

## Montana Code Annotated - 2007

[Previous Section](#)   [MCA Contents](#)   [Part Contents](#)   [Search](#)   [Help](#)   [Next Section](#)

**85-20-301. Northern Cheyenne-Montana compact ratified.** The compact entered into by the state of Montana and the Northern Cheyenne tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Indian reservation and filed with the secretary of state of the state of Montana under the provisions of [85-2-702](#) on May 20, 1991, is ratified. The compact is as follows:

WATER RIGHTS COMPACT  
STATE OF MONTANA  
NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

This Compact is entered into by and among the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, the State of Montana, and the United States of America to settle, for all time, any and all existing claims of or on behalf of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe to water within the State of Montana.

### RECITALS

WHEREAS, in 1975, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and the United States, on behalf of the Tribe, brought suits in the United States District Court for the District of Montana to obtain a final determination of the Tribe's water rights;

WHEREAS, the State of Montana initiated a general stream adjudication pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 697, Laws of Montana 1979, which includes Northern Cheyenne water rights;

WHEREAS, the federal district court suits were stayed in 1983 pending the outcome of Montana State court water adjudication proceedings;

WHEREAS, the adjudication of Northern Cheyenne water rights under state law has been suspended while negotiations have proceeded to conclude a compact resolving all reserved water rights claims of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe;

WHEREAS, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and the United States agree that the Tribal Water Right described in this Compact shall be in satisfaction of the Tribe's reserved water rights claims and any claims to water rights made on behalf of the Tribe by the United States;

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of all parties that the reserved water rights claims of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe be settled through a Water Rights Compact;

WHEREAS, the parties agree that settlement of the reserved water rights claims of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe is dependent on the repair and enlargement of the Tongue

River Reservoir;

NOW THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

## Article I Definitions

The following definitions shall apply for purposes of this Compact:

1. "Acre-foot" means the amount of water necessary to cover one acre to a depth of one foot and is equivalent to 43,560 cubic feet.
2. "Alluvial groundwater" means water located below the land surface within the Quaternary hydrostratigraphic unit that borders or underlies major perennial and intermittent streams in the Tongue River and Rosebud Creek basins. This unit is composed of unconsolidated alluvial deposits of clay, silt, sand, and gravel. For the purposes of this Compact, all other water below the land surface will be deemed nonalluvial groundwater.
3. "Annual" or "per year" means during one year as defined by this Compact.
4. "Board" means the Northern Cheyenne-Montana Compact Board established by Article IV of this Compact.
5. "Completion date" means the date of completion of a project to repair and enlarge the Tongue River Dam to a degree sufficient to provide the storage component of the Tribal Water Right subject to the conditions provided in this Compact.
6. "Depletion" means, for any diversion of water, the difference between the quantity of water diverted and the quantity of return flows within the basin.
7. "Direct flow of the Tongue River" means the water in the Tongue River and its tributaries that has not been stored in the Tongue River Reservoir.
8. "Domestic use" means the diversion of water by one or more individuals, family units or households for drinking, cooking, laundering, sanitation and other personal comforts and necessities; and for the irrigation of a family garden or orchard not exceeding one-half acre in area.
9. "Excess water" means increases in the Tongue River basin water supply resulting from conditions different from those assumed in the Tongue River Water Model.
10. "Exchange water" means water available to the Tribe from the Tongue River direct flow or from the Tongue River Reservoir storage in exchange for Tribal return flows made available to other Tongue River water users.
11. "Indian" means any person who: a) is an enrolled member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe; or b) is a member of a tribe that is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians; or c) holds, or is recognized by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible to hold, trust and restricted property on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.
12. "Manifolded well system" means a water distribution or conveyance facility that is supplied by two or more wells.
13. "Miles City Decree water right" means a water right, finally decreed in any general adjudication of the Tongue River, or recognized under state law until such final adjudication, which is based on the decree entered in Miles City Canal & Irrigating Co. v. Lee, et al., Montana Seventh Judicial District, No. 2809, May 20, 1914, and which has a

priority date of March 24, 1909, or earlier.

14. "Parties" means the Tribe, the State of Montana, and the United States.

15. "Person" means an individual or any other entity, public or private, including the State, the Tribe, and the government of the United States and all officers, agents, and departments thereof.

16. "Ratification date" means the date this Compact has been approved by the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council and the Legislature of the State of Montana.

17. "Reservation" means the Northern Cheyenne Reservation as established by Executive Orders of November 26, 1884 and March 19, 1900.

18. "State" means the State of Montana and all officers, agents, departments, and political subdivisions thereof. Unless otherwise indicated, for purposes of notification or consent, "State" means the Director of the State Department of Natural Resources and Conservation or its successor agency.

19. "State contract right" means a right to receive stored water from the Tongue River Reservoir, not to exceed a cumulative total of 40,000 acre-feet per year, pursuant to a contract that allocates the storage rights of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation or its successor agency.

20. "Tongue River Water Model" means the Tongue River Reservoir Operations computer model that is documented in: Tongue River Modeling Study, Final Report, submitted on July 20, 1990, to the Engineering Bureau of the Water Resources Division of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, or any revision agreed to by the parties. The Final Report and any agreed revisions are incorporated herein by reference as though set forth in full.

21. "Transfer" means any authorization for the delivery or use of water from the Tribe or any person authorized by the Tribe to any other person by a service contract, lease, sale, exchange or other similar agreement.

