

Sustaining Watersheds

Montana



Colorado Watersheds Conference 2019

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“Help ensure that Montana's land and water resources provide benefits for present and future generations”

WATER CONSUMED IN MONTANA ANNUAL ACRE FEET

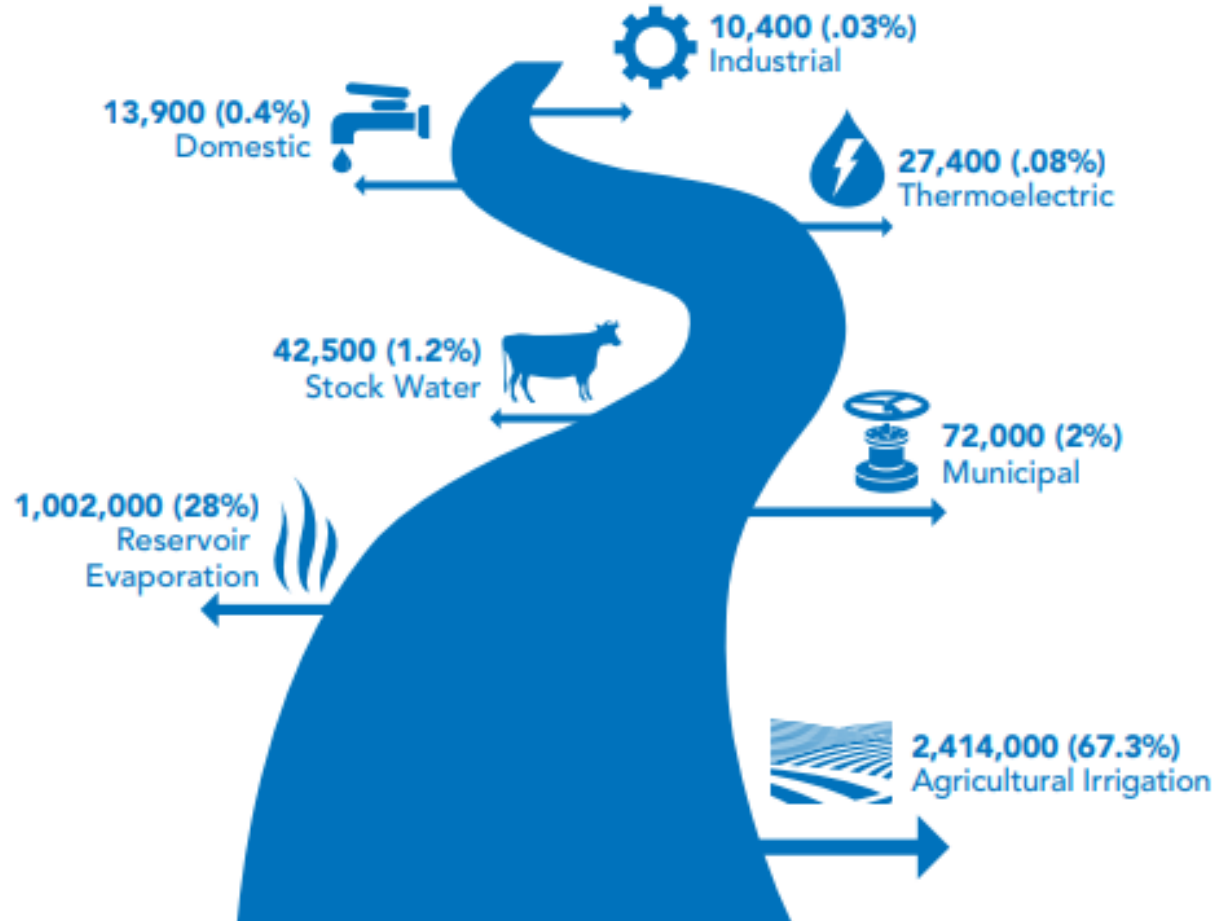


Figure 10: Water Consumption in Montana by Purpose

Integrate Natural Storage to Benefit Water Supplies and Ecosystems



Montana State Water Plan

A Watershed Approach to the
2015 Montana State Water Plan



Existing natural systems, such as riparian areas, floodplains and wetlands act to slow runoff and promote groundwater recharge; effectively storing water and releasing it slowly back to the surface water system. In this way, these natural systems fill a role similar to traditional reservoirs.....

