

Water Court Biannual Report

TRIBE: Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes of the Fort Belknap Reservation

UPDATE: July 15, 2005

The 2005 legislative session passed a bill authorizing \$9.5 in GO bonds to be used for State cost share for the Fort Belknap settlement. An organizational meeting was held in June and the parties continue to work to come to agreement on the costs of proposed mitigation projects, cost share required for federal legislation and Tiber allocation. The Commission hopes to see federal legislation drafted in time to submit it to the 2006 Congressional session.

TRIBE: Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Reservation

UPDATE: July 15, 2005

A negotiating session was held in January and another is scheduled for August. The Commission technical staff continues work to evaluate the impacts of the Tribal proposal for the settlement of water rights to Birch Creek, the southern boundary of the reservation. At the August session the Tribe will submit a draft proposal for water from the St. Mary system; it also continues its involvement in the St. Mary's Rehabilitation Working Group. The goal is to submit a compact to the 2007 Montana legislature.

TRIBE: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

UPDATE: July 15, 2005

The State and Tribe issued a joint press release stating that discussions on the draft Interim Agreement, which was released for public review at the end of November 2004, have been suspended. The parties were unable to come to agreement on revocability issues. The parties have agreed to continue with separate technical work for the long-term settlement negotiations. Initially, work is focused on the Jocko River area. There have been no recent negotiating sessions. The parties are hoping to complete a compact by 2009.

TRIBE: Crow Tribe

UPDATE: July 15, 2005

The Crow Tribe and the Commission hope to complete federal legislation for introduction to Congress in 2006, and the legal teams will meet to begin drafting. Both parties are highly motivated to move the process forward.

TRIBE: Turtle Mountain Chippewa

UPDATE: July 15, 2005

No changes have taken place in the status of negotiations since the last report. The State and the Tribe have not received U.S. Department of the Interior approval for a federal