
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.

Why is the Water Information System important?

- The WIS makes water-related data from multiple state, federal, and local agencies discoverable from one common 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-discipline, and often highly localized. Understanding and resolving them requires ready access to up-to-date information. The WIS facilitates access to water-related information and promotes data sharing.
- Access to good water information facilitates water management, water planning, and water development. The WIS Manager and other State Library staff 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 with water data providers and identify opportunities for partnerships** to make high quality water information available to all Montanans as efficiently and affordably as possible.
2. **Facilitate discovery and access to water information** by managing and updating the Montana Water Information System website as a discovery hub for Montanans to find information about water in the state.
3. **Update and maintain the Montana Hydrography Dataset** for use by state, local, and private interests as the best available statewide digital representation of Montana's streams, rivers, and waterbodies.

Additional relevant statute:

Natural Resource Information System

90-15-301. Establishment of information system. (1) The library, in consultation with the committee, shall establish a planning framework for the implementation of a natural resource information system and shall begin implementation of the plan. This system is to be a comprehensive program for the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of existing data relating to the natural resources of Montana.

Montana Natural Heritage Program

90-15-102. Definitions. As used in this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(3) "Natural heritage program" means a program of information acquisition, storage, and retrieval for data relating to the flora, fauna, and biological community types of Montana.

Montana Land Information Act

90-1-402. Purpose. The purpose of this part is to develop a standardized, sustainable method to collect, maintain, and disseminate information in digital formats about the natural and artificial land characteristics of Montana. Land information changes continuously and is needed by businesses, citizens, governmental entities, and others in digital formats to be most effective and productive. This part will ensure that digital land information is collected consistently, maintained accurately in accordance with standards, and made available in common ways for all potential uses and users, both private and public. This part prioritizes consistent collection, accurate maintenance, and common availability of land information to provide needed, standardized, and uniform land information in digital formats.

Water Information System - Hydrography Dataset Uses

Item (existing or potential)	Statute & Rules (MCA, ARM, USC, CFR)	Class	Scale	Agency
State Water Plan / Planning	MCA 85-1-203	Product / Use	1:24	DNRC
Water Quality Integrated Reporting (Assessment Units)	MCA 75-5-702 33 U.S.C. 1314 & 1315 40 CFR 130.8	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DEQ
Water Quality Monitoring Locations	MCA 75-5-702 40 CFR 130.4	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DEQ
Water Quality Reference Site	MCA 75-5-702 40 CFR 130.4	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DEQ
State Water Use Classification (Water Quality Standards)	MCA 75-5-301 ARM 17.30.600 et seq. 33 U.S.C. 1314 40 CFR 130.3 & 131.4	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DEQ
MPDES Permit Outfalls	MCA 75-5-703	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DEQ
Species Occurrence Mapping	MCA 90-15-102	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	NHP, MDT
Wetland Mapping	MCA 90-15-102	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	NHP, MDT; DEQ
Lotic Aquatic Ecological Systems Mapping	MCA 90-15-102	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	NHP
Floodplain Mapping	MCA 76-5-Part 2	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	MDT; DEQ; DNRC; FWP, Commerce
Fish Distribution / Occurrence / Presence		Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	FWP*
Wildlife Distribution / Occurrence / Presence		Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	FWP*
Dewatering Status	MCA 85-2-150	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	FWP* DNRC
Minimum Instream Flow	MCA 85-2-436	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	FWP* DNRC
Survey site locations		Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	FWP*
Fisheries telemetry work (need network)		Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	FWP*
Fishing regulations		Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	FWP*
Stream Access	MCA 23-2-Part 3	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	FWP*
Display of instream barriers		Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	FWP*

