

21 July, 2004

Secretary, Canadian Section
International Joint Commission
22 Floor, 234 Laurier Ave. W.
Ottawa ON K1P 6K6



Delivered by Email: Commission@ottawa.ijc.org

ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION
"Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action"

Dear Sir/Madam:

Re: St. Mary and Milk Rivers Apportionment

We have learned from the Southern Alberta Environmental Group that a request has been made by Governor Judy Martz of Montana to review the 1921 International Joint Commission (IJC) order which implements the provisions of Article VI of the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty and defines the apportionment between the United States and Canada for the Milk and St. Mary Rivers. The IJC website informs us that the Commissioners are holding a public consultation process to obtain facts related to water supplies in the basin, current and projected water uses, and any matters regarding the current implementation of the 1921 Order. Alberta Wilderness Association would like to inform the IJC of its interest in this matter.

Alberta Wilderness Association has worked on water issues since its founding in the 1960s. We have actively participated in watershed protection and have a keen interest in the Milk River as we co-manage a Natural Area protected by legislation on the lower Milk River Canyon. This area abuts the Canada-United States border and occupies an area where the Milk River exits Canada into the United States.

It is well known that the aquatic and riparian environments of both the St. Mary River and the Milk River are stressed and degraded by current water management. The Oldman River Basin Public Advisory Committee has recommended restoring flows to benefit the aquatic and riparian environments along the lower St. Mary River.

AWA urges that, in any decision-making in this matter, the IJC must consider instream flows. This is essential for the restoration of the health of the aquatic and riparian environments in these rivers. The Southern Alberta Environmental Group has provided you with a list of references in these matters. If you require any specifics about our interest in the Milk River Ridge Dam and the biological importance of the Milk River Canyon area, I refer you to our website URLs:

<http://albertawilderness.ca/Issues/MRR/mrr.htm> (Milk River Ridge Dam)

<http://albertawilderness.ca/Issues/MR/milkriver.htm> (Milk River-Sage Creek—an area that includes the Milk River Natural Area that we co-manage)—this area contains one of the largest concentrations of species at risk in Alberta and in Canada.

Alberta Wilderness Association would like to participate in any processes related to the allocation/apportionment of water in these rivers. Please keep us informed of any further consultations or decisions in matters related to the Milk River Basin.

Yours truly

Cliff Wallis
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