

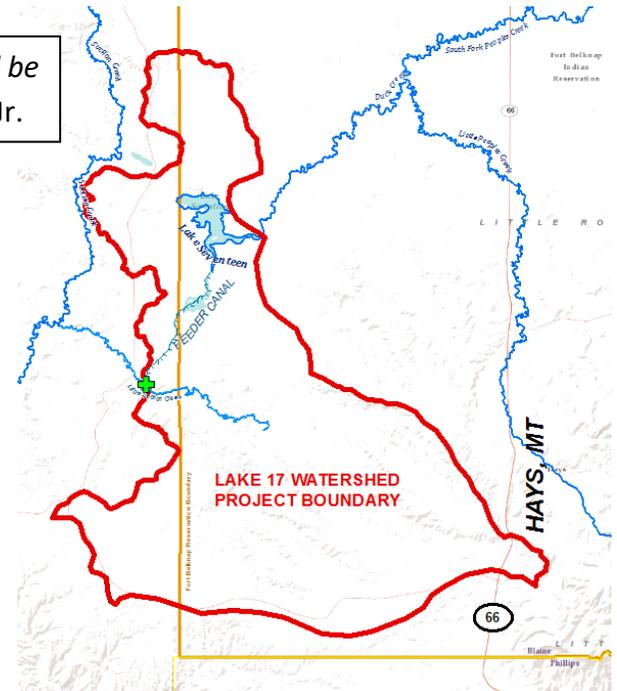
FBIC, NRCS, AND COMMUNITY TO EVALUATE LAKE SEVENTEEN AND LITTLE SUCTION CREEK WATERSHED

The Fort Belknap Indian Community (FBIC) is pleased to announce a partnership with the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop a plan to evaluate rehabilitating Lake Seventeen and Little Suction Creek near Hays. The NRCS has contracted with Northern Engineering & Consulting, Inc. (NECI) and DOWL Engineering to evaluate alternatives proposed and supported by the community.

The dam and diversion were constructed in the 1930's by the BIA and Civilian (Indian) Conservation Corps with the

"...this is not a project that should be left to the wayside." -Andy Werk Jr.

intended purpose of providing a reliable reservoir for cropland irrigation. Over the past 80 years, the system has become a cultural and historic resource only purposed for wildlife, stock water, and public recreation; but always preserved for the irrigation potential that was never fully developed. This system has fallen into a chronic state of disrepair so the FBIC reached out to the NRCS for assistance rehabilitating the diversion and dam in 2010. Those collaborating efforts produced a set of studies, reports and design plans to repair the diversion and dam, which included providing a new principal spillway conduit, concrete riser, rock plunge pool and a one-foot lift on the embankment of Lake Seventeen Dam and installation of a chimney filter and auxiliary spillway for the Little Suction Creek diversion. However, the actual rehabilitation construction was delayed and ultimately suspended due to funding limitations.



The Fort Belknap Indian Community received funding for this planning study from the NRCS - Watershed Flood Prevention Operations Program. Over the next 9 months, NECI and DOWL Engineering will work closely with the community to develop a Watershed Project Plan and Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA). It will be a physically, environmentally, socially, and economically sound plan to evaluate all reasonable alternatives ranging from enhancements to rehabilitation to removal of the dam and diversion.

Public and interagency participation and support will be the key to a good plan. As stated by President Andy Werk Jr., *"I'm excited about this project coming back...there was a lot of people who really put a lot of hard work into this project years ago and I'm glad that there is an opportunity here to get it done. I really feel strongly about that because...this is not a project that should be left to the wayside."*

The public is encouraged to attend the initial **scoping meeting in Hays at 6 pm on Thursday March 14th, 2019 at the Kills At Night Community Center**. A draft Preliminary Investigation Report will be available at the initial scoping meeting to provide more information on the environmental evaluation and design alternatives. Additional public meetings will be held throughout the development of the Plan-EA. The FBIC will also post project news to their website (<http://ftbelknap.org>) and the Fort Belknap Indian Community Facebook page.

To further discuss the project or obtain additional information, please contact the following:

<p><u>Tribal Sponsor:</u> C. John Healy Sr. Transportation Director Fort Belknap Agency: (406) 353-2447 jhealy@ftbelknap.org</p>	<p><u>NRCS Contractor Officer's Representative:</u> Steve Becker, PE, COR NRCS State Conservation Engineer Bozeman: (406) 587-6811 steve.becker@mt.usda.gov</p>	<p><u>Consulting Engineer:</u> Jay Springer, ES Northern Engineering & Consulting, Inc. (NECI) Havre: (406) 445-1113 jay.springer@neciusa.com</p>	<p><u>Responsible Federal Official:</u> Tom Watson NRCS State Conservationist Bozeman: (406) 587-6811 tom.watson@mt.usda.gov</p>
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