

St. Mary Siphon Briefing

March 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 and Pro Pipe have installed all pipe on both sides of the bridge up to the inlet and outlet. Installation of the pipe along the bridge is ongoing with the last sections to be installed will be the direct ties to the inlet and outlet.

The first significant placement of concrete for the inlet was on March 18th. Concrete placements will continue over the next month to complete the inlet, before transitioning to the outlet.

Sletten Construction is nearing completion of the bridge construction, with final pieces to be installed post pipe installation.

River restoration will be complete by the end of April.

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
 - Bridge Complete: April 2025
 - Backfill of Pipe: May 2025
 - Inlet/Outlet Construction: June 2025
 - Project Completion: July 2025

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.

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 = \$36,450,000
- % Spent = 52%