Item (existing or potential)	Statue & Rules (MCA, ARM, USC, CFR)	Class	Scale	Agency
Chronically Dewater Watercourse - Identification	MCA 85-2-150 ARM 36.13.102	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DNRC; FWP*
Public Ways (Water)	MCA 85-1-111	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DNRC, MDT
Navigable Waters	MCA 85-1-112	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DEQ; DNRC, MDT
Water Rights – Appropriations, Permits, and Certificates of Water Rights	MCA 85-2-Part 3 ARM: ~36.12.101 to 36.12.2001	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DNRC; FWP*
Indian and Federal Reserved Water Rights	MCA 85-2-Part 7	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DNRC; Others
Aquatic Invasive Species	MCA 80-7-Part 10 ARM 12.5.701-703	Event Table / Feature Class	1:24	DNRC; FWP*; AGR
Water Quality Assessment (beneficial use support/attainment)	MCA 75-5-703 40 CFR 130.6 & 130.7	Use	1:24	DEQ
Water Quality Restoration – TMDL	MCA 75-5-703 ARM 17.30. USC 40 CFR 130.6 & 130.7	Use	1:24	DEQ
Watershed / Water Quality Modeling	MCA 75-5-703 40 CFR 130.7	Use	1:24	DEQ; DNRC; FWP*
Highway maintenance & construction		Use	1:24	MDT
Forestry – Streamside Management	MCA 77-5-Part 3 ARM 36.11.301-313	Use	1:24	DNRC
Drought Advisory Committee	MCA 2-15-3308	Use	1:24	DNRC
Water Rights - Adjudication	MCA 85-2-Part 2	Use	1:24	DNRC
Water Rights – Temporary Changes	MCA 85-2-407 ARM: ~36.12.1801 to 36.12.1904	Use	1:24	DNRC
Water Rights - Enforcement		Use	1:24	DNRC
Water Rights - Water Commissioners	MCA 85-5-101	Use	1:24	DNRC
State Reservation of Waters	MCA 85-2-316 ARM: 36.12.101 36.16.101	Use	1:24	DNRC
Indian and Federal Reserved Water Rights	MCA 85-2-Part 7	Use	1:24	DNRC
Dam Safety Act	MCA 85-15-210 ARM: ~36.14.101 to 36.14.803	Use	1:24	DNRC

Item (existing or potential)	Statute & Rules (MCA, ARM, USC, CFR)	Class	Scale	Agency
Major Facilities Siting Studies	MCA 75-20-101 et seq.	Use	1:24	DEQ
Environmental Impact Statements	MCA 75-1-201 et seq. ARM 17.4.600 et seq. 42 USC § 4321 et seq. 40 CFR 1502	Use	1:24	DEQ
Coal mine permitting & reclamation plan development	MCA 82-4-205 ARM 17.24.304 ARM 17.24.314 ARM 17.24.634	Use	1:24	DEQ
Streambed mineral rights and leases		Use	1:24	DNRC
Land acquisitions (riparian habitat and recreational opportunities)		Use	1:24	FWP*
Energy facility siting (oil & gas)		Use	1:24	FWP*
Landscape and Ecosystem Assessment and Modeling		Use	1:24	NHP
Water Information System	MCA 90-15-305	Use	1:24	MSL

*All FWP use of the 24K is dependent on the presence and maintenance of a whole stream identifier

Montana Hydrography Data Stewardship Needs

NHD Issues, Concerns, Needs	Scale	State Agency
Improve quality of the features (flowlines and waterbodies need to be representative of the real world)	1:24 or better	All
Water names Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) and alias names used by State agencies	1:24	All
Feature Type editing and classification (e.g., flow line, points, area, perennial, intermittent, ephemeral)	1:24	All
2D / Multichannel streams	1:24	All
Border harmonizations	1:24	All, LCC; StreamStats; Northern Sagebrush Steppe Initiative; Energy; Western Governors' Association Crucial Habitat Analysis Tools (CHAT)
Whole stream identifier (LLID relate)	1:24	FWP, MDT, DEQ, DNRC
100-yr floodplain and other river hazards	1:24	MDT; DEQ; Commerce; DNRC
Wetland integration	1:24	NHP; MDT; DEQ; DNRC; FWP
Networking capabilities	1:24	FWP; DNRC, NHP
Stream Order	1:24	MDT, DEQ, NHP
Generalized/simplified NHD for mapmaking	multiple	All
More stable version	1:24	All