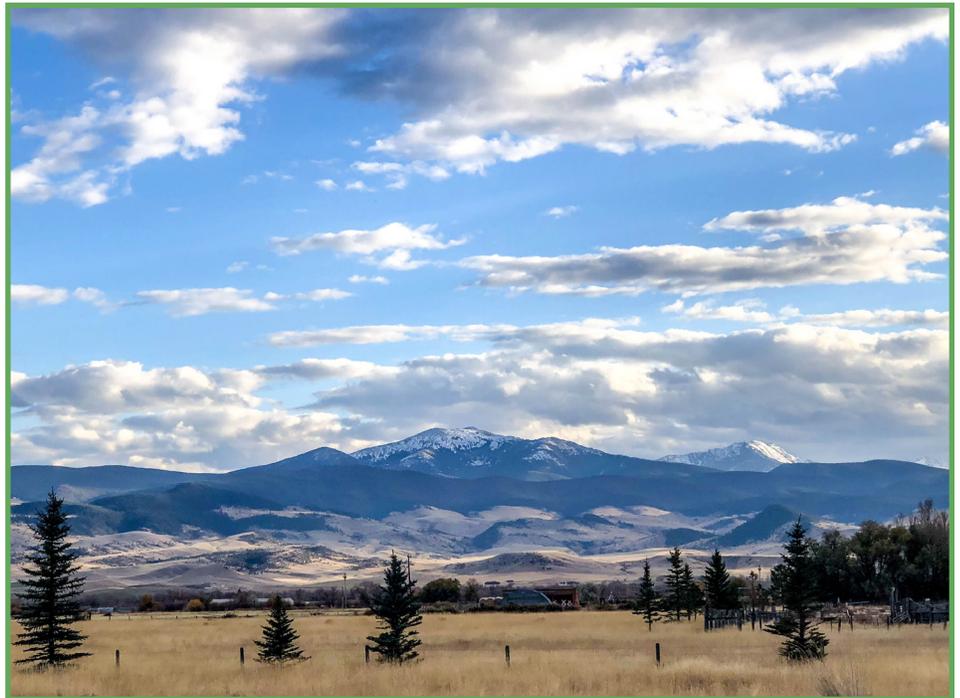




## Welcome to Madison & Jefferson Counties

**M**adison and Jefferson Counties have something for everyone. Located in Southwest Montana, the area prospers with natural resources. The economy base includes production agriculture, wood products, and mining. This recreation haven includes rivers for fishing and floating, hiking and climbing opportunities in the mountain ranges, and large motorized and non-motorized trail systems; there is something for everyone to discover. The communities of Boulder and Basin are home to several radon health mines and ghost towns. The Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park and the Elkhorn State Park are both located in Jefferson County. The county fair is held each August in Boulder, the county seat.



Tobacco Root Mountains. Photo by Aubrie Boline.

### Groundwater Study

Water resources are a vital part of the local economy in Madison and Jefferson Counties and essential to agriculture, recreation, and future growth. The interaction between ground and surface water is an important component to understanding this limited resource. Extension assisted with the recently completed Boulder River Watershed study and is helping to finalize the Jefferson River Watershed study. These two legislative-funded projects help us better understand our water resources and where opportunity exists to impact groundwater recharge to help with late season stream flows that will benefit all water users. The groundwater study involves



area stakeholders and helps to foster the existing drought management plan that has helped sustain late-season stream flows in the Jefferson River, benefitting agriculture and fishing recreation in a collaborative manner.

# Making Boulder's Future Bright

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The 2016 Study Circle and Action Forum, better known as the Making Boulder's Future Bright project, continues its work under the Boulder Transition Advisory Committee (BTAC). MSU Extension agents Tom Harrington and Alison Richardson continue to provide logistical support to the BTAC.

In 2018, Boulder residents had several opportunities to participate and use their voices to help the Making Boulder's Future Bright project move forward to action. Boulder was awarded \$500,000 from the Montana State Legislature to help mitigate impacts from the closing of the Montana Developmental Center (MDC). The Boulder Development Fund Board (BDFB) formed at the beginning of 2018 to give Boulder residents a way to provide input on how the funds should be allocated. The BDFB has worked closely with BTAC, the county planning board, and the Boulder City Council to disperse the funds.

The City of Boulder partnered with BDFB, BTAC, and Land Solutions to complete the Boulder Downtown Master Plan, which was made possible by a \$20,000 grant awarded by the Montana Main Street Program. The Master Plan complements the Growth Policy, also facilitated by Land Solutions, and both documents were adopted by the City of Boulder.

