

# Dawson County



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*Sunset over Short Pines off-highway vehicle area in Dawson County, by Trestin Feagler*

**D**awson County is in central-eastern Montana. Dawson County is a common stopping location between Sidney and Miles City for many traveling between the Midwest and the west. The population of Dawson County is approximately 9,000 and comprises the communities of Richey, West Glendive, and the county seat, Glendive. Dawson County is home to Makoshika state park, the largest in Montana, drawing many tourists to the area for recreation, hunting, and attractions such as the dinosaur museum. Agriculture is a significant enterprise in the county with an even split between livestock and crops. Horse and sheep operations are also common within the area. MSU Extension in Dawson County provides services for the 4-H program, agriculture, horticulture, and community development.

## Dawson County Gardeners

Some of the most beautiful backyards and gardens can be found in Dawson County. Many of the residents in this community are willing to get their hands dirty in hopes of producing bountiful crops and green lawns. In 2021, Dawson County MSU Extension hosted the first in-person Master

Gardener class in several years. Four participants met once a week for eight weeks, learning about the fundamentals of gardening. Additionally, each participant in the class also had at least one garden plot at Glendive Community Garden. Each participant felt more prepared for the upcoming gardening season than before the Master Gardener class.

In addition to educating via the Master Gardener class, Dawson County MSU Extension also received approximately 220 calls about horticulture and lawn care questions. With horticulture being such a popular topic, Dawson County MSU Extension also held a Gardening 101 workshop. The workshop was held in several counties including Dawson, Richland, and Wibaux. The workshops were well attended with many of the participants new to gardening. In addition to garden-focused education, Dawson County MSU Extension hosted a statewide Landscape School in Glendive. Twenty-five participants attended from all over Montana and left ready to tackle their landscaping projects at home. Horticulture and lawn care education helps Dawson County residents to produce their own food, and create a healthy, lasting lawn while doing so with little fertilizer inputs, all while keeping their projects low-maintenance.

## Building of the Barn

Community is an essential aspect of the 4-H Youth Development program, this was emphasized in the last year in Dawson County when the program needed a new small animal barn. At the 2022 Dawson County Fair, the brand-new Simard Small Animal Barn was completed just in time for the small animal projects to be displayed during the fair week. Five local 4-H volunteers worked passionately to ensure a new barn was built to replace the old, rotting building, unfit for people and animals alike. This project was made possible due to the work and support of 4-H members, local community members, and businesses.

The new barn will be utilized for multiple 4-H functions and as a community resource. With ten members participating in the small animal program, they had the opportunity to show their animals both in and around the barn at the 2022 county fair. Large fans kept the poultry and rabbits cool on several hot days at the end of July, a much-needed change from the poorly insulated, old barn. Projects such as this showcase the importance and support of youth programs and community.



**Top:** Glendive Community Garden by Betty Lou Eggert; **Bottom:** Completed Simard Small Animal Barn at the Dawson County Fairgrounds in Glendive, by Alisha Henderson

## Beaverhead County Staff



Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.

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