

In the Water Court of the State of Montana

Clark Fork River Division Union Creek - Basin 76FA

Notice of Entry of Temporary Preliminary Decree and Notice of Availability

As a Water User You Need to Read This Entire Notice

You are hereby notified that the Montana Water Court has entered its Temporary Preliminary Decree on 41 claims in Union Creek and 1 claim in Lower Arkansas Creek Basin 76FA. The entire water rights Decree is now available for your review.

If you, or your predecessors, filed a claim for an existing water right with a priority date before July 1, 1973, an abstract of your claim is enclosed with this Notice. The abstract reflects your existing water right claim as it appears in this Decree. If you, or your predecessors, only applied for or received a permit or certificate from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to appropriate water with a priority date after June 30, 1973 (for example: a well drilled in 1975 for domestic or stock purposes), you will not receive an abstract of water right with this Notice.

What is a Temporary Preliminary Decree?

This Temporary Preliminary Decree is a compilation of 42 existing water right claims filed in the Union Creek and Lower Arkansas Creek drainage in Basin 76FA. See the general Findings and Facts and Conclusions of Law in the first volume of the Decree for further explanation of the preparation of this Decree.

Should You File an Objection?

Only you can answer this question. You should first examine the abstract of your water rights. Is the abstract correct? Your Only you can answer this question. You should first examine the abstract of your water rights. Is each abstract correct? If you don't agree with your pre July 1973 water right claim as it is printed on the enclosed abstract, you may file an objection. Your examination must not stop there, though. You must understand three important facts: (1) your water right may be subject to other water rights on your source or on other sources in the Basin; (2) your water right may be subject to water rights in adjoining Basins; and (3) your water right may be subject to Indian and Federal reserved water rights. If you believe other water right claims in this Decree do not reflect their historical beneficial use, you may file an objection and the Water Court will hear your objection.

You can determine the rank of the priority date of your water right in comparison with other water rights in your Basin by using the Index available with the Decree. The Source Name Index lists all water rights under the name of each source of supply (for example, all water rights listed on the Deep Creek). Under each source name, the water rights are listed from the earliest priority date to the latest priority date. The Priority Date Index lists all water rights within the Basin beginning with the earliest date and continuing to the latest. You can buy a copy of the Decree or just the Index, or you can look at a copy at any of the offices listed on the other side of this Notice or on the internet. You should review ALL the elements of other water rights which may affect you.

Review All Water Right Abstracts Carefully

Look carefully at all the water right abstracts in the Decree, including your own abstract. Elements of your water right may have been changed since the claim was originally filed. If there is a change, that change has occurred as a result of information obtained during the examination of your claim by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. If an abstract reflects any change, that change may be challenged by filing an objection with the Water Court. Your claim may also be called in and reviewed by the Water Court on its own initiative in accordance with the examination information.

THIS PRELIMINARY DECREE, AS MODIFIED AFTER OBJECTIONS AND HEARINGS, WILL BE ENFORCEABLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH '3-7-212 AND '85-2-406 MONTANA CODE ANNOTATED. IF A RIGHT RECEIVES NO OBJECTION OR IS NOT REVIEWED BY THE WATER COURT ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE, IT MAY REMAIN UNCHANGED, WILL BE ENFORCEABLE, AND MAY BE ENTERED IN THE FINAL DECREE.

How to File an Objection and Request a Hearing

An objection must be filed on the forms provided by the Montana Water Court. Water Court forms can be found at the offices or internet address listed below.

ALL OBJECTIONS MUST BE FILED AND RECEIVED AT THE WATER COURT ON OR BEFORE THE SEPTEMBER 6, 2006. OBJECTIONS RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE WILL BE CLASSIFIED AS LATE. Objections may be mailed to the Montana Water Court, P. O. Box 1389, Bozeman, MT 59771-1389, but they still must be received by September 6, 2006.

Can You Get an Extension?

An extension for filing objections may be granted by the Water Judge. Requests must be received by the Montana Water Court on or before SEPTEMBER 6, 2006. Use the form furnished by the Montana Water Court. If an extension is granted, it will apply to everyone. Any extension may be seen at the offices listed below and will be advertised in the Missoulian.

Notice of Availability

THE DECREE (INCLUDING THE FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DECREE INDEX) IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW, AND WATER COURT OBJECTION AND EXTENSION FORMS CAN BE OBTAINED AT THE FOLLOWING OFFICES:

1. Montana Water Court, 601 Haggerty Lane, Bozeman, Montana.
2. Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, 1424 Ninth Ave, Helena, Montana.
3. Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, Water Resources Regional Office, 2705 Spurgin Road, Building C, Missoula, Montana.

You may obtain a copy of the Temporary Preliminary Decree from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Water Rights Bureau, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601. The cost of this Decree, including the Index, Findings and Conclusions, is \$58.00. The Index by itself is \$53.00. Electronic copies of this Decree, including the Index on CD are \$10.00.

After Objections Are Filed

After the time for filing objections has passed, the Montana Water Court will prepare an Objection List, notify you by mail that hearings have been requested and set a date for all interested parties to notify the Montana Water Court of their intent to participate in any of those hearings.

Basin Meeting with the Chief Water Judge

An informal public meeting will be held by Bruce Loble, Chief Water Judge, at the Potomac-Greenough Community Center, 29287 Potomac Road, Potomac, MT.
Thursday evening, April 27, 2006, at 7:00 PM.

C. Bruce Loble
Chief Water Judge
Montana Water Court
P. O. Box 1389
Bozeman, MT 59771-1389

Remember: Objections must be filed in the Water Court by September 6, 2006.