

Review of the Montana Water Information System
Prepared for the Water Policy Interim Committee
January 11, 2016



90-15-305. Water information system. (1) There is a Montana water information system, to be operated within the natural resource information system referred to in 90-15-301 and that is to be considered a part of the system.

(2) The Montana water information system shall make available and readily accessible, in a usable format, to state agencies and other interested persons, information on the state's water resources, out-of-state water resources that affect the state, existing and potential uses, and the existing and potential demand.

85-2-105. Water policy committee duties. (2c) assist with interagency coordination, 2(d) communicate with the public on matters of water policy and water resources of the state, 3(a) analyze and comment on the state water plan, 3(d) analyze, verify, and comment on the water information system.

Why is the Water Information System important?

- The WIS **organizes water-related information** from multiple state and federal agencies and makes it **discoverable from one starting place**. The WIS makes high quality data on surface water, groundwater, water rights, water supply, water quality, watersheds, and more available to the public through GIS, maps, applications, and webpages.
- Water resource issues are multi-faceted, multi-disciplined, and often highly localized. Creating good policy to anticipate and address water issues requires ready access to up-to-date information. The WIS **facilitates water-related data sharing**.
- The WIS Manager and other State Library staff **communicate with the public and answer questions about where to find water data and how to use it**, and they direct patrons to experts and trusted sources.

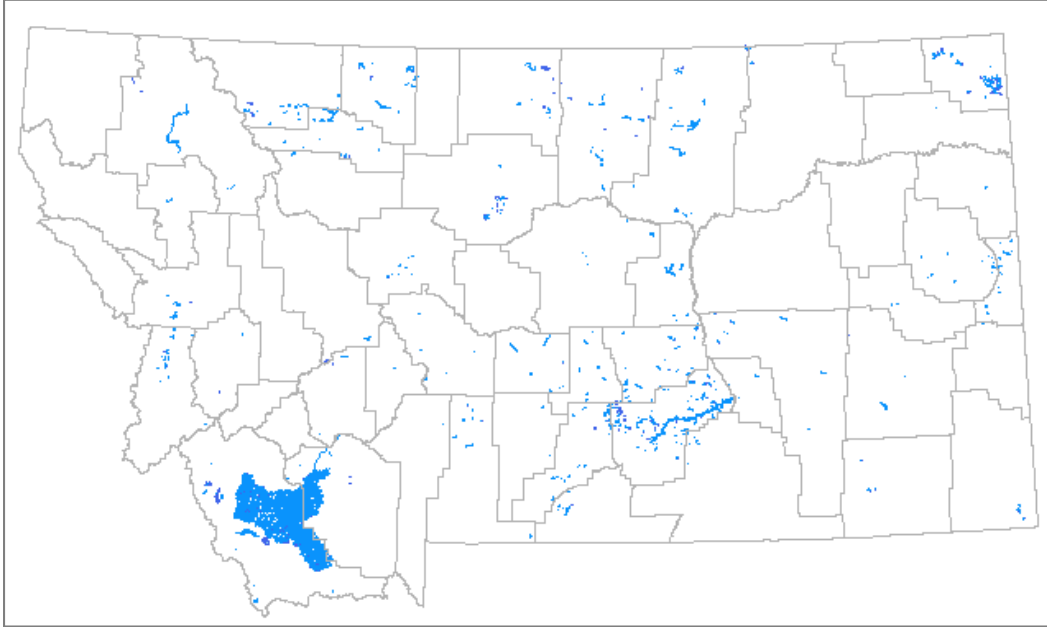
Primary Goals

1. **Coordinate** efforts among state agencies to improve hydrographic data and provide support to water information users throughout Montana. Identify opportunities to collaborate in order to make high quality water information available to all Montanans as efficiently and affordably as possible.
2. **Update and maintain the Montana Hydrography Dataset** making it the best available high quality statewide water information reference dataset for use by Montana state agencies and local and private interests.
3. **Manage and maintain the Water Information System website** as a discovery hub for Montanans to find information about water resources in the state.

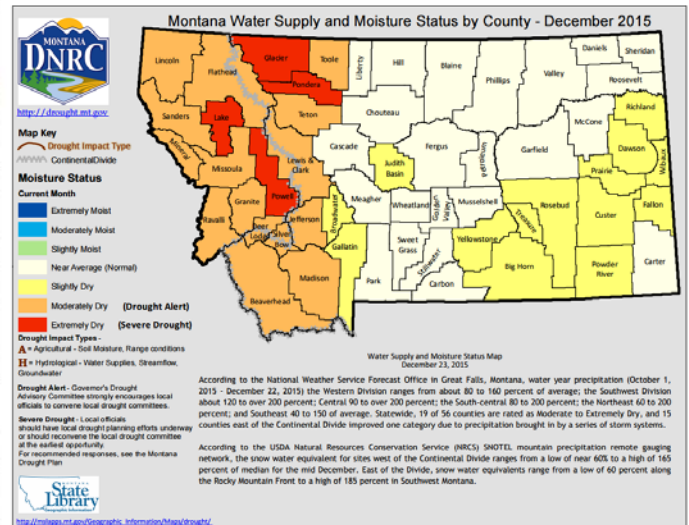
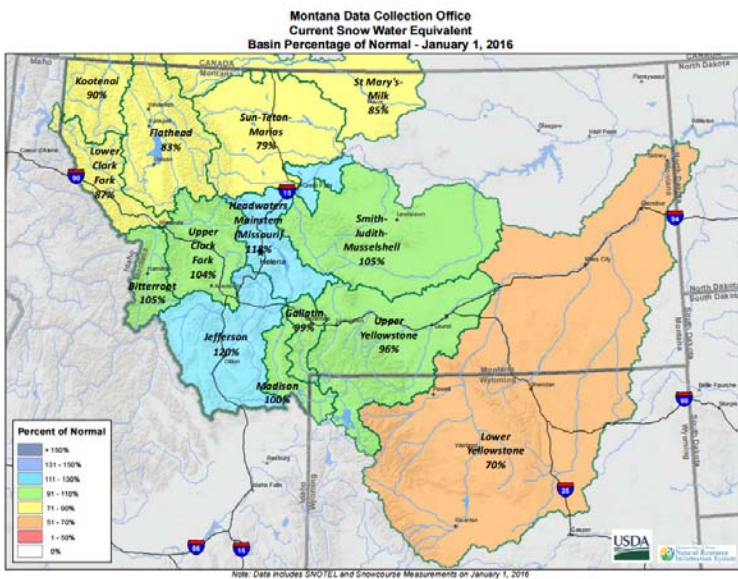
Data Resources

- **GIS data and Maps:** drought, snow and water supply, channel migration zones, Yellowstone River Corridor, Flathead LiDAR, hydrography, watersheds.
- **Applications:** Water right query system, hydrography dataset viewer.
- **Technical support:** Assistance finding water-related information and understanding it.

Water Information System Work Product Examples



Since September 2014, the State Library has made over 25,000 revisions to the statewide hydrography dataset, primarily to the spatial representation of streams, rivers, and waterbodies (map blue lines).



The State Library produces monthly maps of snow and water supply conditions in partnership with the USDA (left map, “Snow Water Equivalent, January 2016”) and monthly maps of drought status in partnership with the Governor’s Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee (right map, “Moisture Status by County, December 2015”). These products and more are made available to the public through the Water Information System at: <http://nris.mt.gov/water>