseases and other problems, while MSU Extension staff and Master Gardener volunteers provided the expertise to diagnose problems and provide management recommendations. In 2020, 63 Grand Traverse County residents had their plant or household pest problems addressed by email, phone, or the virtual diagnostic clinics. An additional 139 County residents were able to receive answers to their horticultural questions by using either the online service Ask Extension or MSU Extension's statewide Lawn and Garden Hotline (1-888-678-3464), which are hosted by teams of MSU specialists, educators, and MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers.

Supporting Hop Production

MSU Extension has taken a leadership role across the North Central and Northeast U.S. by providing valuable research and outreach to current and prospective growers on best practices for planting, harvesting, and pest management.

- Online Desire to Learn course entitled: Hop Production in Midwest and Eastern North America that is open to members of the general public.
- MSU Hop Bine and Dine Webinar Series 2020 held monthly March-September.
- MSU Extension also continued to provide leadership for the Great Lakes Hop Working Group. The GLHWG is a multi-state collaborative developed and coordinated by MSU that develops priorities for hop research and education and collectively work to address the needs of hop growers across Central and Eastern North America.

Conferences

Just prior to the pandemic we were able to host the final Great Lakes Hop and Barley Conference in Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti, MI. The conference was attended by 115 people (registrants and speakers). Top Hops Farm was awarded the coveted Chinook Cup. The 2020 conference was the final Great Lakes Hop and Barley Conference. For the last few years, we have considered

Judging Chinook samples for the annual Chinook Cup at the 2020 Great Lakes Hop and Barley Conference.



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

combining conferences with the Michigan Brewers Guild and in 2021 our efforts paid off. In January, we partnered with the Michigan Brewers Guild and the Master Brewers Association of the Americas (MBAA) to offer a combined virtual conference that was attended by ~250 people. While a virtual conference lacks the in-person opportunities for relationship building and networking, it offers an opportunity to enlist expert speakers from around the world. In addition to expert speakers from around the United States, this year we were able to host Dr. Ann Van Holle, a research scientist at the R&D Department of De Proefbrouwerij, Lochristi, Belgium, who provided an outstanding presentation on “The Relevance of Hop Terroir for Brewers.” Also, of note, the 2021 Chinook Cup was presented virtually during this conference. The 2021 winner was MI LOCAL HOPS in Williamsburg, MI.

Research

MSU Educators continue to secure federal and state funding for research in Grand Traverse County. With Project GREEN funding, Dr. Tim Miles (MSU), Erin Lizotte, and Rob Sirrine are currently assessing methods for controlling cone diseases in hops. With funding from the MDARD Craft Beverage Council Dr. Sirrine, Dr. Trey Malone, Aaron Staples (MSU graduate student) and Alec Mull (Founders Brewery) are collaborating with Silver Spruce Brewery and Cambium Analytica (both Traverse City businesses) to investigate the terroir-influenced quality attributes of hops. The results of this research could help Michigan hop producers differentiate their hops in a manner that increases sales and revenue. Additional collaborative Michigan hop promotion and marketing efforts are also underway with the Hop Growers of Michigan. You can follow these efforts on Instagram at: [hopgrowers_of_michigan](#).

Farm Management

In early 2021, MSU Extension Educator Stan Moore worked with 12 area farms to complete a financial analysis of their farm operation for 2020. Farm financial analyses helps farmers better understand their financial strengths and weaknesses and helps them make better decisions to improve their financial standing. These farms represented around 8 million dollars in gross sales, and around 30 full-time employees (in addition to farm owners).



12 Area Farms
participated in
Financial Analysis



30+ Full Time
Employees



\$8 Million Gross
Sales



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

A key difference in the farm economy this year was the influence of government programs related to covid-19. The programs provide a tremendous amount of financial help to farms that applied, but also brought a tremendous amount of uncertainty and continually changing program requirements. This uncertainty added to an already very stressful year for the farming community.

Year-end tax estimates provided by Moore help farmers manage the tax implications of their farm management decisions. In 2020, farmers tended to have more positive tax returns, largely due to federal covid-19 relief programs. Farms that participated in these year-end tax estimates were in a position to better utilize farm tax strategies. These dollars are then made available for additional purchases locally, contributing to our rural Michigan economy.

Assistance to support beginning farmers across MI

county The MSU Product Center assists Michigan based businesses in developing products and businesses in the areas of food, agriculture, natural resources. In 2020, the Product Center served 788 clients, helping them to create 139 new jobs and 19 new businesses, resulting in total capital formation of \$9,330,686 statewide.

MSUE Innovation Counselors are located around the state, conducting no charge, one-on-one confidential business consulting with entrepreneurs. The assistance provided is tailored to meet the needs of the clients, whether they are start-ups or seasoned business entities. The Product Center's campus-based staff offer fee-based services that range from preparing economic reports and feasibility studies for larger scale projects and grant applications to offering nutritional labeling and Process Authority reviews to meet food safety and regulatory compliance standards. For a complete listing, see PC Services.

