

Musselshell-Golden Valley Counties



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One of the views in Golden Valley County, by Jennifer Solf.

Musselshell and Golden Valley counties are in the South-central region of the state of Montana. As of April 1, 2020, Musselshell County had a population of 4,730 and Golden Valley County had a population of 823. The Musselshell Valley has an exciting history which may be learned about at the local museum, open May through September. The Heritage Trail and River Walk follows the Musselshell River, which offers beautiful scenery of the Musselshell County Fairgrounds. Golden Valley County includes the town of Lavina and the county seat is Ryegate. Musselshell County includes the towns of Melstone and Musselshell, and Roundup is the county seat. The major industries for both counties include cattle production, crop production, and coal mining. MSU Extension continues to foster positive relationships with county commissioners in each county to communicate emerging program needs for area communities.

Second Annual Weed Workshop

Musselshell-Golden Valley MSU Extension and the Lower Musselshell Conservation District (LMCD) teamed up again this year to organize the Second Annual Weed Workshop. The workshop took place on September 2 in the Musselshell-Golden Valley MSU Extension Office. Wendy Jones with the LMCD

and Jennifer Solf provided a taco bar for lunch. The workshop consisted of 50 attendees, and 34 of those received six pesticide applicator credits.

Jane Mangold, MSU Extension Invasive Plant Specialist, discussed control of invasive annual grasses. Rick Caquelin, former District Conservationist with the NRCS, presented on weed control with grazing and weed control following fire. Steve Tyrrel, owner/operator of Integrated Ag Services Incorporated, was able to demonstrate drone technology to effectively control weeds. During this portion of the workshop, attendees walked to the soccer fields across from the Extension office to watch the drone fly to different areas of the field.

Meriel Beck, Musselshell-Golden Valley Weed Coordinator, discussed some of the common weeds found in our area and how to control them. Rory Lewis, Helena Chemical Sales representative, focused on herbicide resistance and issues to consider when applying herbicides in drought conditions. Jennifer Solf, Musselshell-Golden Valley Extension Agent, discussed issues with weeds and livestock during drought. The partnership between MSU Extension and the LMCD has continued to thrive to further meet the needs of area producers and community members through this educational workshop.

4-H Weed Pull

The Musselshell-Golden Valley 4-H program requires members to attend a number of cleanup days at the Musselshell County Fairgrounds to participate in fair. These cleanup days have helped 4-H members and families understand how much work it takes to get the fairgrounds looking its best in preparation for fair week activities. Cleanup day activities vary, from raking leaves, repainting buildings, cleaning up wash areas, to pulling weeds. During the trying year of 2020, Musselshell-Golden Valley MSU Extension and Musselshell/Golden Valley Weed Coordinator, Meriel Beck, organized one of the cleanup days to consist of a weed pull focused around the grandstand area of the fairgrounds. This initial weed pull focused on spotted knapweed. Following this successful event, we organized another weed pull in the spring of 2021. This year we focused on houndstongue, but had senior members focus on spotted knapweed, since it was still very much present in the area. At the beginning of the day, youth and families were given a brief presentation to cover the lifecycle and proper identification of the target weed. There were 26 youth members present for the initial weed pull and 60 youth members at the second weed pull. This large increase in attendance showed it will be beneficial to organize more again next year. In addition, the weed pulls have provided a great opportunity to educate youth and families on the importance of controlling noxious weeds.



Top: A drone demonstration during the weed workshop, by Jennifer Solf; **Bottom:** 4-H members pulling weeds at the Musselshell County Fairgrounds, by Jennifer Solf

Musselshell-Golden Valley Staff



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