22. "Tribal Water Right" means the right to divert or use water as described by Articles II and III of this Compact.

23. "Tribe" means the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation and all officers, agents and departments thereof. Unless otherwise indicated, for purposes of notification or consent, "Tribe" means the Tribal President or the Chief Executive Official of the Tribe.

24. "United States" means the federal government and all officers, agencies, departments and political subdivisions thereof. Unless otherwise indicated, for purposes of notification or consent, "United States" means the Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

25. "Year" means the twelve-month period beginning April 1st and ending March 31st.

## Article II Tribal Water Right

### A. Quantification of Water Right.

The water rights of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe are as follows:

#### 1. Existing Non-Agricultural Uses.

Tribal and individual Indian stockwater, domestic and municipal water uses on the Reservation and in existence as of the ratification date are hereby recognized and protected as part of the Tribal Water Right, and are in addition to the water rights set forth in Sections A.2., A.3., and A.4. of this Article. All such existing uses shall be governed by the terms of this Compact.

2. Tongue River.

Subject to the terms of this Compact, the Tribal Water Right in the Tongue River basin consists of the right to divert or use or to permit the diversion or use of up to 32,500 acre-feet per year, from a combination of direct flow, storage, and exchange water. Tribal and individual Indian irrigation uses in existence on the Reservation in the Tongue River basin as of the ratification date are recognized and protected, and shall be counted as a use of the 32,500 acre-feet per year right described in Section A.2. of this Article.

a. Direct Flow Right. The Tribe has a right to divert or use or permit the diversion or use of up to 12,500 acre-feet of water per year from direct flow of the Tongue River and its tributaries with a priority date of October 1, 1881; provided, that:

i. The Tribe's annual depletion of its direct flow water right in the Tongue River and its tributaries shall not exceed 75 percent of the amount diverted, or 9,375 acre-feet per year; and

ii. The Tribe's direct flow water right in the Tongue River and its tributaries may not be used in a manner that adversely affects:

A. Miles City Decree water rights, or

B. Water rights from off-Reservation tributaries of the Tongue River, which are finally decreed in any general adjudication of the Tongue River, or are recognized under state law until such final adjudication, and which have a priority date of June 30, 1973 or earlier and are based on the use of an irrigation system in place and not abandoned as of June 30, 1973.

b. Storage and Exchange Water. The Tribe has a right to divert or deplete, or permit the diversion or depletion of, up to 20,000 acre-feet per year from a combination of water stored in the Tongue River Reservoir and exchange water. The availability of the 20,000 acre-feet per year depends, as provided in the Tongue River Water Model, upon the annual schedule utilized by the Tribe for diversions of Tongue River direct flows. Except as provided in paragraph A.2.c.ii. of this Article, any reduction in Tongue River Reservoir stored water resulting from Tribal diversions of Tongue River direct flows shall not affect State contract rights, as defined in this Compact, but shall be satisfied exclusively from the right described in this paragraph. Tribal use of stored water from the Tongue River Reservoir shall be measured at the Reservoir.

c. Shortages.

i. The Tribal Water Right in the Tongue River basin shall be subject to shortages due to natural low flows that are consistent with the period of record used in the Tongue River Water Model in diversion amounts not to exceed 50% in any one year and 100% cumulative in any ten-year period.

ii. Decreases in the amount of water stored in the Tongue River Reservoir that are caused by: (i) sedimentation; (ii) Reservoir inflows lower than those assumed in the Tongue River Water Model; (iii) normal and expected maintenance of the Tongue River Dam and associated structures; or (iv) normal and expected deterioration of the Tongue River Dam and associated structures shall not be considered a failure of the Tongue River

Dam as that term is utilized in paragraph A.2.f. of this Article. All such decreases in water availability shall be shared pro rata among all users of stored water including the Tribe.

d. Excess Water. The Tribe shall, as part of the Tribal Water Right, have the first right to use excess water, as defined in this Compact; provided, that total use of the Tongue River Tribal Water Right shall not exceed 32,500 acre-feet per year diverted from direct flow, storage, and exchange water. Tribal nonuse of excess water in any one year shall not affect the right of the Tribe to use excess water in any subsequent year.

e. Contract Water. Nothing in this Compact shall affect the water, and any rights therein, secured to the Tribe by Water Purchase Contract No. 232 for 7,500 acre-feet per year, dated March 15, 1938, between the Tongue River Water Users Association, the Water Conservation Board of the State of Montana and the United States, through the Secretary of the Interior. Any water entitlement pursuant to the Contract shall be in addition to and not a part of the 32,500 acre-feet per year Tribal Water Right set forth above.

f. Failure of Tongue River Dam. In the event of a failure of the Tongue River Dam which causes a substantial diminution of the Tribe's storage right set forth in paragraph A.2.b. of this Article, and notwithstanding the provisions of Article V.A. of this Compact, any party may within 180 days of said failure request the others to renegotiate this Compact. The parties shall have three years from the date of the request to reach a new agreement, during which time all of the provisions in this Compact shall remain in full force and effect. If no party requests renegotiation, or if a new agreement is not reached within three years of the request, the provisions of paragraph A.2.a.ii. of this Article concerning the subordination of the Tongue River direct flow Tribal Water Right to other specified water rights, shall become null and void; provided, that all other provisions of this Compact shall remain in full force and effect. The Tribe shall not be entitled to void or terminate this Compact, or to assert that the State is in breach of the Compact, for a failure of the Tongue River Dam; provided, that any and all other rights of the Tribe arising from such event shall not be affected by this paragraph.