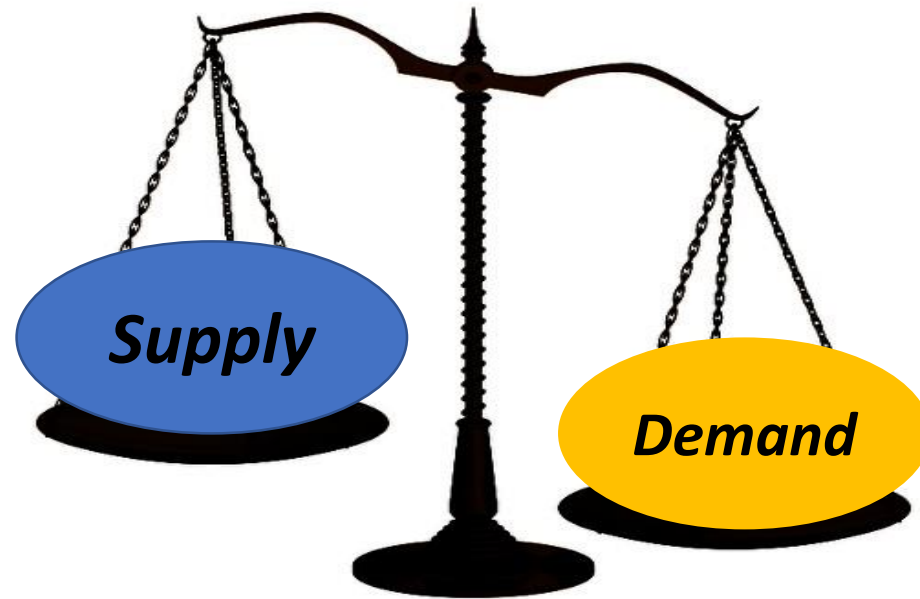
Integrating existing natural systems into Montana's water management practices will support late season flows, help mitigate the impact of drought cycles, and provide environmental benefits.



Building Community Resilience

Water Budgets

Seeking Balance





Water Supply Strategies

- Increase Natural Storage Potential
- Capture and retain water in the headwaters
- Manage uplands to consider water yield
- Improve Soil Health & Water holding capacity
- Improve Floodplain management and connectivity

Demand Side Strategies



- Community-wide Water Conservation
- Drought Planning
- Voluntary agreements and shared sacrifice
- Convert existing agricultural water rights for subdivision irrigation




MCA 85-1-601(6)

- This renewable resource grant and loan.....shall give preference to projects that will *implement state water plan priorities* if, in all other respects, the proposed projects are equal in public benefit and technical feasibility.


WHEREAS, one of the five key recommendations in the 2015 State Water Plan is to use natural storage to benefit water supplies; and




WHEREAS, the maintenance and repair of source watersheds in Montana are essential to maintaining the reliability, quantity, timing, and quality of Montana's water supplies: and



WHEREAS,... MCA, states that the renewable resource grant and loan program "supports the implementation ...of the 'state water plan'" and give preference to projects that will implement state water plan priorities"; and



WHEREAS, because clean water delivered from the source watersheds reduces the costs of treatment for drinking water, the health of source watersheds could be a cost benefit to the state's water supply.



HB424

- *Source watersheds are an integral component of Montana's water resources...and are eligible for the renewable resource grant and loan program.*
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- *Soil and range health play a vital role in protecting and sustaining Montana's renewable natural resources by retaining water, soil, and nutrients in place on the landscape*

