

Montana Water Court
Report to the
Water Policy Interim Committee
March 2026



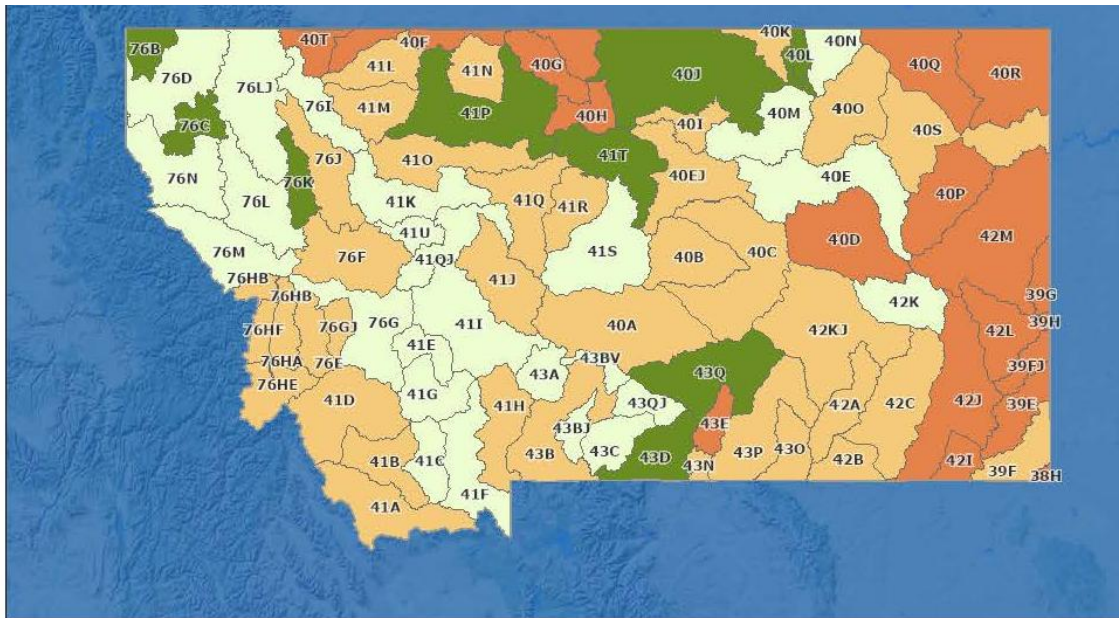
Decree Status Update

2026 Preliminary/Interlocutory Decrees Issued

- 1/14/26 – Big Hole River (41D) – 626 claims
- 2/25/26 – Gallatin River (41H) – 574 claims
- 3/4/26 – Blackfoot River (76F) – 458 claims
- 3/18/26 – Upper Yellowstone River (43B) – 711 claims
- 3/25/26 – Flint Creek (76GJ) – 115 claims
- 3/25/26 – Rock Creek (76E) – 51 claims

2026 Final Decrees Issued

- 2/4/2026 – Milk River above Fresno Res. (40F) – 2,012 rights
- 3/6/2026 – Saint Mary River (40T) supplement – 109 rights (Glacier NP)
- 3/11/2026 – Big Dry Creek (40D) – 3,156 rights



3/19/2026

Water Court Editable Decree Status Layer
Final Decree
Interlocutory Decree
Preliminary Decree
Summary Report Issued
USA_Topo_Maps

1:6,406,554
0 37.5 75 150 m
0 60 120 240 km
USGS The National Map: National Hydrography Dataset. Data refreshed August, 2025. Montana State Library. Copyright © 2013 National Geographic

Remaining Preliminary/Interlocutory Decrees

Decreed Claim Summary by Division

Division	Preliminary decree claims	Interlocutory decree claims	Total claims	To be decreed	Decreed	% Decreed
Clark Fork	37,989	2,045	40,034	1,066	38,968	97.34%
Lower Missouri	74,516	4,856	79,372	1,191	78,181	98.50%
Upper Missouri	56,437	6,014	62,451	151	62,300	99.76%
Yellowstone	64,771	5,041	69,812	1,867	67,945	97.33%
Total	233,713	17,956	251,669	4,275	247,394	98.30%

Clark Fork Division

Clark Fork Division Status of basin decrees in active objection periods							
Basin	Name	Type of Decree	Claims	Decree Issued	Objection Deadline	Counter objection	NOIA Deadline
76G	Upper Clark Fork	Prelim.	5931	11/14/2024	11/10/2025	2/17/2026	TBD
76LJ	Upper Flathead	Prelim.	5914	12/21/2024	2/17/2026	TBD	TBD
76L	Lower Flathead	Prelim.	3578	5/2/2025	4/27/2026	TBD	TBD
76E	Rock Creek	Prelim	51	3/25/2026	9/21/2026	TBD	TBD
76GJ	Flint Creek	Prelim	115	3/25/2026	9/21/2026	TBD	TBD
Total			15,589				

Clark Fork Division Status of remaining preliminary/interlocutory decrees				
Basin	Name	Type of Decree	Claims	Projected Issuance Date
76B	Yaak River	Preliminary	118	2026 – Q2
76C	Fisher River	Preliminary	301	2026 – Q2
76K	Swan River	Preliminary	647	2026 – Q2
Total			1,066	

