



The River Blend: St. Mary and Milk

The International St. Mary and Milk Rivers Study Board publishes this semi-annual newsletter to help keep the public informed about the International St. Mary and Milk Rivers Study. This is the fourth of the series. For more information on the study, see the [previous newsletters](#).

For over a century, the United States and Canada have shared the waters of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers through agreements negotiated by both countries. Over time, changing conditions in the watershed including climate and the state of the infrastructure used to store and move water have impacted the extent to which each country can access their share. The [International St. Mary and Milk Rivers Study](#) is a four-year effort (2021-2025), with a recently added extension of up to one year, to determine if improvements can be made. The Study Board will present its report to the [International Joint Commission](#) no later than June 2026. The Commission will review the report and make recommendations to the governments of both countries for their consideration.

Since the summer, the International St. Mary and Milk Rivers Study Board and its advisory groups have been busy advancing the study's technical work and sharing their progress with each other and with the public. The Study Board also provided an update to IJC Commissioners during the IJC's Semi-Annual Meeting which took place the week of October 20, 2024.

Public Meeting

Malta, Montana, United States

Following the Study Board's last public meeting in June, which was hosted in Lethbridge, Alberta, the Study Board hosted its fifth in-person public meeting in the basin in Malta, Montana on October 2, 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to update the public on the study's progress, work plan and timeline. The Study Board also sought public feedback on future engagement opportunities. The Study Board is extremely appreciative to all who attended and greatly valued hearing the perspectives of people living and working in the basin.



Study Board Co-Chairs speaking at the Public Meeting in Malta, Montana
(Credit: Study Staff)



Public Meeting in Malta, Montana (Credit: Study Staff)



IJC Semi-Annual Meeting

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

During the week of October 20, 2024, the International St. Mary and Milk Rivers Study Board had the opportunity to provide an update to IJC Commissioners during the IJC's



Semi-Annual Meeting which was hosted in Ottawa, Ontario.

The Board discussed the work of its advisory groups, inclusive of virtual Public Advisory Group (PAG) and Indigenous Advisory Group (IAG) meetings and provided an overview of the progress of its Technical Working Groups as the study moves to its next lap of modelling.

Study Staff attending the IJC's Semi-Annual Meeting (Credit: IJC Staff)

The Board also provided some insights into public outreach

being done including fact sheets, regular newsletters, and public meetings that were hosted in different parts of the basin including Lethbridge, Alberta and Malta, Montana. IJC Commissioners were pleased to receive the Study Board's Annual Progress Report and look forward to learning about the next round of modelling being done.

In addition to meeting with Commissioners, Study Staff had the opportunity to attend the IJC's International Watershed Initiative's Climate Change Workshop where IJC board members and associates could share their climate change activities and exchange ideas on best practices, challenges, and opportunities when working in the face of climate change.



Study Board presenting to Commissioners during the IJC's Semi-Annual Meeting (Credit: IJC Staff)

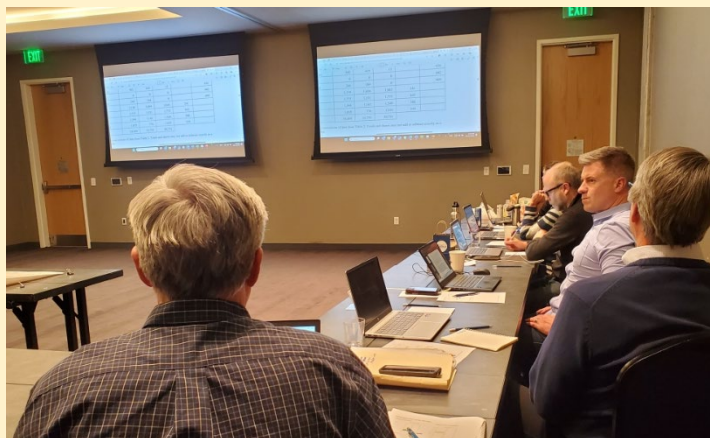
Study Board Meeting

Denver, Colorado, United States

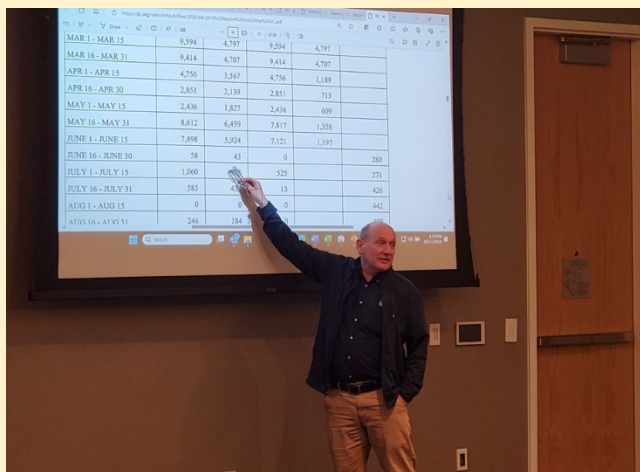
On November 6 and 7, 2024, the Study Board met with its Options Formulation and Evaluation Group (OFEG) in Denver, Colorado.

During a two-day workshop, the Study Board took a deep dive into the natural flow calculation procedures that are currently in use by the Accredited Officers of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers (AOs) and discussed the intricacies of administrative options under consideration, such as the differences between credit and deficit trading.

