

Central Montana RC&D Area Inc.
Success Story Summary
Regional Water Project



The Musselshell-Judith Regional Water Project is a multi-year series of projects, most of which are being managed and facilitated by Central Montana RC&D, on behalf of the Central Montana Regional Water Authority. The over goal is to find a source of municipal water for several towns in five Central Montana counties, to replace the current inadequate or inferior water supplies, that is of sufficient quality as to not require conventional water treatment, thereby saving the need for multiple water treatment facilities and in general reducing the amount of water used and wastewater created.

The major project activities necessary to reach the above goal include:

- 1) Finding a source of water with sufficient quality and quantity to service the area. This was accomplished over a period of 3 years, from 2000-2004, by successfully drilling a test well in the western portion of the RC&D. The water test from that well concluded that the supply was adequate. A water right was secured for the water. Total cost of this activity was \$510,000 financed by the Mt Coal Board, City of Roundup and Musselshell County. Acquisition and coordination of resources, and project management was provided by Central Montana RC&D.
- 2) Formation and organization of a legal entity to be the owner of the over all water project. Central Montana RC&D staff met with officials and public groups from all the potentially affected counties and cities during 2004-2005. The result was the formation of the Central Montana Regional Water Authority, authorized by Montana Statute and approved by the Secretary of State and County Commissions in all five counties. With technical assistance and coordination from Central Montana RC&D, this organization meets monthly.
- 3) Completion of planning processes and feasibility studies required to request Congressional Authorization of the project. Appraisal Report and Phase I and II Feasibility Reports have been completed and submitted for review under the soon to be adopted federal rules for Rural Regional Water Project. Total cost of that work is \$210,000 financed through a legislative appropriation through the MT DNRC. An additional \$300,000 Reclamation grant is being held to match a yet to be secured federal grant for additional well development. A second legislative appropriation of \$298,000 has been secured to complete NEPA review, additional water right work, a Water Conservation Plan and other required documentation. Each report or study is treated as a separate “sub-project” requiring funding and management, and six to nine months to complete. These activities were completed from 2006-2009.

All required project activities are targeted to be completed within the next year, so an Authorization Request can be submitted to Congress in early 2011. It is hoped that project construction can be completed within five years of authorization. Overall system capital cost is estimated to be \$87,800,000, including federal, state and local funds.