### 3. Rosebud Creek.

a. Water Right. The Tribe has a right to divert or use or to permit the diversion or use from Rosebud Creek and its tributaries, for agricultural purposes only, of 1,800 acre-feet of water per year, or enough water to irrigate 600 acres of land per year, whichever is less, with a priority date of October 1, 1881. Tribal and individual Indian irrigation uses in existence as of the ratification date on-Reservation in the Rosebud Creek basin are recognized and protected, and shall be considered a use of the 1,800 acre-feet per year right described in this paragraph.

b. Implementation. The Tribe agrees that in the period between May 1, 1991 and July 1, 1993, the Tribe, or persons authorized by it, will develop no more than 200 acres of land in addition to irrigation uses in existence as of May 1, 1991, through irrigation methods involving pumping of alluvial groundwater, except that the Tribe, or persons authorized by it, may develop up to the full 600 acres of land, or any portion thereof, by any other method. During this period, the Tribe and the State agree to share any hydrologic data available for use in connection with any test which the State undertakes to evaluate impacts, if any, of development of on-Reservation lands on off-Reservation lands. After July 1, 1993, the Tribe, or persons authorized by it, may develop the full 600

acres of land by any irrigation method.

c. Additional Water Right. In addition to the water right described in paragraph A.3.a. of this Article, the Tribe has a right to divert or use or permit the diversion or use from Rosebud Creek and its tributaries, for any purpose, of up to 19,530 acre-feet of water per year, or enough water to irrigate 6,510 acres of land per year, whichever is less, with a priority date of October 1, 1881. The Tribe may not exercise the water right set forth in this paragraph in a manner that adversely affects a water right finally decreed in any general adjudication of the Rosebud Creek basin or, until such final decree is issued, a water right recognized under state law, which 1) has a priority date of June 30, 1973 or earlier, and 2) is based on the use of an irrigation system in place and not abandoned as of June 30, 1973; provided, that the state law water rights protected in this paragraph shall not exceed:

i. North of the Reservation, 8,100 acre-feet of water per year or enough water to irrigate 2,700 acres of land per year, whichever is less; and

ii. South of the Reservation, 540 acre-feet of water per year or enough water to irrigate 180 acres of land per year, whichever is less.

d. Dams and Impoundments. The Tribe shall not construct, within the Rosebud Creek basin, any dams or impoundments to store water naturally arising in Rosebud Creek and its tributaries; provided, that the Tribe may construct stockwater impoundments pursuant to paragraph A.5. of this Article, and, subject to other applicable provisions of this Compact, may construct dams or impoundments within the Rosebud Creek basin to store water from sources outside the basin, including non-alluvial groundwater.

e. Moratorium on Permits. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation shall order a moratorium on the issuance of permits in the Rosebud Creek basin concurrent with the ratification date of this Compact. The moratorium shall not apply to applications for permits by persons who have entered into deferral agreements with the Tribe for Rosebud Creek basin water as provided in Section G. of this Article. The Department may order the moratorium lifted if it determines that water is available over and above the amount necessary to fulfill the Tribal Water Right described in paragraph A.3.a. and Section A.3.c. of this Article. The Tribe may challenge the Department's determination to lift the moratorium under the procedure set forth in Article IV of this Compact.

#### 4. Groundwater.

a. Alluvial Groundwater. The Tribe has a right to withdraw and use, or permit the withdrawal and use of, alluvial groundwater in lieu of surface water diversions of the Tongue River and Rosebud Creek Tribal Water Right, subject to the same terms and conditions of this Compact that apply to such surface water diversions. Alluvial water withdrawn from wells or manifolded well systems with a capacity of 100 gallons per minute or less shall not be deducted from the Tribal Water Right. For wells or manifolded well systems with a capacity of withdrawing greater than 100 gallons per minute of alluvial water, the entire amount withdrawn shall be deducted from the Tribal Water Right.

b. Non-alluvial Groundwater. Except where a Tribal right to non-alluvial groundwater is established pursuant to Article VII.B. of this Compact, Tribal use or authorization of use of non-alluvial groundwater shall, at the election of the Tribe, comply with state law in effect at the time of the use or with the alluvial groundwater provisions of paragraph

A.4.a. of this Article.

5. Stockwater Impoundments. The Tribe may construct, or permit the construction of, stockwater impoundments on the Reservation, where the capacity of the impoundment is less than 15 acre-feet and the impoundment is constructed on a source other than a perennial flowing stream. The amount of water so impounded shall not be deducted from the Tribal Water Right.

6. Subirrigation. The Tribe shall be entitled to take advantage of any natural subirrigation occurring on the Reservation. Where otherwise consistent with state law, persons outside the Reservation shall also be entitled to take advantage of natural subirrigation.

