

# Rediscovering the Marias - A Baseline Development Project

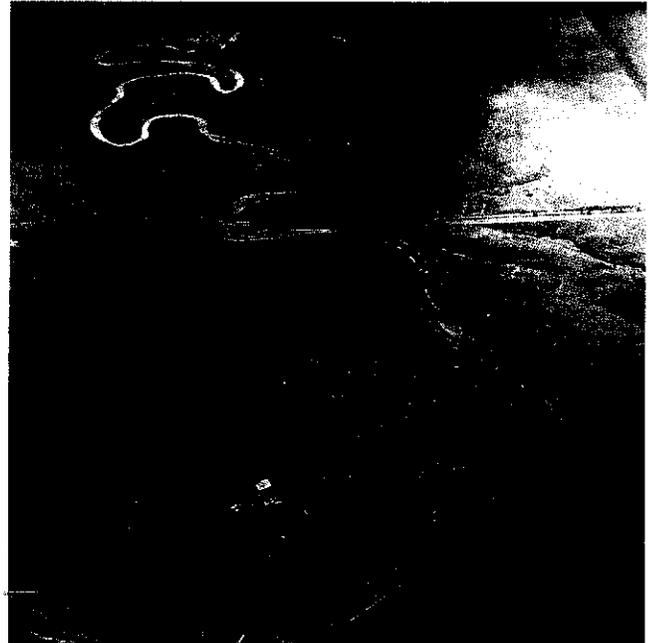
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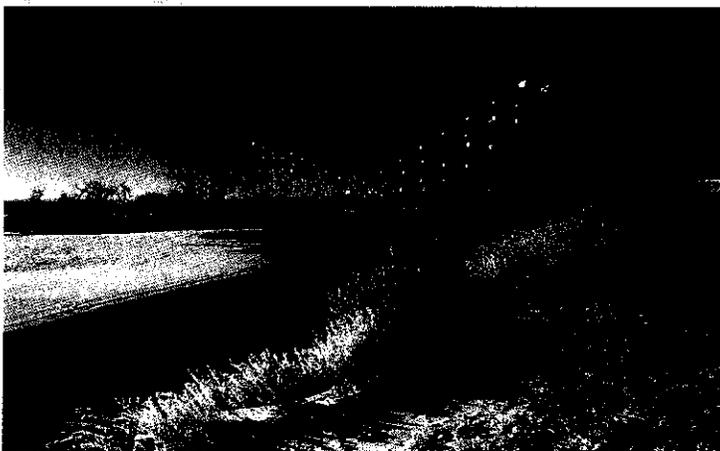
➤ The Marias River watershed encompasses 3,294,259 acres of land in the heart of the golden triangle, of which more than 91-percent is in private ownership. Watershed residents rely on the Marias River for drinking water, crop irrigation, livestock watering, recreation, and fish habitat.

➤ A document and data search conducted by Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology and Montana Department of Environmental Quality determined that a comprehensive watershed characterization or water-quality evaluation has never been conducted for the Marias River watershed.

➤ Resource problems in the watershed include streambank stabilization, rangeland health, irrigation water management, noxious weeds, salinity, and oil and gas production/water quality.



➤ With the available water-quality data, it is difficult to conduct water-quality comparisons across the watershed and to assemble a comprehensive and complete concept of water-quality.



