

# Local researchers focus on 'good' insects

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
NEWS EDITOR

When people think about insects, they often think of them as unwelcome guests, from the line of ants leading into their pantry to the swarming mosquitos ruining their barbecue.

While some scientists at the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center do study pests, Sandra DeBano, an associate professor specializing in invertebrates, focuses on the bugs people actually want around.

Beneficial invertebrates she studies include pollinators, composters and natural predators that can be unleashed against pests attacking a crop. Levels of certain types of insects can also be used to measure the health of a stream or other ecosystem.

"I study how we can enhance the services of these invertebrates," DeBano said.

Bees are a good example. Growers often rent different types of bees to help pollinate their crops, placing them in the small tent-like structures that can be seen popping up in fields around Hermiston each summer.

DeBano works with them on how to attract more native pollinators to their fields,



Contributed photo by Scott Mitchell

**A bee lands on a willow in Eastern Oregon.**

through measures, such as planting certain types of bushes along the edges or planting cover crops that will encourage pollinators to stay around when there isn't a cash crop blooming in that field. She said native bees pollinate about \$3 billion in crops in the United States every year.

"I look at how we can enhance that pollination they can get for free from nature," she said.

Beyond attracting the pollinators in the first place, farmers also need to be careful about not killing them off while trying to fight pests. DeBano said sometimes small changes, such as switching to a different type of insecticide or spraying in the evening when bees

aren't active, can make a big difference.

She said the same principles apply to people's yards and home gardens.

"Using pesticides wisely is really important, having people aware that when they're spraying and what they're spraying has effects on pollinators," she said. "People just see pests in their garden and start spraying a broad spectrum pesticide."

Those actions can have inadvertent consequences, killing off not only the unwelcome insects but also ones that are beneficial to a garden or landscaping.

In addition to working with the agricultural industry, DeBano also works with the U.S. Forest Service on forestry projects, as



Contributed photo by Scott Mitchell

**Graduate student Katie Arstingstall and intern Coltyn Kidd collect bee samples from a field in Eastern Oregon for a Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center project.**

does David Wooster, another HAREC associate professor who studies invertebrates.

Wooster's specialty leans more toward aquatic invertebrates. He measures the prevalence of mayflies, stone flies, beetles, leeches, flatworms and other invertebrates to gauge a river's health. An increase in numbers or in dominance of species that are especially sensitive to human impacts indicates that a river restoration project by the Forest Service or Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian

Reservation has succeeded in improving the health of the ecosystem there.

He also studies the spread of invasive species, such as the rusty crayfish that has invaded the John Day River system.

One thing Wooster has been studying for years is how much surface water irrigators can remove from a river before they start to see significant impacts on the health of that river.

"It's a much trickier question to answer than I thought when I first started out," he

said. "Rivers are very idiosyncratic and they respond very differently to the same treatment."

While the COVID-19 pandemic has canceled school field trips and in-person educational programs at HAREC for now, Wooster said one part of his job he usually enjoys is helping students explore the world of aquatic invertebrates through hands-on field trips.

"A lot of kids play in rivers, but they don't usually pay attention to the creepy crawlies there," he said.

# Libraries are now open for in-person visits

By **NADA SEWIDAN**  
STAFF WRITER

Libraries have now reopened for in-person visits in Hermiston and neighboring cities with slight modifications.

Some restrictions include limiting the number of people in the library at one time and adjusting hours.

Hermiston Public Library is only allowing entry through their back door and is limiting the number of people inside the building at

a time. The library's website states that curbside pickup will still be available for those not comfortable with going inside.

Hours are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday. For more information contact 541-567-2882 or library@hermiston.or.us.

City Library in Umatilla reopened on Wednesday, June 10 and has also modified event schedules to limit gatherings. The library will

continue with events, such as their summer reading programs and teddy bear workshops, but limit the amount of reservations available.

Library Director Kellie Lamoreaux said sign-ups are required and gatherings for events are limited.

"We're not going to do anything big," she said. "Only 10 people at a time for events."

To sign up for Umatilla's summer reading program, visit [umatilla-city.org/library](http://umatilla-city.org/library) or call 541-922-5704.



HH file photo

**Bricks at the Hermiston Public Library display the names of donors who helped build it.**

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**HERMISTON PUBLIC LIBRARY REMODEL - PHASE 1**

Sealed bids will be received by the City of Hermiston, at the Building Department, 215 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston, OR 97838, for the construction of the Hermiston Public Library Remodel - Phase 1. Sealed Base Bids must be received by 3:00 pm local time on July 22, 2020 and must be marked "Sealed Base Bid - Hermiston Public Library Remodel - Phase 1". Bids received after this time will not be considered. Sealed Bids will be opened and publicly read at 3:00 pm on July 22, 2020.

Project documents are available at [www.architectswestplans.com](http://www.architectswestplans.com). Bidders may download digital files at no cost; Hardcopy sets are available with a refundable deposit of \$300.00 per set plus a non-refundable fee of \$30.00 per set for handling to be submitted by separate checks. General Contractor may obtain two (2) sets of documents; Mech/Elec/First Tier subcontractors may obtain one (1) set of documents via checks payable to Architects West and mailed to Abadan Reprographics, 603 E. 2nd Ave., Spokane, WA 99202. Deposits will be returned on receipt of documents for a period of ten days after bid opening, provided they are complete and in clean, usable condition. Additional or partial sets may be purchased. Bidders are encouraged to register as a plan holder at [www.architectswestplans.com](http://www.architectswestplans.com), and select "Add me as a Plan Holder". Questions regarding the plan room contact Auron (509) 747-2964 or [repro@abadanspokane.com](mailto:repro@abadanspokane.com). A complete set of contract documents will also be filed with the Plan Centers listed at [www.architectswestplans.com](http://www.architectswestplans.com).

A non-mandatory Pre-Bid Conference has been scheduled for 10:00 am local time on July 7, 2020, at Library at 235 E. Gladys, Hermiston, OR. No bidder may withdraw his bid after hour set for opening thereof, unless award is delayed for a period exceeding 60 days. The City of Hermiston reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive informalities or irregularities in any bid.

For the City of Hermiston, By Byron Smith, City Manager  
**Publication Dates: July 1 of 2020**

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