

**Montana – Alberta St. Mary and Milk Rivers Water Management Initiative  
Joint Initiative Team meeting #2  
January 12-13, 2009, Great Falls, MT**

**Attending:**

For Alberta – Ken Miller, Brent Paterson, Gerry Perry, Duncan Lloyd, Sal Figliuzzi, Robert Harrison Tom Gilchrist, Tim Toth, Terrence Lazarus, and Roger Hohm.

For Montana - John Tubbs (Jan 12), Dustin de Yong, Randy Reed, Dave Pederson, Harold “Jiggs” Main (Jan. 12, 3:30p.m.), Don Wilson (Jan. 13) Larry Dolan, and Paul Azevedo.

**Guest** – Larry Mires (executive director, St. Mary’s Rehabilitation Group), Randy Perez, (Water Resources Director, Ft. Belknap Indian Community)

**Purpose of Phase 2 Joint Initiative Team**

To explore and evaluate options for improving both Montana’s and Alberta’s access to the shared water of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers, and to make joint recommendation(s) on preferred options to both governments for their consideration and approval.

**Purpose of Meeting**

Second of three educational meetings dedicated to developing a better understanding of the international apportionment procedures and the similarities and differences in how Montana and Alberta manage water.

**Day 1 – 2:00 – 5:00 pm**

**1. Welcome and Member Introductions (John)**

All members introduced themselves. John welcomed Harold “Jiggs” Main representing the Ft. Belknap Indian Community as a new member to the Joint Initiative Team.

Updates and Action Items from December 10 &11, 2008 meeting.

- Premier Stelmach will send a letter to Governor Schweitzer expressing Alberta’s support for the rehabilitation of the St. Mary Diversion Facilities.
- Discussed and agreed that meeting notes should reflect the **intent** of an agenda item, rather than a detailed discussion of the **content**. Additional content will be added when the discussion brings new information forward, agreements are reached and decisions are made.
- Approve Draft notes of December 10 &11, 2008 meeting as sent out.
- MT Senator Jon Tester has invited Ken Salazar, the Obama Administration’s nominee for U.S. Secretary of the Interior, to visit the St. Mary Diversion Facilities. MT will keep AB apprised of developments.

**2. What did members think about since last meeting?**

Members shared thoughts and insights on the Initiative process that have come to mind since the last meeting.

- “Change” was discussed – changing current operations of the St. Mary- Milk river system – and how the JIT could get agreement on any recommendations for change.

- State of MT is committed to rehabilitation of the St. Mary Facilities. The St. Mary Rehabilitation Working Group is key to enabling change in MT.
- JIT members have expressed a strong desire to visit infrastructure in MT and AB.
- Alberta is interested in seeing how to share the benefits of providing better access to the shared waters.
- Need to keep politicians/decision-makers in both jurisdictions engaged in process to ensure it goes as smoothly as possible. AB has a communications person assigned to the project. MT will confirm their communications person.
- Discussed and agreed that the broad range of background support information is of great value for this, and likely for future discussions between water users and government agencies in both jurisdictions. Members agreed to hire a professional writer to compile all the background support information into a single report. Information will be made available to the public.

### 3. **International Agreements** (Section 5 of background information)

Sal Figliuzzi (AB) and Larry Dolan (MT) presented information on the international agreements that govern water sharing in the St. Mary and Milk Rivers (the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty, the 1921 Order, the 2001 Letter of Intent), apportionment procedures, annual records meetings, and the difference between each jurisdiction's entitlements versus actual diversion.

JIT members discussed water accounting procedures, the role of the Field Officers, the location of flow monitoring sites and weather stations in AB and MT, and other operational and administrative aspects of the agreements.

- **ACTION** Larry and Sal will reproduce figure 5.1.5 (U.S. and Canadian entitlements as a percent of total natural flow @ the international boundary) using median (not average [mean]) data.
- Larry and Sal will compute the percentage of U.S. entitlement MT could take if the St. Mary Canal had an 850 cfs capacity.

