

## Status of Special Projects Funded for Irrigation Research by the 2007 Legislature

The 2007 Legislature directed DNRC to conduct two research projects regarding irrigation in Montana. A brief description of each project is provided below. For more information, please contact Alice Stanley, DNRC Resource Development Bureau at 406-444-6687 or [astanley@mt.gov](mailto:astanley@mt.gov)

### ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE

The purpose of the study is to provide decision makers with an evaluation of the economic benefits of irrigation in Montana, and economic impacts of investment in existing and new irrigation projects. The final product will be a report entitled *Irrigation in Montana – A Program Overview and Economic Analysis*.

This report will include the following elements:

- A description of existing financial and technical assistance to irrigators and the agricultural community
- An overview of Montana's irrigation systems.
- A description of the methodology and limitations of the economic analysis
- Results and implications of the analysis
- Conclusions and recommendations for government programs

**Appropriation:** \$200,000 in House Bill 2

**Oversight:** DNRC Resource Development Bureau. Our project oversight committee consists of the following staff: Alice Stanley, Chief, DNRC Resource Development Bureau

Tim Bryggman, Natural Resource Economist, DNRC Water Resources Division

Chad Lee, Business Development, Montana Department of Agriculture

Pat Riley, DNRC Irrigation Development Program Manager

Study results will be presented to the Legislative Water Policy Interim Committee September 2008.

**Status:** DNRC has contracted with the economics consulting firm ECONorthwest to conduct the analysis. The study oversight committee is in the process of reviewing preliminary draft technical reports addressing elements of the study. Revised draft technical reports will be completed by early summer. A final draft will be completed at the end of August.

### INVENTORY OF IRRIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITION

The purpose of the study is to provide state agency personnel and other decision makers with an understanding of the condition of existing irrigation systems throughout Montana. This inventory will also include estimated costs of needed improvements. The final product will be a report entitled *Irrigation in Montana – An Inventory of Infrastructure Condition*. The report will include the following elements:

- Description of irrigation system management in general throughout Montana
- System inventory methods and results.
- A description of general irrigation infrastructure condition and restoration needs in Montana
- Conclusions and recommendations
- A GIS database that will support an interactive map of irrigation systems for public use on the DNRC website.

**Appropriation:** \$100,000 in House Bill 6

**Oversight:** Our project oversight committee consists of the following staff:

Alice Stanley, Chief, DNRC Resource Development Bureau

Pat Riley, DNRC Irrigation Development Program Manager

Bill Greiman, Civil Engineer, Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission

**Status:** DNRC has contracted with PBS&J to conduct the inventory. PBS&J plans to distribute a survey questionnaire late spring and visit selected systems late summer/early fall. A final report will be completed late December, 2008.