

Table 1.4 Colstrip Ownership Breakdown²⁶

	Unit 1 (retired 2020 —no longer operational)	Unit 2 (retired 2020 —no longer operational)	Unit 3	Unit 4	Total (% of Units 3 and 4)	Total (MW of Units 3 and 4)
Puget Sound Energy	50%	50%	25%	25%	25%	370
Talen Energy	50%	50%	30%	--	15%	222
Portland General Electric	--	--	20%	20%	20%	296
NorthWestern Energy	--	--	--	30%	15%	222
Avista Corp.	--	--	15%	15%	15%	222
PacifiCorp	--	--	10%	10%	10%	148

Table Summary: This table lists the percentage ownership in Colstrip Units 3 and 4. Six companies own shares in Colstrip.

NATURAL GAS GENERATION

Montana is home to six natural-gas fired generation plants. Two are in the Butte area, and the other four are in the eastern part of the state on the Eastern U.S. grid. Three of the four plants in the eastern part of the state are owned by Montana-Dakota and run infrequently. The other two are owned by or under contract with NorthWestern. In 2011, NorthWestern commissioned the Dave Gates Generation Station, which is comprised of three natural gas-fueled, 50 MW simple cycle combustion turbines (SCCT) totaling 150 MW of generation capacity. The plant, located near Anaconda, provides regulation services for NorthWestern’s balancing area (the transmission footprint managed by NorthWestern). The 53 MW Basin Creek electric generation plant near Butte began operations in late 2005. Natural gas usage at the Basin Creek plant constitutes a small percentage of Montana’s total usage. Basin Creek is a peaking plant under contract with NorthWestern. NorthWestern dispatches the plant as needed to meet demand spikes and when market prices exceed variable costs to operate the plant. The Culbertson Generation Station, a nearly 90 MW facility, began operations in 2010 on the U.S. Eastern Electric Grid. The Culbertson Generation Station operates with a low capacity factor. The natural gas generation plants at Miles City, Glendive and Sidney are all peaker plants that run infrequently, as required to meet system demand.

NorthWestern is currently pursuing development of a new 175 MW natural gas plant near Laurel. The planned Yellowstone County Generating Station would include 18 flexible reciprocating internal combustion engines (RICE) and is intended to add a dispatchable capacity resource to NorthWestern’s electricity supply portfolio.

²⁶ Montana Energy Office.

Table 1.5 Montana Natural Gas Generation Facilities²⁷

Facility Name	Company Name	County	Initial Operation Date	Generator Nameplate (MW)
Dave Gates	NorthWestern Energy	Deer Lodge	2011	150
Culbertson	Basin Electric Power Cooperative	Richland	2010	91
Glendive*	Montana-Dakota Utilities	Dawson	1979/2003	84
Basin Creek	Basin Creek Equity Partners, LLC (contracted with NorthWestern Energy)	Silver Bow	2006	52
Miles City	Montana-Dakota Utilities	Custer	1972	23
Lewis and Clark	Montana-Dakota Utilities	Richland	2015	19

**This facility can also run on fuel oil when natural gas supplies are constrained.*

Table Summary: This table lists the natural gas fueled electric generators in Montana.

HYDROPOWER

Hydroelectric dams are an important resource in Montana’s energy generation mix and produced half of the state’s net electric generation in 2021. There are currently 32 operating hydroelectric facilities in Montana and six of the state’s ten-largest generating plants are water powered. At more than 562 MW of nameplate capacity, Noxon Rapids is the largest hydroelectric facility in Montana and is located on the Clark Fork River in Sanders County. Nearly all of its power is exported out of state. In 2021, Montana ranked sixth among all states for power generated by hydroelectric dams. Ownership of hydropower dams in Montana includes utilities and federal agencies. One of the largest facilities, the Seli’š Ksanka Qlispe’ Dam (207 MW; formerly the Kerr Dam) was purchased by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in 2015. This is the first Tribally-owned hydroelectric dam in the United States.

²⁷ Montana Energy Office.