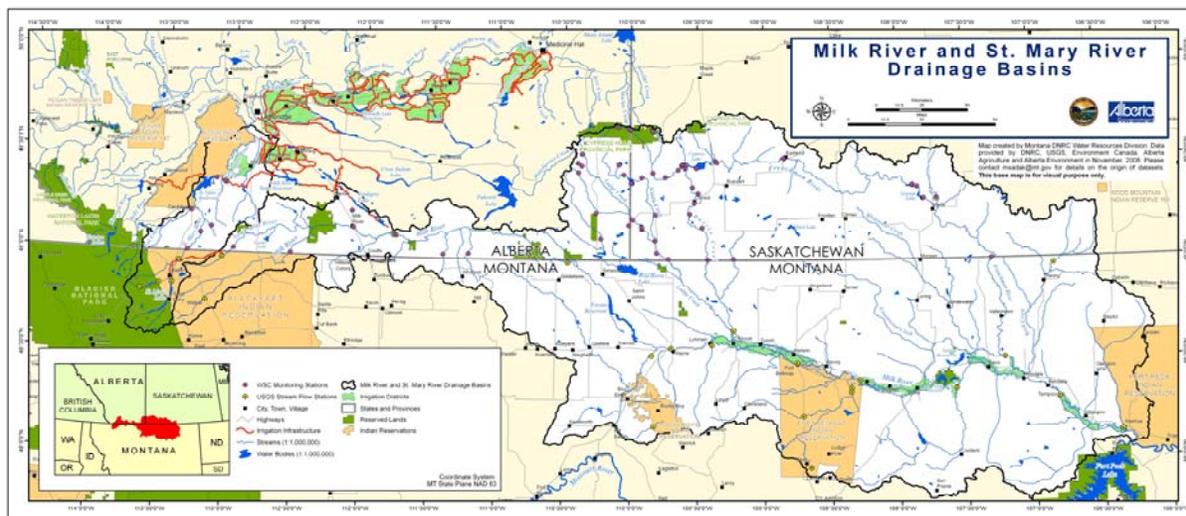


Modeling for the Future of the Milk-St. Mary River Systems in Montana, Basin Study Program

Contact: Kip Gjerde, P.E., 406-247-7750, jgjerde@usbr.gov

Reclamation and the State of Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) will partner to conduct a Basin Study in the Milk and St. Mary River watersheds in north-central Montana that will identify options to secure an adequate water supply for multiple water uses in the basin. The Milk and St. Mary Rivers supply about 140,000 acres of irrigation, including water supplies for Reclamation's Milk River Project, and are also important water sources for municipal uses, tribal water rights, fish, wildlife and recreation. Water shortages in the basin are well documented. The current system of canals and storage reservoirs supply irrigators with only one-third to one-half of the water needed for full crop production in a normal year and Reclamation shortage criteria are frequently exceeded. These shortages are likely to be intensified by the impacts of climate change, aging infrastructure and heightened competition for finite water supplies. The scope of the study is to:

- refine a hydrologic model of the St. Mary and Milk River systems to evaluate water supply scenarios, potentially including the impacts of new water developments in Canada and decreased storage capacity due to sedimentation in Fresno Reservoir;
- model the potential effects of climate change on future water supplies;
- evaluate options to meet future water supply needs, including operational changes, modifications to existing facilities, and non-structural changes.



The study partners will engage basin stakeholders in the study process and believe that the results of the study will be of use to several other basin stakeholders.

The total cost of the study is \$700,000 (50/50 cost share).



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