Finally, the Michigan State University Extension Food Processing and Innovation Center (FPIC), which is managed by the Product Center, is Michigan's leading independent commercial food development, processing, packaging, and research facility. Businesses can rent the FPCI to create and commercialize new food and drink product lines for the marketplace in an industry compliant and cutting-edge facility located in Okemos, Michigan. See Food Processing Innovation Center for more information.



**312 Counseling
Sessions**



**New Sales:
\$2,669,000**



**5 New
Businesses
Launched**



**33 New
Jobs Created**



**New Investments:
\$959,000**

**2017-2020 MSU
Product Center
Impacts in Grand
Traverse County**

FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES

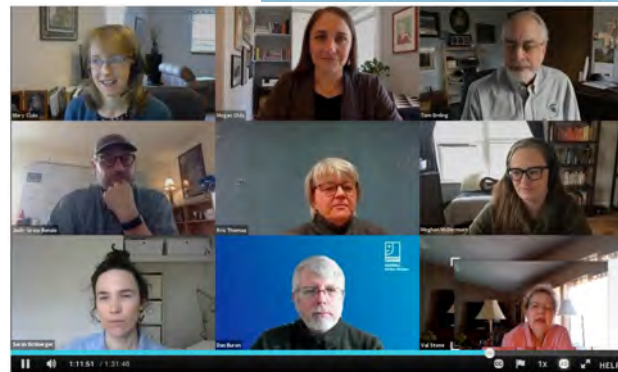
When you support MSU Extension, participants learn how to implement best practices in good governance that keeps communities solvent, productive and engaged; learn effective conflict management skills that help leaders and residents work collaboratively on complex issues; and engage youth leaders in decision-making. In the personal finance area, MSU Extension helps youth and adults alike learn the skills they need to increase their savings, manage their spending avoid predatory lending and reduce mortgage defaults. All of these outcomes help lower the cost of governmental services and lead to personal and community stability, strong neighborhoods and safe communities.

- **New Commissioner School** celebrated 52 years in 2020 by going totally virtual. The program, for newly elected county commissioners, used a combination of live webinars and self-paced online readings and videos. Participants expressed appreciation for the ability to work the study around their busy schedules. Educational outcomes surpassed 2018 results.
- **The Northern Michigan Counties Association** continues its long history of being a place where county commissioners from across the northern lower peninsula gather (virtually for now) eight times each year for lively discussion, sharing successes and concerns, learning from each other, and from guest speakers on topics selected by the commissioners who participate. MSU Extension provides the educational staff support. Due to the pandemic, 2020 saw a transition from in-person to Zoom. Participation dropped off a bit at first, but rebounded later in the year, and early 2021 looks even stronger, with participation up 50% compared to the 2020 average.
- **Building Strong Sovereign Nations (BSSN): Anishinaabek Leadership for Seven Generations Tribal Governance Conference**, a program for elected and appointed tribal officials, also went virtual in early 2021 with recorded sessions available.
- MSU Extension facilitated a Ripple Map Evaluation in partnership with the Northwest Food Coalition's **Farm to Neighbor Program**. Increasing the amount of fresh and healthy food in food pantries was identified as a key leverage point - where you apply a little bit of resources in a system to get a big ripples effect of positive change. Many positive ripples were identified from this program, including building resiliency in the food system.
- **The Food Security Summit** was a six-part virtual series aiming to create space for people to learn about needs and resources and explore a shared understanding and a common vision to address regional food insecurity and hunger in the greater Grand Traverse region. The goals of the Summit were to create additional public awareness through sharing data and stories of care, resiliency, and change, and to highlight a



Fostering Strong Communities, continued

whole-community issue that is rapidly increasing in severity with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Summit series was hosted by the Northwest Food Coalition, in partnership with Food Rescue of Northern Michigan, Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, and Michigan State University Extension, and with financial support from Rotary Charities of Traverse City. Michigan State University Extension provided use of our zoom platform for the event and registration support as well as actively participated in the planning of the sessions.



Food insecurity and hunger were already-growing problems prior to the pandemic, and are now magnified. Our food system is broken and we collectively have an opportunity to improve it. These are immediate problems that need quick implementation and long-term solutions rooted in sound community-based policies, programs, and strategies.

The audiences for the Summit included those experiencing food insecurity, supporting a family member or neighbor experiencing food insecurity, working at a food pantry or at an agency providing food assistance, community members wanting to learn and support people experiencing food insecurity, those working at an organization that supports people, or a community that is experiencing food insecurity, or people simply curious about learning more about food and the future of our community.

Over 200 individuals registered for the series. Between 80-120 people participated in each session. Some people participated in one session, and some in all six. The majority of participants were from the Northwest Lower Michigan region, although there were some participants from other regions and states.

The Summit consisted of six sessions. Each topic-focused session lasted for 1.5 hours and was hosted on Zoom using a webinar-style format.

