

St. Mary Siphon Briefing

February 2025 Update



Project Team

Project Stakeholders:

Bureau of Reclamation
Milk River Joint Board of Control
Blackfeet Tribe
State of Montana

Project Sponsors:

Ryan Newman (BOR)
Wade Jones (Joint Board)

Technical Team Lead:

Stan Schweissing (HDR)

Primary Contractors:

Sletten Construction
NW Construction

Project Managers:

Steven Darlinton (BOR)
Jennifer Patrick (Joint Board)

Website: [Milk River Project](#)

Project Briefing

NW Construction has installed all pipe on the west side of the bridge up to the inlet and are installing the pipes on the east side of the bridge. 120 of the 190 sections of pipe has been installed.

The inlet structure rebar is being tied and the first significant placement of concrete will be the week of March 10th.

Sletten Construction is installing the girders for the bridge crossing. Girder installation is expected to be completed next month and the final concrete placements for the backwall will follow.

River restoration will begin early next month.

Operations

2025 Water Supply

- Irrigation water supply projections range from none to a partial irrigation through a portion of July
- The supply will depend on natural runoff from snow and rain in the Milk River Basin. Runoff will be stored in Fresno and Nelson reservoirs prior to irrigation.
- Some storage in Fresno will be reserved for municipalities to ensure a minimum release of 40 cfs. The reserved storage target will vary depending on the certainty of St. Mary Siphon completion and time of year.
- Fort Belknap Indian Irrigation Project natural flow and storage rights will be released from Fresno until depleted.

Schedule

- Completed Tasks
 - Project Start: June 17, 2024
 - Qualified EXM Determination: July 3, 2024
 - FONSI: July 31, 2024
 - Biological Opinion: August 2, 2024
 - Bridge and Pipe Removal: August 29, 2024
 - Start of Pipe Production: September 3, 2024
 - Pipe Delivery: October 16, 2024
- Upcoming Milestones
 - Girder Installation: March 2025
 - Bridge Complete: May 2025
 - Inlet/Outlet Construction: June 2025
 - Project Completion: September 2025

Costs

Estimated cost of \$70 million to replace both St. Mary (\$51.6M) and Halls Coulee (\$18.4M) Siphons.

- Reclamation:
 - Aging Infrastructure Account: \$36,351,000
 - Disaster Supplement: \$33,649,000
- River Restoration:
 - NRCS EWP Grant (MRJBOC): \$876,571
 - DNRC RDG Grant (MRJBOC): \$100,000

Task based project budget summary is available on request:

- Total Baseline Project Estimate = \$70,000,000
- Total Project Spent = \$29,450,000
- % Spent = 42%