

Meet the Neighbors: Returning home to change the future

Tourmaline Farms owners work to spread holistic agriculture practices

By Samantha Malott, Daily News staff writer

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Pamela Holloway approaches a British White beef cow Monday at Tourmaline Farm near Deary. Holloway and her husband, Glenn, chose the breed in part for its docile nature.

Geoff Crimmins/Daily News

After spending 22 years around the world, Pam and Glenn Holloway are back in Latah County and ready to make a difference at Tourmaline Farms.

Pam, 44, a Washington State University graduate, and Glenn, 66, a University of Idaho graduate, both left the area after entering into the U.S. Army more than two decades ago, a move that Pam says "took us all over the world for 21 years."

While stationed in Virginia, the pair purchased a small farm with the intent of it being a hobby farm, but "it took on a life of its own," Pam said. "Then we had the opportunity to come home and purchase Tourmaline Farms."

On Sept. 12, 2013, the couple hit the ground running with the 1,280-acre farm outside Deary.

Within the first 12 months of operation, Tourmaline Farms was named by the Savory Institute a "Savory Hub" - of which there are only 30 around the world, Pam said. As a Savory Hub, the Holloways are working to educate farmers and consumers in the region and demonstrate how to build strong, resilient communities using holistic management principles, she said.

Between the two's backgrounds, Pam in health care and Glenn in critical infrastructure and community sustainability, Pam said they recognized there was a need to help the community become more resilient. She said the community has all the right stuff to become a healthy, vibrant self-sustainable area, but still only 5 percent of the area's food is produced locally, she said.

Through self-practice, outreach to other farmers and educators and internships with young farmers, she said they are working to spread the Savory Hub practices. Holistic management includes environmental, economic and social components, she said. With farming, she said, they don't just look at the seed in

the soil or the cows on the land, but at all the relationships, including the ecology of the area, the cost of fencing and the relationships with neighbors, to name a few.

"We work through a lot of those things and maintain that holistic perspective so that we take all of that into account, so the farmer can be much more successful," she said.

At Tourmaline Farms, the Holloways have also helped to train young farmers, including one who is putting together a business plan and starting up his own operation on the farm, Pam said. He will own and run his own operation, but he will have support with the land and mentoring from the Holloways, Pam said.

"A lot more of us need to be doing that with young farmers," she said.

Pam said Moscow and the surrounding area has great potential with vast acres to be managed holistically and the diversity of thoughts and cultures mixed together.

"This community is truly a community, and we've got some of the most gorgeous outdoor space that I've ever seen," she said. "I've certainly had the time to experience many different cultures and I've had the big city lifestyle, and I can tell you there is nothing better than being a part of a small community with people that care about each other."

Moving forward, the couple hope to bring on interns, apply for grants and organize a 30-day Kickstarter campaign for additional funding.

For more information about Tourmaline Farms and its products, visit www.tourmalinefarms.com.

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