Lower Missouri Division

Lower Missouri Division Status of basin decrees in active objection periods							
Basin	Name	Type of Decree	Claims	Decree Issued	Objection Deadline	Counter objection	NOIA Deadline
40I	Peoples Creek	Interlocutory	13	7/9/2025	1/5/2026	N/A	3/31/26
40EJ	Missouri River - Bullwacker to Musselshell	Interlocutory	344	9/25/2025	3/24/2026	TBD	TBD
40A	Upper Musselshell	Interlocutory	858	10/31/2025	4/29/2026	TBD	TBD
40C	Lower Musselshell	Interlocutory	318	10/31/2025	4/29/2026	TBD	TBD
40M	Beaver Creek	Interlocutory	513	11/12/2025	5/11/2026	TBD	TBD
41R	Arrow Creek	Interlocutory	171	12/10/2025	6/28/2026	TBD	TBD
40B	Flatwillow Creek	Interlocutory	348	12/17/2025	6/15/2026	TBD	TBD
Total			2,565				

Lower Missouri Division Status of remaining preliminary/interlocutory decrees				
Basin	Name	Type of Decree	Claims	Projected Issuance Date
40J	Milk River below Fresno Res	Interlocutory	622	2026 – Q2
40L	Frenchman Creek	Interlocutory	151	2026 – Q2
41T	Missouri River below Marias	Interlocutory	288	2026 – Q2
40P	Redwater River	*Interlocutory	130	2026 – Q3
Total			1,191	

* Interlocutory for basin with prior final decree.

Upper Missouri Division

Upper Missouri Division Status of basin decrees in active objection periods							
Basin	Name	Type of Decree	Claims	Decree Issued	Objection Deadline	Counter objection	NOIA Deadline
41C	Ruby River	Preliminary	2932	6/25/25	3/23/2026	TBD	TBD
41QJ	Missouri – Holter to Sun River	Interlocutory	582	8/31/2025	3/4/2026	TBD	TBD
41G	Jefferson River	Interlocutory	642	12/3/2025	6/1/2026	TBD	TBD
41D	Big Hole River	Interlocutory	626	1/14/2026	7/13/2026	TBD	TBD
41H	Gallatin River	Interlocutory	574	2/25/2026	8/24/2026	TBD	TBD
Total			5,356				

Upper Missouri Division Status of remaining preliminary/interlocutory decrees				
Basin	Name	Type of Decree	Claims	Projected Issuance Date
41P	Marias River	Interlocutory	151	Q2 - 2026
Total			151	

Yellowstone Division

Yellowstone Division Status of basin decrees in active objection periods							
Basin	Name	Type of Decree	Claims	Decree Issued	Objection Deadline	Counter objection	NOIA Deadline
42K	Yellowstone R. – Tongue to Powder	Preliminary	1638	5/8/2025	2/2/2026	5/18/2026	TBD
43C	Stillwater River	Preliminary	2182	6/18/2025	3/16/2026	TBD	TBD
42KJ	Yellowstone - Bighorn to Tongue	Interlocutory	458	7/16/2025	1/12/2026	5/18/2026	TBD
43BJ	Boulder River (Yellowstone trib)	Preliminary	912	9/3/2025	3/2/2026	TBD	TBD
43A	Shields River	Preliminary	294	11/19/2025	5/18/2026	TBD	TBD
43B	Upper Yellowstone	Interlocutory	711	3/18/2026	9/24/2026	TBD	TBD
Total			6,195				

Yellowstone Division Status of remaining preliminary/interlocutory decrees				
Basin	Name	Type of Decree	Claims	Projected Issuance Date
43D	Clarks Fork Yellowstone River	Interlocutory	589	Q2 2026
43Q	Yellowstone River between Clarks Fork & Bighorn River	Interlocutory	801	Q2 2026
38H	Belle Fourche River above Cheyenne River	*Interlocutory	19	Q3 2026
39H	Little Missouri below Little Beaver	*Interlocutory	4	Q3 2026
42I	Little Powder River	*Interlocutory	41	Q3 2026
42J	Powder River	*Interlocutory	208	Q3 2026
42L	O’Fallon Creek	*Interlocutory	205	Q3 2026
Total			1,867	

* Interlocutory for basins with prior final decrees.

Claims Resolved by Month

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Jan		850	587	371	468	310
Feb		870	573	303	398	153
Mar		934	728	437	390	
Apr		932	755	574	392	
May		767	592	346	249	
Jun		1016	379	495	203	
Jul	799	1030	603	659	383	
Aug	851	1040	1764	455	617	
Sep	704	659	420	500	302	
Oct	571	753	838	656	227	
Nov	607	810	658	392	218	
Dec	1032	563	328	709	310	
Total	4564	10224	8225	5897	3847	463
Avg	761	852	685	491	321	232

Federal and Tribal Compact Status

Compact Name	WC Case #	Status
Crow Tribe Compact	WC-0006-C-2012	CLOSED
Blackfeet Tribe Compact	WC-0006-C-2018	Closed
Blackfeet Tribe Stipulated Rights	WC-0001-C-1991	Closed
Fort Peck-Montana Compact	WC-1992-1	Closed
Northern Cheyenne Compact	WC-0001-C-1993	Closed
National Park Service-MT Compact	WC-1994-1	Closed
Rocky Boys Compact	WC-2000-01	Closed
Red Rock Lakes Compact	WC-2000-02	Closed
USFWS Black Coulee and Benton Lake Compact	WC-2000-03 and WC-2002-04	Closed
USDA Forest Service	WC-2007-03	Closed
USA-BLM-MT Compact	WC-2008-10	Closed
National Bison Range Compact	WC-2011-01	Closed
Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge Compact	WC-2013-04	Closed
USDA Fort Keogh Research Station	WC-2014-07	Closed
USDA Sheep Experiment Station	WC-2014-06	Closed
Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge	WC-2015-05	Closed
Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument	WC-2015-06	Closed
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation	WC-0001-C-2021	Active
Fort Belknap Indian Reservation		Pending before Congress