7. Big Horn Reservoir (Yellowtail) Storage.

a. Tribal Allocation. As a part of the Tribal Water Right, the Secretary of the Interior shall allocate 30,000 acre-feet per year of stored water in Big Horn Reservoir, Yellowtail Unit, Lower Bighorn Division, Pick-Sloan Missouri Program, Montana, measured at the dam, for use or disposition by the Tribe for any beneficial purpose, either on or off the Reservation, pursuant to the terms of this Compact. This allocation is subject to the prior reserved water rights, if any, of any Indian tribe, or of persons claiming water through that tribe, to that water. Any use or disposition of water from Big Horn Reservoir off the Reservation by the Tribe is subject to the specific provisions relating to such use or disposition in any act of Congress ratifying this Compact.

b. Payment for Tribal Allocation. The Tribe shall not be required to make payments to the United States for any portion of the Tribal Water Right stored in Yellowtail Reservoir unless and until the water is used or sold by the Tribe in which case the Tribe shall make annual payments to the United States as hereinafter provided.

i. Use or Sale for Municipal and Industrial (M&I) Purposes. For each acre-foot of stored water used or sold for M&I purposes, the Tribe shall pay annually to the United States an amount to cover the proportionate share of the annual operation, maintenance and replacement (OM&R) costs, and the proportionate share of the capital costs with appropriate interest for the Yellowtail Unit allocable to the Tribe's stored water. Upon full payment of the capital costs allocable to the Tribe's stored water supply, the annual payments shall include only a proportionate share of the annual OM&R costs. Such annual payments shall be reviewed and adjusted, as appropriate, to reflect the actual capital and OM&R costs for the Yellowtail Unit.

ii. Agricultural, Domestic, Livestock, and Other Uses. For each acre-foot of stored water used or sold for other than M&I purposes, the Tribe shall pay annually to the United States an amount to cover the OM&R cost for the Yellowtail Unit allocable to the Tribe's stored water, which amount shall be reviewed and adjusted, as appropriate, to reflect the actual OM&R costs for the Yellowtail Unit. The Bureau of Indian Affairs shall transfer sufficient funds on a nonreimbursable basis to the Bureau of Reclamation to cover allocable OM&R costs under this paragraph.

c. Rates and Revenues. Except for payments required to be made to the United States as set forth above, the Tribe shall set such rates as it deems proper for its use or sale of stored water and shall retain all revenues from its use or sale of said stored water; provided, that the United States reserves the right to use any and all water stored in Yellowtail Reservoir for hydropower generation.

d. Agreement. Following ratification of this Compact, and upon development of a

demand for the water under Section A.7. of this Article, the United States and the Tribe shall enter into an appropriate agreement, if required, setting forth the terms and conditions under which water will be made available to the Tribe, and for the collection and disposition of revenues in connection therewith.

B. Persons Entitled to Use the Tribal Water Right.

The Tribal Water Right may be used by the Tribe, or persons authorized to use water by the Tribe pursuant to Article III; provided, that:

1. Such use is in accordance with the terms of this Compact;
2. That the Tribe shall give preference to Tribal members to use the Tribal Water Right; and
3. Such water right may be transferred from one Tribal member to another Tribal member for agricultural purposes only upon the transfer of land on the Reservation from one Tribal member to another Tribal member.

C. Place of Use of the Tribal Water Right.

Pursuant to a Tribal water code adopted as prescribed in Article III of this Compact, and subject to all other provisions of this Compact, the Tribe shall have the right to use or permit use of the Tribal Water Right with any point of diversion or any place of use on or off the Reservation; provided, that any use of the Tribal Water Right off the Reservation shall not be deemed to convert the Tribal Water Right to a state water right, and subsequent nonuse of the Tribal Water Right off the Reservation shall not constitute a relinquishment, forfeiture, or abandonment of the Right.

D. Purposes of the Tribal Water Right.

Except as provided in paragraph A.3.a. of this Article, the Tribe may authorize use of the Tribal Water Right on the Reservation for any purpose without regard to whether such use is beneficial as defined by state law. Off the Reservation, any use of the Tribal Water Right shall comply with Article III.B.

E. Conditions Upon Uses of the Tribal Water Right.

The Tribe shall adopt appropriate regulations to ensure that use of the Tribal Water Right is not wasteful and does not degrade water quality.

F. Transfer of Tribal Water Right.

The Tribe shall not transfer water naturally arising in Rosebud Creek or its tributaries for use off the Reservation. The Tribe may transfer any other part of the Tribal Water Right for use on or off the Reservation pursuant to the terms of this Compact. This paragraph shall not affect the right of the Tribe to enter into a deferral agreement regarding Rosebud Creek water pursuant to Section G. of this Article.

G. Deferral Agreements.

After the ratification date, the Tribe may enter into an agreement with any person who is exercising or proposing to exercise a right under state law to use surface water off the Reservation, which agreement protects the person's right from any exercise of the Tribal Water Right; provided, that:

1. Before use of such water, the person shall have complied with all applicable state laws concerning the acquisition of a water right;
2. Subsequent to acquisition of the state water right, regulation of its use shall be subject to state law;
3. The amount of water subject to the agreement shall be deducted from the amount of water available for depletion by the Tribe in the basin from which the water is being



diverted; and

4. The agreement shall not permanently alienate the Tribal Water Right or any part thereof.

H. Effect of Non-Use of Tribal Water Right.

Non-use of any part of the Tribal Water Right shall not constitute a relinquishment, forfeiture or abandonment of the Right.

I. Tribal Water Right to be Held in Trust.

The Tribal Water Right shall be held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Tribe.

