



## CENTRAL MONTANA RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT AREA

*In 2004, the Central Montana RC&D Council adopted a project to assist the region in acquiring acceptable quantities of good quality municipal water. Central Montana Regional Water Authority (CMRWA) includes eight member communities and is administered by Central Montana RC&D.*

### Project Benefits:

- ☑ **COST:** Residents & their communities won't have to absorb cost of upgrading numerous smaller water facilities.
- ☑ **JOBS:** The system will provide jobs during construction & for ongoing operation & maintenance.
- ☑ **WATER CONSERVATION:** Total water consumption by all communities will be less than if each community provides water treatment.
- ☑ **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** A dependable, high-quality water source is an incentive to businesses & industry to relocate to Central Montana.

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## Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System

*A regional water project seeking clean, plentiful & affordable water for its residents...*

### CMRWA Funding:

This project has received a Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation direct appropriation for 6 years, \$1 per capita from its members, a Montana Coal Board grant for the test well at Utica, and a Bureau of Reclamation grant for its appraisal. Total funding to this point is nearly \$1.4 million, which has been secured by Central Montana RC&D on behalf of CMRWA.

Central Montana RC&D is developing a second federal grant request for \$500,000 for completion of the full feasibility report, required as part of the Congressional Authorization process for rural water projects.

The total estimated capital cost of the project is \$103 million.



Musselshell River running dry near Ryegate, Montana.  
*Photo courtesy of Big Sky Fishing.com*

### Accomplished To Date:

- ☑ Formation of a legal water authority.
- ☑ Finding and proving a new water source. The Utica Test well proved water quality and quantity. Water right acquired.
- ☑ Appraisal report submitted to & approved by the Bureau of Reclamation under the Rural Water Supply Act of 2006 rules. Appraisal systematically investigates alternative solutions, then selects a preferred alternative. Preferred alternative points to a wellfield site south of the test well.
- ☑ Several phases of the Feasibility Report including investigation of water source development, site selection, pipeline routes, construction methods, construction costs, O&M costs, water & energy conservation options, ,etc.

### What's Next?

- ☑ Finish the Feasibility Study, including environmental assessment, socio-economic analysis & water conservation study. (This work is under contract and due to be completed by summer 2011.)
- ☑ Seek Federal Authorization (2011)
- ☑ Construction (2013)

## The Problem:

Good water is not a luxury enjoyed by some Central Montana communities:

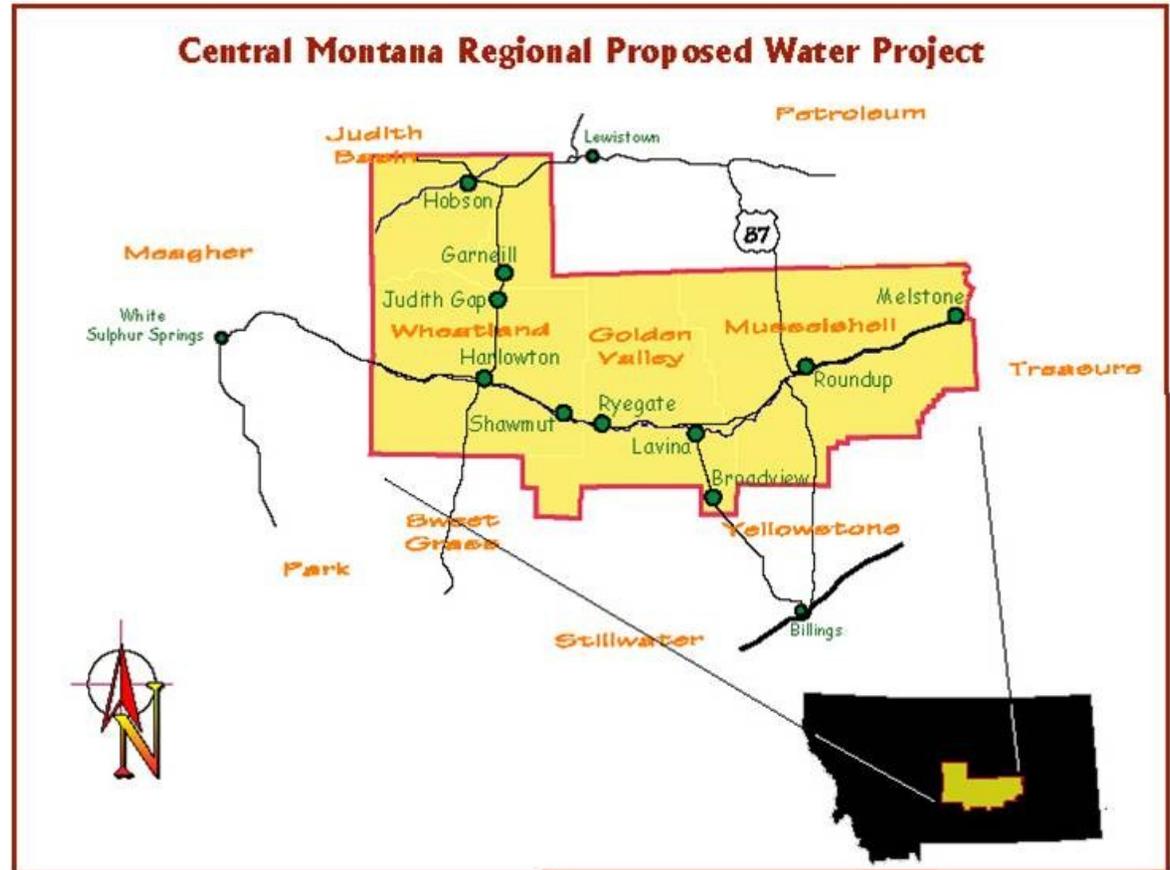
- ☑ High mineral or sulfate contents make it undrinkable;
- ☑ Businesses threatened to be shut down because of high nitrate levels;
- ☑ Water restrictions are common during dry years.

## The Solution:

An informal group had been meeting to look for solutions to the water dilemma in the Musselshell Valley region since 2001. Guided by Central Montana RC&D, the Central Montana Regional Water Authority was authorized in 2004 to search for a good and plentiful municipal water source for residents. A test well was drilled into the Madison Aquifer near Utica, which proved the water quality and quantity. Alternatives were explored and the preferred wellfield site chosen. Each step in the overall project has been the equivalent of a major project requiring multiple months of work and thousands of dollars by RC&D.

*"We are a small community in Montana with a big problem... The fact is that the water here isn't fit to drink."*

*- Peggy Jones, Roundup*



Proposed route of the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System.

## About the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System:

- ◆ Proposed wellfield to be located six miles NW of Judith Gap, with deep wells drawing water from the Madison Aquifer.
- ◆ Core transmission line will be about 230 miles long, beginning near Utica, going northeast to Hobson and possibly Moore, south to Judith Gap and Harlowton, east to service Ryegate, Lavina, Broadview, Roundup and Melstone.
- ◆ The project will initially provide municipal water for about 5,800 residents, and eventually service about 7,500. The project will also serve interested rural customers along the route.