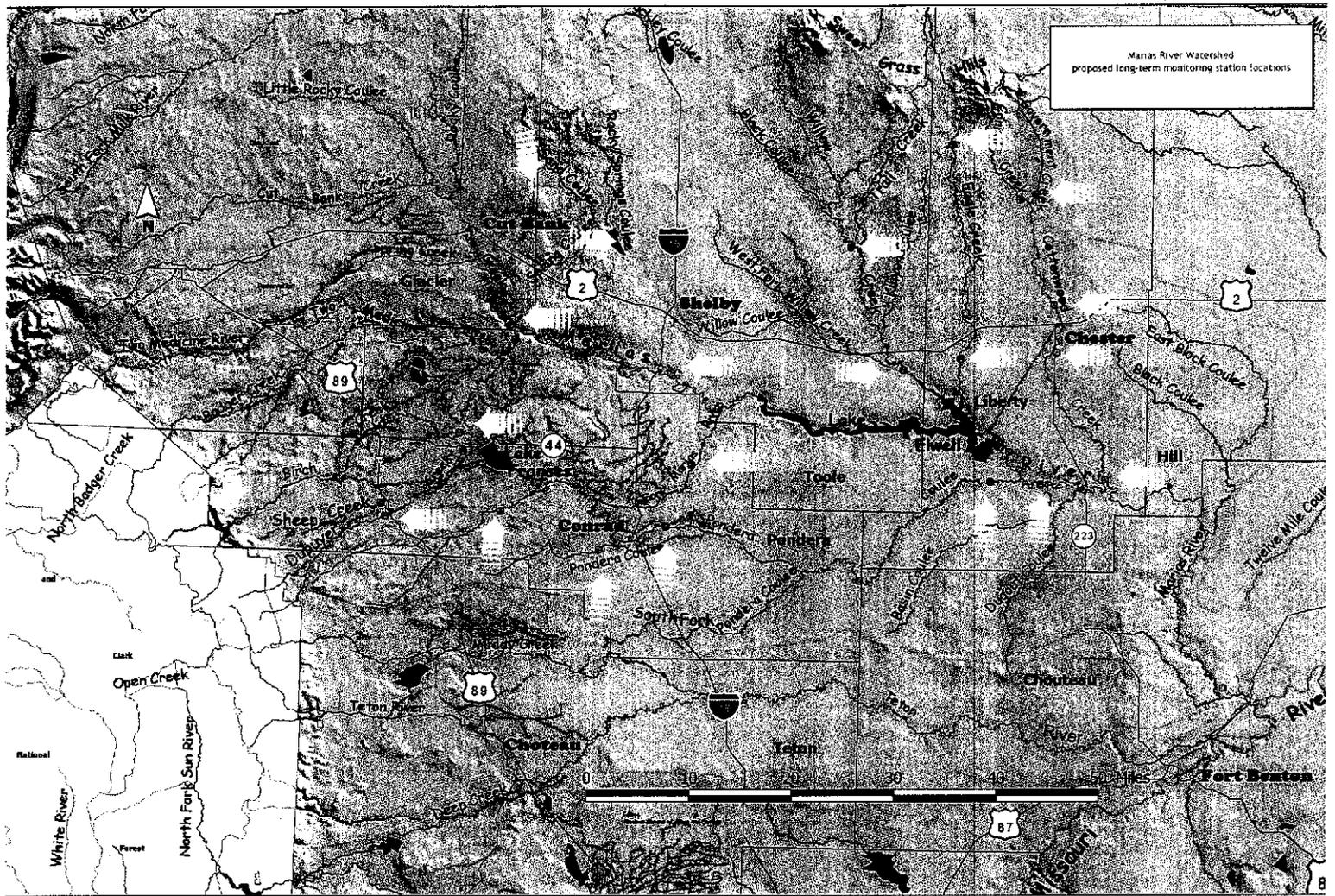
➤ New enforcement of federal water-quality laws, increased water demand for agriculture, domestic, recreation, fisheries habitat, drought management, and downstream water-resource demands all require a greater understanding of water availability and water-quality within the watershed.

➤ A surface water-monitoring program is required to define sources of water-quality impairment, to monitor watershed changes over time, and to provide detailed information for better project planning and more effective budgeting and expenditure of private and public funds.

**This Marias River Watershed group (MRW) sponsored project proposes to:**

- Provide equipment for establishing long-term, permanent water-quality monitoring stations.
- Develop a centralized local database and data-storage system available for the entire watershed.
- Coordinate and incorporate all water-quality monitoring within the watershed by federal, state, and local agencies and organizations.
- Map watershed features important for the management and planning of watershed and water-quality improvement projects.

**Liberty County Conservation District**  
in cooperation with the Marias River Watershed and the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology



**Agencies and organization members of MRW supporting this project include:**

- Marias River Watershed landowners
- Montana State Extension Service
- Local weed control boards
- Local city and county governments
- Glacier, Pondera, Toole, Liberty, Chouteau, Hill, and Teton Counties Conservation Districts
- Local irrigation districts
- Government and natural resource offices of the Blackfoot Nation and the Rocky Boys Reservations
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- National Park Service
- U. S. Forest Service
- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U. S. Geological Survey
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
- Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
- Montana Salinity Control Association.

For more information:

Marias River Watershed  
 Roger Zentzis, Coordinator  
 406 292-3594

Liberty County Conservation District  
 Chester Montana  
 406 759-5778