

WPIC Topics

1. City vs County development – Counties are seeing a depletion of groundwater resources as fringe areas are subdivided. With the recent Judge Sherlock decision, connection to city services may be the only option, but the cost and timing are often obstacles to development. A study of the possible remedies is necessary to ensure responsible development. (46 degrees North Subdivision – Lewis and Clark County)
2. Regional water districts – There are currently four regional Water systems: Fort Peck Dry Prairie, Rocky Boy's North Central Montana Regional System, Musselshell-Judith Regional System and Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority. Funding for regional systems is often a combination of Federal grants, State grants and loans. Expansion of these systems is critical to development in their respective counties. A study could be done which outlines possible impacts to communities and the need for additional systems (or expansions of current projects) in other areas of the state. (Valley View Subdivision – Richland County)
3. Bureau of Mines Studies and Local Water Quality Districts. Groundwater investigations by the Bureau of Mines are used to determine groundwater quality, quantity, dependability and trends within an area considering development. For those municipalities that have the resources, Local Water Quality Districts are able to provide some information, but there are areas of the state that are underrepresented. A study is warranted to prioritize those areas that need further groundwater investigation and to address funding for these types of studies. (Yellowstone County)
4. Funding improvements to existing private water systems. Public water systems that are privately owned need ongoing resources to ensure a safe water supply. The most vulnerable of these are those privately owned systems that serve low income developments. There are very few resources available to owners who want to make improvements. As study outlining possible solutions should be considered.
5. Water Well Drillers – Placement and construction of wells is outlined in rule with the board of water well drillers overseeing variances, but there is no statewide permitting system to ensure protection of public health or property owner rights. A study is warranted to see if a statewide permitting system would be beneficial given the new legislation regarding well isolation zones/ property lines, water rights, etc. (Stillwater County subdivision)