Welcome to Granite County

Granite County is a rural, natural-resource supported county in central Western Montana. Winter and summer recreation draw visitors to the scenic beauty year-round, while agriculture is the economic base. Georgetown Lake provides a variety of recreational experiences, and is next door to the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness. The population of the county is about 3,000, and the County Seat of Philipsburg has a population of around 900. The other incorporated town in Granite County is Drummond, with a population of around 300. Montana State University Extension in Granite County is supported by three strong and important partners. County, state and federal funding sources work together to assure that MSU Extension in Granite County has the resources to provide timely and relevant education addressing locally-identified issues. Montana counties provide about 40 percent of the funding to support local offices, state funding provides about 40 percent, and federal partners about 20 percent. Like many Western Montana communities, the Granite County area has a rich mining past, but agriculture has provided the base of economic activity through the boom and bust cycles associated with historic mining. Granite County . . . Montana at its best!

Scenic view of Georgetown Lake with the Pintler Mountains in the background.
4-Her’s Unlock New Livestock Quality Assurance Curriculum

The Granite County 4-H program is comprised of 62 members and 14 leaders participating in various projects. The 4-H program in Granite County combines efforts to share the unique hands-on learning experience that is 4-H. Members in the Granite County 4-H program have the opportunities for hands-on learning at several different county events: Project Possibilities, Foods Fair, Stir-Ups, Quality Assurance, Countywide Demonstrations, IPYA (International Program for Young Adults) Presentations, and the Skill-A-Thon. The Granite County 4-H Council wanted to emphasize Livestock Quality Assurance for all members and all species during the 4-H year. We integrated new curriculum and lock box games to teach kids how to problem-solve situations they might encounter with their project animals and provide real world applications for those looking to pursue animal husbandry as adults. In Granite County, multiple workshops were held, and there was 100% participation from youth in market animal projects. Kids with breeding projects and small animal projects also participated in their species-specific activities. Afterwards, youth had learned about and taught each other proper feeding and nutrition, animal shelter design, and proper medication use, among other things. And they also had fun! Granite County will continue to identify educational needs of the youth in the 4-H program while also providing educators and leaders to help them reach their goals.

Herdsmanship School Continues in Granite County

The Granite County Herdsmanship School was developed 24 years ago as a way to bring educational programs to ag producers in Granite County that would be important to the success of their way of life. In the summer of 2017, Montana experienced drought and Granite County was no different. Livestock and hay are two main sources of income to people living in the county and they regularly deal with pests that impact their bottom line. The Herdsmanship School held in 2018 looked to address these problems that many in the area dealt with. Experts and speakers from around Montana were invited to talk about drought risk management, livestock markets, hornfly control in cattle, vertebrate pest control in hay and pasture, and vaccination efficacy. Some attendees made changes to their operation based upon attending the Herdsmanship School and saw results in higher calf weights in the fall, and reduced pocket gophers in hay fields. In the winter of 2019, Granite County MSU Extension will look to deliver more locally-impactful information through this program.
Noxious Weed Control Remains Important in Granite County

Once again, the Granite County MSU Extension office partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Granite County Conservation District to host the 11th Annual Noxious Weed Clinic. Controlling noxious weeds is a high priority for landowners and managers in Granite County. This year’s clinic brought a variety of topics. People attending learned how to identify noxious weeds of concern to the area, poisonous plants that had been popping up recently, sprayer calibration, and weed control after fires. Over 40 attendees also received Private Applicator Credits, which allow them to stay up-to-date on their Private Applicator License certifications. Evaluations showed that participants benefited from visual aids and tools for noxious weed identification and quick and easy sprayer calibration. In addition to educational programs, Granite County MSU Extension worked with over 15 landowners to establish three cooperative weed management areas through the Noxious Weed Control Trust Fund. This brought $32,000 dollars in matching funds to the county to help private landowners combat noxious weeds like spotted knapweed and houndstongue.

Knapweed infestation in Granite County.
Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA Veteran’s Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.