

**MONTANA WATER COURT
YELLOWSTONE RIVER, FROM BRIDGER CREEK TO CLARKS FORK
YELLOWSTONE
BASIN 43QJ
YELLOWSTONE DIVISION**

NOTICE OF ENTRY OF SECOND PRELIMINARY DECREE AND NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING YOUR WATER RIGHTS

The Montana Water Court issued a Decree (a list of water rights) in your Basin. This notice may include an abstract (a description of your water right as decreed).

- If an abstract is included with this notice, then your water right is part of the Decree.
- If an abstract is not included with this notice, then your water right is not part of the current Decree.

WHAT IS THE SECOND PRELIMINARY DECREE?

The Decree includes abstracts of existing water rights on all sources of water within Basin 43QJ. Water right claims in the first Preliminary Decree issued in 1985 were reexamined by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) pursuant to Water Court orders. Water right claims filed after the first Preliminary Decree was issued, are also included. They were examined by the DNRC pursuant to the Water Right Claim Examination Rules. The DNRC may have made changes or identified potential problems on your abstract by placing "issue remarks" on the abstract.

Review the abstracts. The Decree, which consists of Findings of Facts, Conclusions of Law, and abstracts of the water rights, can be viewed at: <https://courts.mt.gov/Courts/Water/Notices-Info/>. If you prefer to view a paper copy, please contact the Water Court or your DNRC office. See below for contact information.

If you believe any water rights in the Decree do not reflect historical (before July 1, 1973) beneficial use, you must file an objection by **March 24, 2025**. Objections must be filed on the forms provided by the Water Court. The forms can be found at: <https://courts.mt.gov/Courts/Water/LegalResources> or by contacting the Court: watercourt@mt.gov or (406) 586-4364.

A request to extend the objection deadline must be filed by March 24, 2025. If an extension is granted it will be advertised in the *Billings Gazette*, *Stillwater County News*, and *Big Timber Pioneer*.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Water Court will be offering informal public meetings to explain the objection process on the following dates:

- **Thursday, October 24, 2024, at 6:00 pm in person** at the Stillwater County Civic Center, 16 Sheep Dip Road, Columbus, MT 59019
- **Thursday, November 21, 2024, at 12:00 pm via Zoom**. To take part in the telephone conference, dial (646) 558-8656, enter the Meeting ID 836 3043 2901#, then press # to skip participant ID, then enter the meeting password 564049#

If someone objects to your water rights, the Court will notify you, and you may file a counterobjection to your objector's water rights in this decree. After all notice periods pass, the Water Court will address all objections, counterobjections, and issue remarks. **Make sure your address is up to date with the DNRC.** You can contact the DNRC at the address below:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Montana Water Court
1123 Research Drive
Bozeman, MT 59718
(406) 586-4364
watercourt@mt.gov

Montana DNRC, Water Rights Adjudication Office
1424 9th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-0560

Montana DNRC, Billings Regional Office
Airport Industrial Park
1371 Rintop Drive
Billings, MT 59105-1978
(406) 247-4415

Remember, objections must be filed and received by the Water Court by March 24, 2025.

DATED this 25th day of September, 2024,

/s/ Russ McElyea
Chief Water Judge
Montana Water Court

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROCESS, OTHERWISE, YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL ANY DECISIONS AFFECTING YOUR WATER RIGHT IS LIMITED.