## Day 2 – 8:30 am – 3:00 pm

### 1. **Irrigation** (Section 8 of background information)

Roger Holm (AB) and Larry Dolan (MT) presented information on the irrigation infrastructure and water application systems used in each jurisdiction. Members watched a video title “The Magic of Water” produced by Alberta Agriculture and Food. A copy of the video was provided to all JIT members. AB handed out an annual report, “Alberta Irrigation Information 2007” as reference – it identifies irrigation info for crops in the irrigation districts.

### 2. **Water Operations** (Section 8 of background information)

Larry Dolan (MT) and Terrence Lazarus (AB) gave presentations on the water management operations in each jurisdiction. Larry described the operations of Sherburne Reservoir, Fresno Reservoir, and Nelson Reservoir. Terrence described the operations of the Waterton - St. Mary Headworks System in southern Alberta which includes the Waterton-Belly Canal, Belly Chute, St Mary Reservoir, and the St. Mary –

Ridge Reservoir. Terrence provided JIT members with a brochure entitled, “Water Management Operations”.

JIT members discussed the challenges each jurisdiction faces in operating and managing their water infrastructure.

- 3. In-stream Ecosystem Flows (Section 7 of background information)**  
Sal Figliuzzi (AB) and Larry Dolan (MT) presented information on the regulatory/ planning process used in each jurisdiction to address in-stream flows for the ecosystem.
- 4. Criteria for evaluating options**  
The JIT must start considering criteria that would be valuable in evaluating the options that will be developed after the education sessions are complete. This will be taken up in subsequent meetings.
- 5. Meeting Review, Next Meeting, Actions Items**  
Each jurisdiction reported on its communications about the Initiative.

MT’s Governor’s office indicated that Montana plans to uphold its open meeting approach. Alberta will work with its government Communications staff to clarify its approach.

Communications plan – there are 5 audiences: (1) governments of MT and AB; (2) JIT governments and organizations; (3) Municipal leaders (including southern Alberta MLAs); (4) Direct stakeholders (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, *etc.*), and (5) Other interested public (media, irrigation organizations, *etc.*).

A press release would announce and acknowledge that this initiative is underway, but no press releases have been issued by either government at this time. Open houses could be used to get information to large group of requestors if necessary.

The Milk River Watershed Council Canada has a meeting on Jan. 22 in which the MRWCC AB Team members will use Joint Status Report #1 to provide their members information about the Initiative.

**ACTION** – Tim will work with the rest of the AB Team to ensure that Gerry and Duncan have the information to apprise the OWC.

#### Potential for tours

The following areas were identified as important areas to be seen:

- **April 6-7, 2009** – Milk River Irrigation Project (MT). Fresno Reservoir to Glasgow Irrigation District.
- **May 5-6, 2009** – Waterton, AB – Alberta headworks (Waterton-St. Mary Ridge-Verdigree Coulee) – down to the Milk River (AB) irrigation works. Tour will include potential future storage sites.
- **June 2009**, date TBD – St. Mary’s Diversion system in MT. Tour will go from Sherburne Reservoir to Drop Structures at the North Fork Milk River.

For the April and May meetings, it was agreed the best use of the JIT's time is to hold a one day meeting to start brainstorming ideas about options (without any analysis) plus a one day tour.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 18-19 in Lethbridge. Larry Dolan and Sal Figliuzzi will make presentations on;

- Water Supply & Management Models,
- Past and Ongoing Structural and Water Management Investigations
- Requested additional topics

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

### **Summary of Agreements**

- Agree that meeting notes should reflect the **intent** of an agenda item, rather than a detailed discussion of the **content**.
- Approve Draft notes of December 10 & 11, 2008 meeting as sent out.
- Agree to hire a professional writer to compile all the background support information into a single report. Information will be made available to the public.

### **Action Items**

- MT will identify a communications person for Initiative process.
- Larry and Sal will reproduce figure 5.1.5 (U.S. and Canadian entitlements as a percent of total natural flow @ the international boundary) using median (not average [mean]) data.
- Larry and Sal will compute the percentage of US entitlement MT could take if the St. Mary Canal had an 850 cfs capacity.
- Tim Toth will work with the rest of the AB Team to ensure that Gerry and Duncan have the information to apprise the OWC.