Article III  
Administration of Water Rights

A. Tribal Administration.

1. Except as otherwise provided in this Compact, the use of the Tribal Water Right shall be administered by the Tribe, and the Tribe has the final and exclusive jurisdiction to resolve all disputes between users of the Tribal Water Right. Administration and enforcement of the Tribal Water Right shall be pursuant to a water code, which shall be developed and adopted by the Tribe and submitted for approval to the Secretary of the Interior within one year after ratification of this Compact. Pending the adoption and approval of the Tribal water code, the administration and enforcement of the Tribal Water Right shall be by the Secretary of the Interior.

2. Within six months after the Tribal water code takes effect, the Tribe shall provide the State with notice of each use of the Tribal Water Right, including uses in existence as of the ratification date of this Compact and those established since that time, which shall show:

- a. The person authorized to make the diversion;
- b. The amount of water authorized to be diverted annually;
- c. The amount of water authorized for annual consumption;
- d. The point of diversion;
- e. The period of use;
- f. The place of use;
- g. The uses for which the water may be diverted; and
- h. The relative priority of the use as against other uses of the Tribal Water Right.

3. The Tribe shall thereafter notify the State within sixty days after the end of each quarter year of all new uses of surface and groundwater authorized by the Tribe during the preceding quarter year and of all new uses of the Tribal Water Right actually commenced during that quarter year. The notice shall be in the same format as that prescribed in Section A.2. of this Article.

4. The Tribe shall provide the State with not less than 180-days written notice prior to the start of construction of any project to divert any portion of the Tribal Water Right from the Big Horn River or the Big Horn Reservoir for use on the Reservation, or from the Tongue River or the Tongue River Reservoir for use on the Reservation in the Rosebud Creek basin. The notice shall describe: any diversion, conveyance and storage facilities; the amounts of water to be diverted and consumed; and the purpose, place, and

period of the proposed use. Diversion or use of water from such project may be made only after all permits, certificates, variances or other authorizations described in paragraph B.3. of this Article have been obtained. With respect to any such project or diversion, the State or any affected person may seek such remedies as may be available under federal, state, or tribal law, and nothing in this Compact shall be construed to affect the rights of any party under such law.

**B. Off-Reservation Uses of the Tribal Water Right.**

1. Off-Reservation Uses. Any use of the Tribal Water Right involving a point of diversion or place of use located off the Reservation shall be considered an off-Reservation use; provided, that releases or diversions from Big Horn Reservoir or Tongue River Reservoir for use on the Reservation shall not be considered off-Reservation uses.

2. Subsequent Federal or State Law. All off-Reservation uses of the Tribal Water Right shall comply with the requirements set forth in Section B. of this Article until such time as the statutory or common law of the United States or the State of Montana establishes that off-Reservation uses of Indian water rights may occur without regard to state law.

3. Diversion Facilities.

With respect to diversion or transportation facilities located off the Reservation, the Tribe or persons using the Tribal Water Right shall apply for all permits, certificates, variances and other authorizations required by state laws regulating, conditioning or permitting the siting, construction, operation, alteration or use of any equipment, device, facility or associated facility proposed to use or transport water. A diversion or use of water in the exercise of the Tribal Water Right may be made only after all permits, certificates, variances or other authorizations applied for pursuant to this paragraph have been obtained.

4. Off-Reservation Uses in Tongue and Rosebud Basins.

a. The Tribe shall provide the State with not less than 180-days advance written notice of any off-Reservation use, transfer, or change of use of the Tribal Water Right:

- i. Within the Tongue River basin, or
- ii. Utilizing Tongue River water off-Reservation in the Rosebud Creek basin.

b. The notice shall include sufficient documentation to demonstrate that:

- i. The proposed use of water is a beneficial use as defined by Montana law in effect at that time;
- ii. The proposed means of diversion, and the construction and operation of the diversion works are adequate;
- iii. The proposed use, transfer, or change of use will not adversely affect, except with the consent of the owner of such right:

A. Any water right arising under the laws of the United States, or

B. Any right to the use of water established pursuant to the laws of the State; except that, if the portion of the Tribal Water Right that is the subject of the proposed off-Reservation use, transfer or change of use is the storage and exchange right set forth in Article II.A.2.b. of this Compact, the Tribe need only demonstrate that Miles City Decree rights will not be adversely affected by such use, transfer, or change of use.

iv. The proposed use, transfer, or change of use does not cause any unreasonable significant adverse environmental impact; and

v. Proposed uses, transfers, or changes in use in excess of 4,000 acre-feet per year and 5.5 cubic feet per second of water will not:

A. Substantially impair the quality of water for existing uses in the source of water from which the diversion is made;

B. Be made where low quality water which can economically be used is legally and physically available to the Tribe for the proposed use;

C. Create or substantially contribute to saline seep; or

D. Substantially injure fish or wildlife populations in the source of water from which the diversion is made.

c. A proposed use, transfer or change of use of the Tribal Water Right pursuant to Section B.4. of this Article may be challenged:

i. Within 30 days after the expiration of the notice period provided in Section B.4.a. of this Article;

ii. In a court of competent jurisdiction; and

iii. By the State or by a person whose rights are adversely affected by the proposed use, transfer, or change of use.

In any such case, the Tribe shall have the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that it has satisfied the requirements of Section B.4.b. of this Article. A Tribal notice that conforms to the requirements of Section B.4.b. of this Article shall be prima facie evidence of its contents.

