



BLACKFEET NATION

Blackfeet Water Compact and Settlement Act: The Basics

On April 20, tribal members will vote to determine the future of our water on the Reservation. The vote will approve or deny the Blackfeet Water Compact and the Blackfeet Water Rights Settlement Act.

If a majority of voting tribal members vote “yes” on their ballots, the water agreement between the Blackfeet Nation, the state of Montana, and the United States will be implemented. This means:

- Blackfeet’s reserved water rights (or Winters rights) will be confirmed.
- Blackfeet water rights will be quantified for the Tribe, tribal members and allottees.
- Blackfeet’s jurisdiction and regulatory authority over its water rights will be confirmed and established.
- Blackfeet will receive \$471 million dollars from state and federal funding for water related projects.

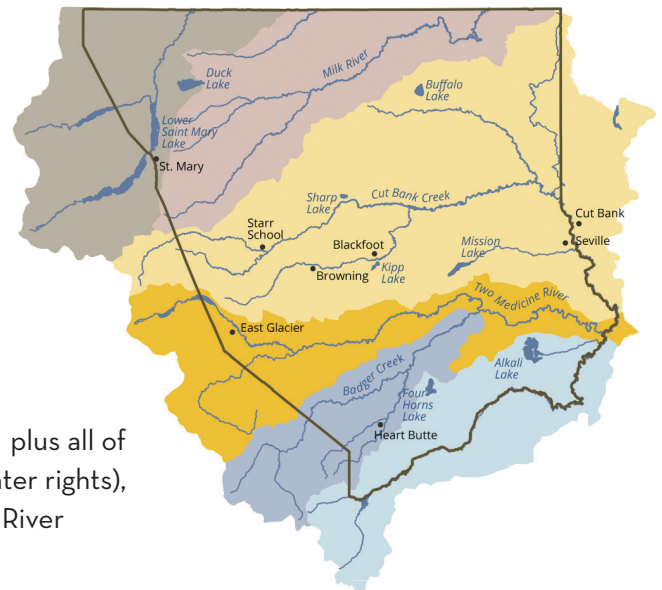


What will the Blackfeet Water Compact and Settlement Act provide?

Water

The Tribe would be entitled to nearly 800,000 acre-feet of water annually, including:

1. All surface and groundwater on the Reservation (minus the amount of State water rights) from the following drainage basins:
 - Milk River
 - Badger Creek
 - Cut Bank Creek
 - Two Medicine
2. 50,000 acre-feet annually from the **Saint Mary River Basin**, plus all of Lee Creek and Willow Creek (minus the amount of State water rights), and all the remaining U.S. share after diversions for the Milk River Project.
3. 125 cfs (approximately 62,000 acre-feet) annually from **Birch Creek**.



800,000 acre-feet of water is enough to cover the entire Reservation 6 inches deep

What additional Water Rights are there?

- All water in lakes, ponds, wetlands and other water bodies
- Any water rights associated with acquired lands
- 45,000 acre-feet annually from Lake Elwell (Tiber Dam)

Funding

\$422 million (federal funding)

+

\$49 million (state funding)

\$471 million

- Community water systems
- New irrigation projects
- Improvements to existing irrigations projects
- Four Horns pipeline, dam safety and other improvements
- Recreational lake improvements
- Swiftcurrent environmental improvements and protection project
- Land and water acquisition
- Fishery development and management
- Water related energy development issues

Additional Water Compact Highlights

- Blackfeet can issue permits to water users on the Reservation, and can lease available excess water to water users on and off the Reservation.
- The State cannot issue any new state water right permits on the Reservation.
- Blackfeet has an exclusive right to develop and market hydropower at Milk River Project facilities on the Reservation.
- The Four Horns pipeline will be constructed to allow Blackfeet to market water to Birch Creek water users or others further downstream.
- New irrigation projects will be developed in all stream basins.
- Upgrades to existing and development of new municipal water systems.
- Recreational lake improvements, including campgrounds and other facilities.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acre-foot of water - Amount of water that covers one acre of land one foot deep.

Federal reserved water rights or Winters rights - Amount of water needed to fulfill the purposes of the Reservation. These rights cannot be lost even if they are not used.

State water rights - Water rights established under state law on non-member fee lands.

For more information:



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