

# Meagher County



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Sunset entering into Meagher County, by Meagher County Chamber of Commerce.

**M**eagher County, located in Central Montana, is a rural agricultural county. The county is approximately 2,395 square miles with a population of 1,891 people. The county seat of White Sulphur Springs has a bustling main street with producers, town-folks, and outdoor enthusiasts all year round. People come from all over the world to enjoy the famous hot springs, float or fish the Smith River, and to recreate in the four mountain ranges. The Little Belt, Big Belt, Castle, and Crazy Mountains surround the county. No matter the season, the mountains have something for everyone, whether it be snowmobiling or skiing in the winter, camping or hiking in spring and summer, or hunting in the fall. MSU Extension hosts a variety of educational opportunities for community members focusing on agriculture, community development, and 4-H/youth development.

## A New Agent in Meagher County

Makayla Paul was welcomed to Meagher County in mid-May. Paul hails from Sand Coulee, MT, where she graduated high school from Centerville High. She is an alumni of the Cascade County 4-H program. Throughout her time in the program, she was a Junior Leader and raised multiple hogs and steers. 4-H ignited her passion for agriculture and after

high school, she continued her education at Montana State University. Paul received a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science: Livestock Management & Industry. During her time at Montana State, she completed an internship with Gallatin County Extension and worked for the Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development throughout the academic year. Her passion and background in agriculture and 4-H will serve the community of Meagher County well. She looks forward to hosting more educational opportunities for youth and adults and working with her colleagues across the state.

## The Summer of Wildfires

On Sunday, June 13, around 4 p.m., a smoke plume could be seen Southwest of White Sulphur Springs. The plume, later named the Deep Creek Fire, burned for 26 days and burnt 4,648 acres of land in Meagher and Broadwater Counties. The community received a short break before another wildfire would spark from a lightning strike. Saturday, July 10, the Woods Creek Fire started in the Big Belt Mountains west of White Sulphur. The Woods Creek Fire wreaked havoc on Meagher and Broadwater County residents for most of the summer. The fire burned over 55,000 acres on private and public lands. In September, MSU Extension hosted Peter Kolb,

Forestry Specialist, and Jeff Mosley, Range Specialist. The two met with landowners from both counties and provided insight on how to recover from the wildfires. Kolb spoke on salvage-logging burnt trees and what to expect on regrowth of the forest. Mosley educated producers on grazing rangelands and seeding recommendations after wildfires. Our assistance provided landowners with an outline on how to rehabilitate land after wildfires. Throughout the next year, Extension agent Makayla Paul will continue to work with producers on their recovery of range and forested lands. Next spring, Paul plans to travel back to the properties to view the progression of the recoveries. This will give her an opportunity to continue building relationships with landowners and to provide further education if needed.

### 4-H in Meagher County

Meagher County 4-H had 44 active members and 7 volunteers in the 2020-2021 4-H year. There are two active clubs, the Mavericks and Castle Mountaineers. In 2021, 4-H camp was back and better than ever. Meagher County has a joint 4-H Camp with Judith Basin, Wheatland, Broadwater, and Musselshell-Golden Valley counties. There was a total of 48 members that attended camp, and 11 of those call Meagher County home. Meagher County did not have any camp counselors, so next year we hope to send at least one counselor to 4-H Camp. The next major event of the summer was the Meagher County Fair. It kicked off with the horse show, consisting of showmanship, western and English horsemanship, and ranch horse classes. Nine members competed in horse show events.

Later in the week, the Indoor Fair, Outdoor Fair, and live sale were all completed. The Indoor fair hosted 53 different projects, homemade by members and displayed for judging. If members received a blue ribbon or higher, they were able to sell their project in the live auction. The Outdoor Fair included 21 pigs, 2 lambs, 7 steers, chickens, and rabbits; most of these animals were live-auctioned that evening. The sale totaled over \$103,000. This was the largest grossing sale in Meagher County 4-H history. 4-H is currently fundraising to build a new barn at the Rodeo Grounds. The barn would replace the current beef barn and would be a multipurpose building. The first weekend of October, Meagher County 4-H hosted a two-day high school rodeo, which helped to fund-raise more than 10,000 dollars toward the new barn. The goal is to have the barn built by the time of the Meagher County 4-H Fair of 2023.







**Previous Page: (top)** Makayla Paul during the high school rodeo fundraiser hosted by 4-H, by Thad Hereim; **(bottom)** Members receiving directions before interview judging at the Meagher County 4-H Fair, by Bobbie Glick; **This Page:** Private property that was burnt during the Woods Creek Fire in Meagher County, by Makayla Paul

## Meagher County Staff



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**Makayla Paul**  
4-H/Youth Development and Agriculture Agent