

# MONTANA WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION

"THE MONTANA WATERLINE"

# AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) – IRRIGATION PROJECT GRANTS AVAILABLE

Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in 2021 in response to the Covid 19 impacts on the United States economy. One aspect of ARPA included funding for water and sewer project infrastructure. During the 67<sup>th</sup> legislative session, the legislature passed HB 632. HB 632 included a delineation of ARPA allocations and a program to administer the use of funds made available for sewer and water infrastructure and other sectors of the economy. The legislation provided for the establishment of an Infrastructure Advisory Commission to specifically oversee the administration of the sewer and water sections of the Act. While it was the intent of the legislature to include irrigated agriculture and related projects within the water and sewer category, the guidelines and ranking criteria made it almost impossible for irrigation projects to compete against the cities and counties for funding and no irrigation projects were successful in the first round of funding.

MWRA REQUESTS SETASIDE FOR IRRIGATION GRANTS - Based upon the inability of irrigation projects to compete for funding within the ARPA program criteria and ranking, MWRA initiated a discussion with the Infrastructure Commission to explore the possibility of setting aside a specific amount of funding for irrigated agriculture. After discussions and consideration by the full Commission, ten million dollars were set aside for irrigated agriculture and specific guidelines were established. Maximum grant amount under the set aside is \$500 thousand dollars. Specific project activities and other guidelines can be obtained from the Department of Natural Resources or by visiting the ARPA web site at ARPA.mt.gov. Applications are due by January 14, 2022. Currently, projects must demonstrate water quality benefits and projects pertaining exclusively to dams or reservoirs are excluded. A request has been presented to the Department of Treasury to allow use of the funds for dam and reservoir projects but, no confirmation has been received. Irrigation Districts and Associations can apply directly for funding under ARPA guidelines. However, private ditch companies will have to apply through a Conservation District or County in which the project is located.

**RENEWABLE RESOURCE GRANT AND LOAN PROGRAM** – DNRC Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program (RRGL) is now accepting planning grant applications. Planning grants are available to government entities for planning activities which lead to an RRGL program project application to conserve, manage, develop, or protect a renewable resource in Montana. For more information visit the DNRC website or contact staff at 444-9766.

2022 MWRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE (See Page 3)

## **FEATURED INFO:**

**ARPA Funding For Irrigation Entities ......** Cover

MWRA Annual Conference Info & Registration.....3

# MONTANA WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION

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# **EXEC'S COMMENTS**

(Reiterated from Legislative Addition)

#### **DEAR WATER USERS:**

The importance of our water storage and delivery systems becomes more apparent every day. Water issues continue to increase and as our population expands and interests change it will be increasingly important for Agriculture to maintain a strong voice on behalf of irrigation and the critical function of our related infrastructure. While legislators and other policy makers recognize the economic and environmental importance of agriculture and our irrigation infrastructure, competing interests would direct priority in directions that may not be in our best interest. Direct citizen involvement in agriculture is far less than in past generations, but concern for the Agricultural Industry continues to be fairly strong. That said, strong representation by Montana Water Resources Association and other Agricultural organizations in actions such as the ARPA grant funding program and the Infrastructure Commission is more important than ever.

As I noted in my last Exec. Comments, the bills that passed the 2021 Session resulted in fair and balanced legislation. Legislation such as HB632 that was passed in order to address ARPA funding, passed with reasonable attention to agriculture, but as the process developed, it became almost impossible for Agriculture to compete for funding. Through MWRA participation our concerns were heard, resulting in changes that made it possible for Irrigated Agriculture to compete in the funding process.

It is an honor to represent Montana Water Resources Association and our membership. Our collective efforts result in very positive results.

Sincerely,

Mike

Michael E. Murphy Executive Director

# MONTANA WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION

# \* 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE \*

Montana Water Resources Associations' annual conference will be held February 9-11, 2022 at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort. The conference starts with Membership and Board meetings beginning at 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. Meetings focus on: MWRA resolutions, election of board members, and state and national issues.