The success of BTAC can be easily recognized in attendance growth at meetings. On the first Thursday of every month at 8 a.m., the Boulder city hall fills with residents committed to seeing their community thrive. These active participants have

even created a handful of subcommittees stemming from the BTAC umbrella, including Trails and Outdoor Recreation, MDC Re-utilization, Client Services, and Health and Human Services.

The Boulder community interactive process was recognized at the National Community Development Conference in Big Sky, and in June, former MSU Extension agent Micky Zurcher and BTAC Chair Drew Dawson traveled to Kildare, Ireland to do a presentation discussing the journey and process of Making Boulder's Future Bright at the World Community Development Conference at Maynooth University. This once in a lifetime opportunity put the community of Boulder and the work being done here in an international spotlight.

As 2018 draws to a close, Boulder's future is looking brighter than ever. The conclusion of the Downtown Master Plan and the Growth Policy are only the beginning as the City of Boulder pursues progress, such as bringing high speed fiber optic internet to town, establishing a community brand, creating a business revolving loan fund, and installing gateway signs. A new Montana Developmental Center (MDC) Re-utilization Committee—a group of business professionals and Boulder residents supported by agents Harrington and Richardson—was recently formed to explore the future of the property and buildings located on the MDC campus and put them back into productive use. The Boulder community interaction model has received much interest from other communities looking at productive ways to engage their towns in open dialogue to meet current and future challenges.



Photo by Aubrie Boline.

## Pipestone Creek Sedimentation and Jefferson Slough Eurasian Milfoil

Extension supports the Jefferson River Watershed Council with these two legislative-approved projects. The Pipestone Creek sedimentation project is helping to reduce streambank erosion and reduce sediment buildup downstream that has contributed to flooding events and created a nursery for the waterborne noxious weed, Eurasian Milfoil, which impacts the Missouri River fishery and recreation.

A test section of the Jefferson Slough channel was relocated and contoured into a stream to assess the impacts and control the spread of the weeds. The initial impact is the visual observation that sediment is flowing through the project and not being deposited in the test area. The area is also being supplemented with herbicide treatments to help check the spread of the noxious weed. The process has involved several area stakeholders and the public to enhance communications to help with the public/private partnership.



## SUNLIGHT BUSINESS PARK

The Sunlight Business Park (SBP) is a property located in a tax increment finance industrial district (TIFID) at the south end of Jefferson County, just outside of Whitehall. The land hosts several lots available for lease to businesses right along the I-90 corridor. This year, the Jefferson Local Development Corporation (JLDC) constructed a brand new warehouse building at the SBP.

The new building is identical to the one that was built several years ago, and it houses three bays for lease. Construction began in June of 2018 and completed in October. The SBP and the TIFID land on which it sits is owned by Barrick Golden Sunlight Mine and is a part of the corporate sustainability program.

Within a month of completion, two of the three bays in the new warehouse building were rented to local businesses. This is indicative of the need for such infrastructure in the Whitehall area. The town's central location between Butte, Dillon, Bozeman, and Helena makes the business park an incredibly valuable asset.

The future of the SBP is open to many possibilities, including ideas such as an interpretive center, a brewery, a feedlot, potential wind farm, and more.



# 4-H Youth Development

## 4-H Cloverbud Small Animal Pilot Program Flourishes

Children between the ages of 5 and 7 who participate in 4-H are called Cloverbuds. This level of 4-H is a way for younger children to participate in the 4-H program, and has traditionally been a practice-only or non-competitive program.

In 2016, MSU Extension in Madison-Jefferson counties saw a decrease in 4-H members choosing small animal, so a pilot program was launched where Cloverbud members could sign up for and exhibit small animals at the fair, something usually only open to older 4-H children. The projects that became available to Cloverbuds for the first time were goat, rabbit, pocket pets, poultry, cat and dog.

Project leaders created special Cloverbud classes at the fair, allowing them to show their animal with the official judge, who also gave each Cloverbud participant valuable pointers and show tips. The Cloverbuds really seemed to enjoy this opportunity

as they got to participate with the “big” kids and most received a participation ribbon and prize.

By the time enrollments were counted for 2017-2018, there were 30 children who signed up for the Cloverbud Small Animal Pilot Program.

The first year things seemed to pick up for the Small Animal Committee with a few Cloverbuds taking the opportunity to practice showing an animal. As the second year rolled around, it seemed that everyone appreciated the idea of younger kids getting a chance to show an animal at fair.

With the positive reception to program adjustments, program leaders foresee the Cloverbud project continuing to be very successful.



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