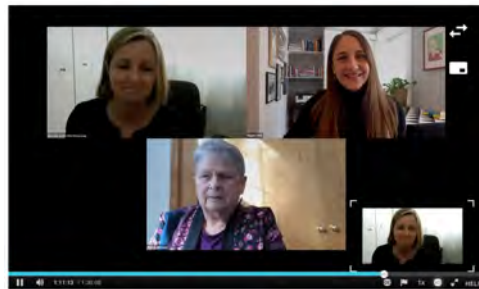
- Session 1 - Who In Our Community Is facing Food Insecurity? (December 8, 2020)
- Session 2 - What are the Sources of Food Assistance? (January 12, 2021)
- Session 3 - How do we Make Decisions to Address Community and Individual needs? (January 26, 2021)
- Session 4 - How do People in Need get Access to Healthy Food? (February 9, 2021)
- Session 5 - What Values Drive our Solutions? (February 23, 2021)
- Session 6 - What's Next? Chartering a Path Forward for Food Security for Our Community (March 9, 2021)

After each Summit session, participants were sent a link to an evaluation form. PDFs of each evaluation summary are available. Participants consistently rated the Summit highly by stating they “agree” or “agree a great deal” with the following statements:



Fostering Strong Communities, continued

- The speakers and panelists communicated their ideas clearly.
- The speakers and panelists held my interest.
- The facilitator(s) encouraged participation.
- I was introduced to ideas and concepts that were new to me.
- I am inspired to learn more about this topic.
- I would recommend this session to others.
- The technology and virtual learning format worked well for me.



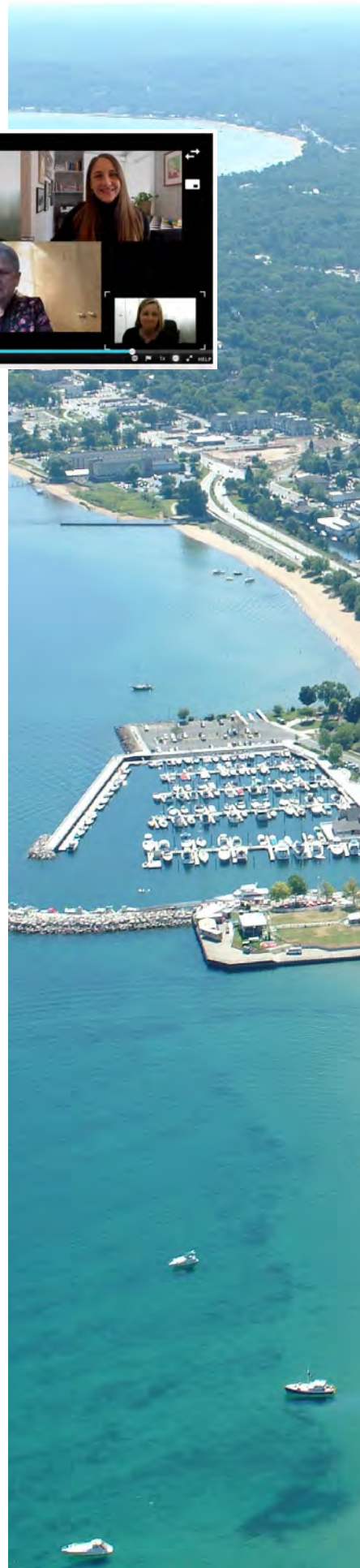
Enhancing & protecting our Great Lakes coastal resources

Sea Grant Extension

MSU Extension supports efforts to carry out Sea Grant programs throughout Grand Traverse County and the rest of Michigan. Michigan Sea Grant Extension helps apply research, conducts educational activities and is connected to more than 40 coastal counties. Extension Educators provide technology transfer by interpreting scientific knowledge for decision-makers, public officials, community leaders, businesses and industries. Michigan Sea Grant Extension provides targeted support focusing on marinas and other businesses, restoring coastal habitats and related industries, such as commercial and recreational fishing. In partnership with state and federal agencies, Extension Educators are responsive and proactive in addressing local, regional and national issues relevant to Michigan.

Grand Traverse County and all Great Lakes coastal communities along Lake Michigan-Huron experienced record high water levels in 2019/2020. The Michigan Sea Grant / MSU Extension outreach team delivered numerous programs to help citizens understand Great Lakes water level fluctuations and impacts from coastal erosion on property and infrastructure. In-person programs were delivered in Peninsula Township to standing-room only crowds and virtual programs were presented on Great Lakes shoreline protection and at the virtual Freshwater Summit. Educational programs showed similarities and differences between the last prior high water period in 1986, the record low level waters in 2012/2013 and now highest monthly averages since 1918 during the period of January to August, 2020. The Michigan Sea Grant Extension also worked closely with TV, print and internet media on this hot topic issue and brought in experts from the National Weather Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Michigan Sea Grant Extension also assisted with Great Lakes education providing research-based info to hands-on groups including Inland Seas Education Association, Discovery Center & Pier, the Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay, Northwestern Michigan College Great Lakes Water Studies program and other groups and agencies.



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