

Part 1: A Vast Potential Resource

The good news is that Montana has an abundance of ground water. According to the USGS Montana residents use 188 million gallons of ground water per day – which is less than 2% of the total water usage. This 188 million gallons per day is so small that Giant Springs in Great Falls, one of Montana’s hundreds of springs, leaks over 200 million gallons of water per day.

In comparison, other states use more ground water and a much larger percentage compared to surface water. For example:

- Montana: 188 million gallons per day – which is 2% of surface use
- Wyoming: 541 million gallons per day – which is 14% of surface use
- South Dakota: 222 million gallons per day – which is 72% of surface use
- Oregon: 993 million gallons per day – which is 17% of surface use.
- Idaho: 4 billion gallons per day – which is 27% of surface use.

This goes on state to state. Factually, Montana is a very large state that has an abundance of ground water with a very small use! It is estimated that 90% of the total water available in Montana consists of ground water. Therefore, since Montana uses 8 Billion gallons per day of surface water, the potential vast groundwater resources amounts to many billions of gallons per day.

The bad news is that there is a movement in Montana that would severely restrict ground water use or, worse, stop it all together. This movement uses misinformation to further their “No Growth” agenda for Montana. It looks as though “Political Science” has replaced scientific facts in dealing with ground water.

In conclusion, the economy of rural Montana is dependent on ground water not only for development but for agricultural uses. Over 94% of rural Montana’s main water source is derived from ground water. Home owners, churches, farms & ranches, rodeo grounds, nurseries, schools, and fire departments are just a few of the dependent ground water users today. Montana’s economy needs ground water development to grow. Agriculture needs ground water to survive. Ground water is a vast potential Montana Resource. Lets use it – not lose it – to out of state interests! Information provided by MWWDA