Conference program presentations begin Thursday morning, February 10<sup>th</sup>. The 2022 conference will wrap up on Friday at noon. Program agenda will include technical presentations from representatives of private enterprise and government entities covering current administrative and policy issues and other information designed to assist those involved in the use and management of Montana's water resources. Program agenda information will be updated on the MWRA web site (mtwra.org).

MWRA reserved a block of rooms at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort for the evenings of February 8<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>. The block will expire January 26<sup>th</sup> and rooms will be available on a space available basis after that. Be sure to let them know you are attending the MWRA conference when you call (406-797-3241) in order to get the conference rate.

For registration, the attached registration form and check should be mailed prior to January 28, 2022. No cancellation refunds can be provided after January 31<sup>st</sup>.

Attending MWRA's annual conference offers an exceptional opportunity to network with other Montana water users and government representatives as well as industry product representatives.

## We look forward to seeing you at the MWRA conference!!

	22 MWRA CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FAIRMONT HOT SPRINGS RESORT	
	February 9-11, 2022	
NAME	Spouses Name (If Attending)	
REPRESENTING		
STREET OR BOX #	CITY	STATE ZIP
PHONE NUMBER:	EMAIL:	
[ ] Registration Fee (Includes meals and breaks)		\$160 \$
[ ] Spouse Registration Fee (Includes meals and breaks)		\$110 \$
Registration Fee mailed after January	\$	
Total Amount Enclosed >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>	·>>>>>	>>>>> \$

Please detach and send this registration form and check made payable to MWRA to P.O. Box 4927, Helena, MT 59604. For additional information, please send an email to: <a href="mailto:mwra\_h2o@msn.com">mwra\_h2o@msn.com</a>

## MONTANA WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION

Montana Water Resources Association (MWRA) works to protect water and other private property rights at both state and national levels. Protecting these rights is increasingly difficult as the connection to making a living on the land and concern for private property rights continue to diminish.

MWRA combines experience with reason and balance in managing Montana's water resources. As a strong participant in legislative and administrative policy development MWRA strives for responsible use and management of our water to protect the resource, while protecting rights of hard working Montanans. Support for protection of our water and other private property rights, is crucial. Your membership, participation, and encouragement to others for their support and participation will help MWRA continue as it has for over 70 years as "Montana's Voice for Montana's Water".

#### MEMBERSHIP DUES STRUCTURE/APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP	ANNUAL	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	ANNUAL	
CATEGORY	DUES	CATEGORY	<u>DUES</u>	
Business/Firm		Irrigation Dist./Assoc	Irrigation Dist./Assoc./Private Ditch	
Under 10 Employees \$370		Minimum Base	Minimum Base \$370	
10 -100 Employees \$840		plus, First 5,000 Acres		
Over 100 Employees \$1,175		at \$.074/Acre		
Individual		plus, Remaining A	cres Over	
Voting	\$80	5,000 Acres at \$.052/Acre		
REAs and RTAs	\$400	Sustaining Membersh	nips	
Municipalities		Silver	\$1,500	
City, Town, or Coun	ty	Gold	\$2,000	
\$.10	) per capita	Platinum		
Other Political Sub	\$370	Associate Member	\$	
For more information, please call: (406) 235-4555 or visit the web site at mtwra.org. You may use this form to activate your membership. Please include a check made payable to MWRA, P.O. Box 4927, Helena, MT 59604. Name: Individual/ Entity				
Street or Box Address	:	email:		
City		State Zip		

------ (CUT HERE) -------

Please tear off the above information insert and send it with your own new membership or your encouragement as a current member, to an irrigation project, individual, business, or other entity that you feel should be a member of MWRA. Your support and that of others for MWRA is crucial to maintaining a strong advocacy position for water and other private property rights. **Thank You!** 



HELENA, MONTANA 59604