#### 5. Off-Reservation Uses Outside Tongue and Rosebud Basins.

Except as provided in Section B.4. of this Article, no person may initiate an off-Reservation use, transfer, or change of use of the Tribal Water Right without first applying for and receiving authorization for the use, transfer, or change of use pursuant to Montana law in effect at the time of the application.

#### C. State Administration.

1. The State shall administer all rights to the use of surface water and groundwater within the Reservation which are not a part of the Tribal Water Right. The State shall have the final and exclusive jurisdiction to resolve all disputes between users of rights established under state law.

2. Within one year after ratification of this Compact, the State shall notify the Tribe of all existing uses of surface and groundwater for which a permit has been issued by the State in the Tongue River or Rosebud Creek basins. The notice shall state:

a. The person authorized to make the diversion;

b. The amount of water authorized to be diverted annually;

c. The amount of water authorized for annual consumption;

d. The point of diversion;

e. The period of use;

f. The place of use;

g. The uses for which the water may be diverted; and

h. The priority date of the use.

3. The State shall notify the Tribe within sixty days after the end of each quarter year of all new uses of surface and groundwater for which a permit has been issued by the State in the Tongue River or Rosebud Creek basins during the preceding quarter year and of all new uses of water actually commenced pursuant to the laws of the State during that quarter year on each of these sources. The notice shall be in the same format as that

prescribed in Section C.2. of this Article.

D. Operation of Tongue River Reservoir.

1. To provide for Tongue River Reservoir operation procedures that are consistent with the purposes of this Compact, a reservoir operation plan shall be developed by a five-member advisory committee. The committee shall have representatives from the State of Montana, the Tongue River Water Users Association, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, the United States, and a fifth member to be selected by the other four. The advisory committee shall annually agree upon a reservoir operation schedule setting forth proposed uses of storage and direct flow for the year. The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation or its successor shall thereupon be responsible, consistent with the terms of this Compact and other applicable law, for the daily operation of the Reservoir and for implementation of the reservoir operation plan.

2. The reservoir operation plan shall provide for the operation of the project for fish and wildlife purposes depending on the availability of water on an annual basis. This provision shall not create an operational preference for fish and wildlife purposes relative to other project purposes.

3. The Secretary of the Interior shall pay annually to the State an amount to cover the proportionate share of the annual operation, maintenance and replacement (OM&R) costs for the Tongue River Dam allocable to the Tribe's stored water in the Reservoir.

#### Article IV

#### Northern Cheyenne-Montana Compact Board

A. Establishment of Board.

There is hereby established the Northern Cheyenne-Montana Compact Board. The Board shall consist of three members: one member appointed by the Governor of the State of Montana; one member appointed by the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council; and one member selected by the other two members. All members shall be appointed within six months of the ratification date of this Compact and within thirty days of the date any vacancy occurs. Each member shall serve a five-year term and shall be eligible for reappointment. The initial term of each member shall be staggered with one member serving a five-year term, one a four-year term, and one a three-year term. The initial term of each member shall be chosen by lot. Expenses of the members appointed by the State and the Tribe shall be borne by the entity appointing the member. The expenses of the third member and all other expenses shall be borne equally by the Tribe and the State, subject to the availability of funds.

B. Membership.

Should the two appointed members fail to agree on the selection of a third member within sixty days of the ratification date of this Compact or within thirty days after any vacancy occurs, the following procedure shall be utilized:

1. Within five days each member shall nominate three persons to serve as a member of the Board;

2. Within fifteen days thereafter each member shall reject two of the persons nominated by the other member;

3. The chief judge of the United States District Court for the District of Montana shall

select the third member of the Board from the remaining two nominees. If the chief judge declines for any reason to select the third member, the chief justice of the Montana Supreme Court shall make the selection from the remaining two nominees.

C. Quorum and Vote Required.

Two members of the Board shall constitute a quorum if reasonable notice has been provided in advance to the absent member. All Board decisions shall be by a majority of the Board, shall be in writing and, together with any dissenting opinions, shall be served on all parties in the proceeding before the Board, and on the parties to this Compact.

D. Jurisdiction of the Board.

The Northern Cheyenne-Montana Compact Board shall have jurisdiction to resolve controversies over the right to the use of water between users of the Tribal Water Right on the one hand and users of state water rights on the other hand. Such controversies shall include, but shall not be limited to, disputes as to the meaning of this Compact, and disputes concerning the operation of the Tongue River Reservoir as it affects the Tribal Water Right.

E. Powers and Duties.

The Board shall hold hearings upon notice in proceedings before it and shall have the power to administer oaths, take evidence and issue subpoenas to compel attendance of witnesses or production of documents or other evidence. The Tribe, the State, and the United States shall enforce the Board's subpoenas in the same manner as prescribed by the laws of the Tribe, the State, or the United States for enforcing a subpoena issued by its courts in a civil action. The parties to the controversy may present evidence and cross examine any witnesses. The Board shall determine the controversy based on the evidence, and grant any appropriate relief, except money damages. All decisions of the Board shall be by majority and in writing. The Board shall adopt necessary rules and regulations to carry out its responsibilities within six months after its first meeting. All records of the Board shall be open to public inspection except for privileged information.

F. Review and Enforcement of Board Decisions.

1. Decisions by the Board shall be effective immediately, unless stayed for a period of time prescribed by the Board. Any party before the Board may appeal any final decision by the Board to a court of competent jurisdiction within thirty days of such decision. The notice of appeal shall be filed with the Board and served personally or by registered mail upon the Tribe, the State, the United States and all parties to the proceeding before the Board, and all such persons shall thereafter have the right to participate in the appeal.

