

Upper Clark Fork River Basin Steering Committee
440 Evans Ave
Missoula, MT 59801

March 13, 2006

Dear Water Right Holder:

Last fall, the Blackfoot Challenge, the Big Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited (BBCTU), and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) hosted two public meetings regarding the examination of water right claims in the Blackfoot basin as part of the State's general stream adjudication process. Working in partnership with these organizations, the Upper Clark Fork River Basin Steering Committee is trying to increase water right holder's participation in the adjudication process and in shaping the future of water rights administration.

The Upper Clark Fork River Basin Steering Committee was established in 1991 and includes representatives from the Big Blackfoot, Little Blackfoot, Flint Creek, Rock Creek, Deer Lodge Valley and Butte. The Steering Committee is not an agency of state government and has no regulatory authority. Additional information about the Steering Committee is attached.

The Steering Committee is conducting a survey to assess your experiences with the state-wide water rights adjudication process and your expectations after this process is complete. The survey is enclosed and we ask that you fill out and return the survey in the stamped envelope provided. Water right holders in two Clark Fork sub-basins are being surveyed. The survey responses will be kept confidential and only a summary of responses will be retained.

In addition to the survey, the Steering Committee has given careful thought to what happens after the general stream adjudication is complete. A paper written by the Steering Committee titled "How Will Completion of the Adjudication Affect Water Management in Montana?" was written to stimulate discussion by Montana water users, water managers, and policy makers on the future of water rights enforcement, water administration, and water management in Montana. The paper is enclosed.

The Steering Committee will be hosting a public meeting at the **Ovando School Gym** on **March 23, 2006 at 7:00 pm** to discuss the survey questions and related issues. By completing the survey and/or attending the public meeting you will help identify and implement fundamental changes to water rights administration before final water rights decrees are issued. Your input is essential to improving this process which affects the water resources we all depend on.

If you have questions regarding the survey, please bring it with you to the public meeting or feel free to contact the committee (see below). Please be sure to get the survey back to us by March 23rd so that your response can be included. Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

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