

**Ground-Water Assessment Program
 New Proposals
 February 7, 2005**

Background: Ground-Water Assessment is funded from the following sources:

- \$300,000 annually from the Resource Indemnity Trust interest
- \$366,000 annually from the RIGWA tax proceeds
- \$666,000 total funding (89-2-905 mca)
 (The funding level is fixed in statute at the level proposed in 1991. The 2003 value for the same amount would be about \$895,000.)

Challenges:

- NP 1 Proposed pay plans (about 7% in the next biennium) will add \$35,000 to personnel costs.** The Assessment Program will have to absorb the increased costs by either laying off staff or cutting operations.
- NP 2 An additional \$33,000 is required to maintain current field activity because of recent increases in-state lodging rates from \$36 to \$60/night and increased Montana Tech motor pool costs of about 12% since 2000.** Travel will be reduced increasing the time needed to complete future characterization areas. Measurements in the monitoring program will likely be decreased.
- NP 3 Water-level recorders purchased in the early 1990's are outmoded, beginning to fail, and need replacement. Modern water-level recording systems cost about \$2,200 per well. Replacing 30 recorders in the next biennium would cost \$66,000.** Recorders increase the amount and quality of data obtained from a well per field visit, which improves efficiency. Modern systems require less frequent visits decreasing field costs.

2007 Biennium solution:

- There is \$252,454 in the Ground-Water Assessment special revenue account dedicated to ground water but transferred at a time (mostly in fiscal year 2000) that the program did not have authority to use the funds.

Budget Request:

We request that you approve the following.

Number	Description	FY 2006	FY 2007	Biennial total
NP 1	Pay Plan support from excess Ground-Water Account funds	\$15,248	\$19,589	\$34,837
NP 2	Increased travel-cost support from excess Ground-Water Account funds	\$16,449	\$16,449	\$32,898
NP 3	Water-level recorder replacement from excess Ground-Water Account funds	\$33,000	\$33,000	\$66,000
	Total requested from excess Ground-Water Account funds	\$64,697	\$69,038	<u>\$133,735</u>