2. In any appeal, the Board's decision shall be presumed to be valid, and may be vacated by the court only on one of the following grounds:

- a. The decision is not supported by substantial evidence;
- b. The decision was procured by corruption, fraud or undue means;
- c. There was evident partiality or corruption by the Board or by any member;
- d. The Board was guilty of misconduct in refusing to hear the dispute, or in refusing to hear evidence pertinent and material to the controversy, or any other clear misbehavior by which the rights of any party have been substantially prejudiced;
- e. The Board exceeded its authority under the terms of this Compact; or
- f. The decision is contrary to law.

3. Unless an appeal is timely filed as provided in paragraph F.1. of this Article, any decision of the Board shall be confirmed or enforced by any court of competent

jurisdiction on petition of the Board, the Tribe, the State, the United States, or any party before the Board in the proceeding in which the decision was made.

4. A court of competent jurisdiction in which a timely appeal is filed pursuant to paragraph F.1. of this Article, or in which a petition to confirm or enforce is filed pursuant to paragraph F.3. of this Article, may order such temporary or permanent relief as it considers just and proper.

5. Any appeal may be taken from any decision of the court in which a timely appeal is filed pursuant to paragraph F.1. of this Article, or in which a petition to confirm or enforce is filed pursuant to paragraph F.3. of this Article, in the manner and to the same extent as from orders or judgments of the court in a civil action.

6. In any appeal or petition to confirm or enforce the Board's decision, the Board shall file with the court the record of the proceedings before the Board.

G. Waiver of Immunity.

The Tribe, the United States and the State hereby waive their respective immunities from suit, including any defense the State shall have under the Eleventh Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, in order to permit the resolution of disputes under this Compact by the Northern Cheyenne-Montana Compact Board, and the appeal or judicial enforcement of Board decisions as provided herein, except that such waivers of sovereign immunity by the Tribe, the United States, or the State shall not extend to any action for money damages including costs and attorneys' fees.

Article V

Finality and Effectiveness of Compact

A. Ratification and Effectiveness of Compact.

1. Upon ratification by the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council and the Legislature of the State of Montana, the terms of this Compact may not be altered, voided, or modified in any respect without the consent of the parties; provided, that except as set forth in Section A.2. of this Article, this Compact shall not become effective until ratification by the United States Congress and the completion date occurs, notwithstanding the provisions of Section [85-2-702\(2\)](#), MCA. If the completion date does not occur on or before December 31, 1997, or any later date agreed to in writing by the parties, this Compact, including all provisions that become effective on the ratification date, shall become null and void without further action by any party. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section [85-2-702\(3\)](#), MCA, this Compact shall not be included in any preliminary decree or final decree in any State water court proceeding unless and until this Compact becomes effective as set forth in this Article.

2. As between the State and the Tribe, all of the provisions of this Compact shall become effective upon the ratification date except insofar as they:

- a. Quantify or provide for the administration of the Tongue River Tribal Water Right;
- b. Provide for the management or operation of the Tongue River Reservoir; or
- c. Require Congressional authorization.

All of the provisions that do not become effective upon the ratification date shall become effective on the completion date, unless Congress provides otherwise.

B. Incorporation Into Decrees and Disposition of Federal Suits.

Within sixty days after the completion date, the parties shall petition for incorporation of this Compact into a decree in any appropriate State court proceeding commenced in accordance with 43 U.S.C. 666. Upon the issuance of a final decree by the State water court, or its successor, and the completion of any direct appeals therefrom, or upon the expiration of the time for filing any such appeal, the United States, the Tribe, and the State shall within thirty days execute and file joint motions pursuant to Rule 41(a), Fed. R. Civ. P., to dismiss the Tribe's claims, and any claims made by the United States as trustee for the Tribe, in Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation v. Adsit, et al., No. 75-6-BLG (D. Mont.); United States v. Big Horn Low Line Canal Company, et al., No. 75-34-BLG (D. Mont.); and United States v. Tongue River Water Users Association, et al., No. 75-20-BLG (D. Mont.), (hereinafter collectively referred to as "the federal suits"), with prejudice. This Compact shall be filed as a consent decree in the federal suits only if, prior to the dismissal of the federal suits as provided in this Article, it is finally determined in a judgment binding upon the State of Montana that the State courts lack jurisdiction over, or that the State court proceedings are inadequate to adjudicate, some or all of the water rights asserted in the federal suits.

## Article VI General Provisions

A. Nothing in this Compact shall be so construed or interpreted:

1. To establish the nature, extent, or manner of administration of water rights of any Indian reservation or other federal reservation other than the Northern Cheyenne Reservation;
2. To preclude the acquisition or exercise of a right to the use of water by the Tribe or any individual Indian outside the Reservation by purchase of such right or by acquisition of land, or by application to the State;
3. To preclude the acquisition or exercise of an appropriative right to the use of water under state law by the Tribe or any individual Indian within the Reservation:
  - a. By purchase of such right or by purchase of land; provided, that water rights acquired by such purchase after the ratification date of this Compact shall be in addition to and shall become part of the Tribal Water Right and shall be governed by this Compact; or
  - b. By application to the State. Except for applications for non-alluvial groundwater pursuant to Article II.A.4.b., and applications for storage appropriations authorized by paragraph A.8. of this Article, any such application shall not be granted by the State until the Tribal Water Right in the basin where the diversion that is the subject of the application is located has been fully utilized;
4. To determine the relative rights inter sese of persons using water under the authority of the State or the Tribe;
5. To limit in any way the rights of the parties or any other person to litigate any issues or questions not resolved by this Compact;
6. To authorize the taking of a water right which is vested under state or federal law;
7. To create or deny substantive rights through headings or captions used in this Compact;

