



## REAL Montana Class II Travels to Washington D.C.



Farrah McGregor, MGGGA At-Large Director and Northwest Farm Credit Services VP – Customer Solutions, just returned from four days in Washington D.C. as part of REAL Montana (Resource Education and Agriculture Leadership). For

Farrah and other members of REAL Montana Class II, this was the fourth seminar in their two-year educational program.

The focus of the seminar March 1-5 was “Policy on a National Scale”. Class members spent a day on Capitol Hill meeting with the Montana Congressional delegation and receiving briefings from Senate Agriculture and Energy and Natural Resources Committee staffers. The American Farm Bureau Federation hosted the class the following day, where they heard from speakers representing a wide range of interests including the EPA, Federal Forest Resource Coalition, and the Associated General Contractors of America. The class arranged meetings with representatives from federal agencies including the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, Department of the Interior, Department of Energy, USDA Forest Service, U.S. Trade Representative, and USDA Risk Management Agency. The visit to D.C. was topped off by a guided tour of the Gettysburg battlefield where class members heard leadership lessons from a retired Army colonel. Additional class activities included tours of the U.S. Capitol and other historic sites as well as group dinners with the California Agriculture Leadership Program and the Washington AgForestry Leadership Program.

“This trip to Washington D.C. provided our class with a great opportunity to visit with the senators, representatives and departments that have an impact on the key natural resource industries in our state. We expressed our concerns, positioned the opportunities and made contacts that will allow us to continue to have an impact at the local, state and national level. I am very excited about the opportunity to make a difference in the agriculture and natural resource industries!”

Twenty of Montana’s emerging and established leaders were competitively selected from a pool of qualified candidates representing a wide variety of agriculture and natural resource industries across the state to take part in Class II of REAL Montana. The two-year program features eight in-state seminars; a four-day national study tour in Washington D.C.; and a ten-day international trip. Seminars include training in natural resource development, agriculture institutions and agencies, public speaking/media, economics, state and federal policy, international trade, urban/rural relationships, water issues, and other current industry topics.

REAL Montana is funded through a partnership with Montana State University Extension and private industry. Oversight is provided by an advisory board of industry leaders. The program will start accepting applications for Class III in the spring of 2017.

Complete program information is available at [www.realmontana.org](http://www.realmontana.org) or by contacting Janelle Booth, program director, at (406) 994-6480, [janelle.booth@montana.edu](mailto:janelle.booth@montana.edu).



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