8. To preclude or to discourage the Tribe from establishing the right to, or contracting for, water from any further enlargements of the Tongue River Dam, or from any future storage facilities that may be built within the Tongue River or Rosebud Creek basins, or in any other water basins;

9. To address or prejudge whether, in any interstate apportionment, the Tribe's water right shall be counted as part of the waters apportioned to the State; or

10. To alter or amend any provisions of the Yellowstone River Compact, Act of October 30, 1951, ch. 629, 65 Stat. 663 (1951).

11. To prohibit the Tribe or the United States from challenging any claims to water in any general adjudication of the Tongue River or Rosebud Creek basins.

B. The parties expressly reserve all rights not granted, recognized or relinquished in this Compact.

C. The Secretary of the Interior shall comply with all aspects of the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. 4331-4335, and the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531, et seq., and other applicable environmental acts and regulations in implementing this Compact.

## Article VII Tribal Relinquishment of Other Water Claims

A. With the exception of the Tribe's claim to non-alluvial groundwater in paragraph B. of this Article and any rights to water which may exist with respect to land held by the Tribe or a Tribal member outside the present Reservation, the Tribe and the United States as trustee for the Tribe hereby relinquish forever any and all claims, in existence on the ratification date of this Compact, to water within the State of Montana. The relinquishment includes, but is not limited to, any claim for water derived from aboriginal use of land or water, any Indian treaties, any Act of Congress, and any executive act of the United States.

B. The parties intend that the water right as confirmed to the Tribe in Article II is in full satisfaction of its federal reserved water right based on Winters v. United States, 207 U.S. 564 (1908). Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph A. of this Article, the Tribe retains the right to assert a claim that it has a right, not based on the federal reserved water rights doctrine, to the use of any non-alluvial groundwater underlying the Reservation. In any such action, the Tribe shall be estopped to assert that its right to non-alluvial groundwater is a federal reserved water right, that the Tribal Water Right confirmed in Article II is inadequate to satisfy the purposes for which the Reservation was created, or from collaterally attacking this Compact in any manner. Any right to non-alluvial groundwater established by the Tribe under this paragraph is not subject to this Compact. Nothing in this Compact shall be construed to waive any defenses of the State or any water user to a Tribal claim for non-alluvial groundwater.

## Article VIII Binding Effect



Upon the effectiveness of any provision of this Compact, its terms will be binding:

A. Upon the State and any person or entity of any nature whatsoever using, claiming or in any manner asserting any right under the authority of the State to the use of water in the State of Montana; provided, that for purposes of consent, ratification, or authorization, the validity of consent, ratification, or authorization is to be determined by Montana law;

B. Upon the Tribe and any person or entity of any nature whatsoever using, claiming or in any manner asserting any right to the use of the Tribe's water right, or any right arising under any doctrine of reserved or aboriginal water rights for the Tribe, or any right arising under tribal law; provided, that for purposes of consent, ratification, or authorization, the validity of consent, ratification or authorization is to be determined by tribal law; and

C. Upon the United States and any person or entity of any nature whatsoever using, claiming or in any manner asserting any right under the authority of the United States to the use of water in the State of Montana; provided, that for purposes of consent, ratification, or authorization, the validity of consent, ratification or authorization is to be determined by federal law, and further provided that nothing contained in this Compact affects any claim of any Indian tribe, or of persons claiming water through that tribe, or the right of any Indian tribe, or persons claiming water through that tribe, to pursue a claim to any water from any source based on any theory of right or entitlement.

#### Article IX Contributions to Settlement

A. The United States agrees to provide \$31,500,000 to repair the Tongue River Dam and spillway and to raise the Tongue River Dam spillway crest to secure the Tribe's existing contract water under Article II.A.2.e. and to provide additional storage capacity to secure the Tribe's storage and exchange water right under Article II.A.2.b.

B. The State agrees to provide \$16,500,000 to repair the Tongue River Dam and spillway with the understanding that the State's portion will be paid through a combination of cash and federal loans, in proportions to be agreed upon by the parties.

C. The Provisions of this Article are subject to the separate Letter of Agreement dated April 17, 1991, between the State and the United States explaining in detail the allocation of the costs of the project. The State and the United States will enter into a further agreement providing for the expenditure of the contributions and loans of the United States hereunder.

D. The United States agrees to provide \$10,000,000 for a Tribal Development Fund payable in equal amounts of \$2,000,000 each fiscal year for five years. These funds shall not be distributed on a per capita basis to members of the Tribe and shall only be used for land and natural resources administration, planning and development within the Northern Cheyenne Reservation or for land acquisition by the Tribe within the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

E. Federal financial contributions to paragraph A of this Article will be budgeted for, subject to the availability of funds, by October 1 of the year following the ratification of this Compact by Congress and the authorization by Congress of the Tongue River Dam



**History:** En. Sec. 1, Ch. 812, L. 1991.

Provided by Montana Legislative Services