OFEG Leads provided the Study Board with an update on the progress of the Technical Working Groups and highlighted the successes and challenges encountered during Laps 1 and 2 of the modelling work.



Study Board Meeting in Denver, CO (Credit: IJC Staff)



Study Board Meeting in Denver, CO (Credit: IJC Staff)

The Board also received a preview of and provided feedback on the visualization tool that is under development to help the Board navigate the wealth of information being produced through the modelling efforts.

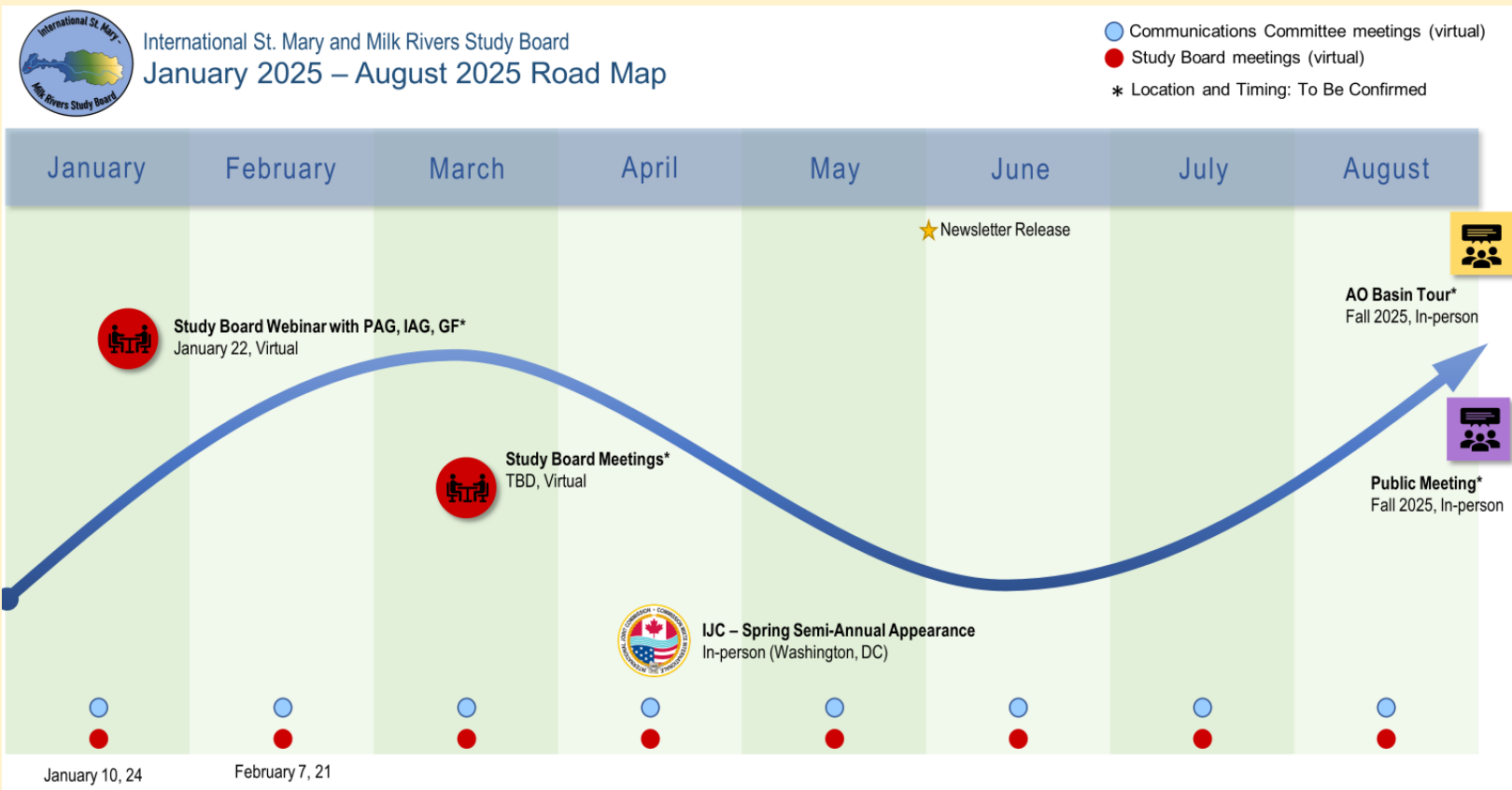
The tool will allow the Board to compare performance indicators across options and scenarios and assist in the selection of recommendations to the IJC at the conclusion of the study.

The Study Board will reconvene with the OFEG in 2025 for a similar workshop examining the outcomes of Lap 3.

The Road Ahead...

The International St. Mary and Milk Rivers Study Board wishes everybody a Happy Holiday! From progressing the work of the Technical Working Groups to virtual meetings and a basin tour, the Board looks forward to continuing their work into the new year and seeing you all at the next Public Meeting.

See the figure below to see what the Board has in store for the next few months:



Want to learn more? Have comments or questions?

Scan the QR Code for quick access to the Study Board's website and fact sheets:

- [Work Plan](#)
- [Apportionment](#)
- [Geography and Infrastructure](#)
- [Performance Indicators](#)
- [Fall 2024 ISMMRSB Progress Report](#)
- [Using Models to Assess Changes to St. Mary – Milk Rivers System](#)
- [TWG One Page Summary - AE](#)
- [TWG One Page Summary - CH](#)
- [TWG One Page Summary - IO](#)
- [TWG One Page Summary - SEA](#)
- [TWG One Page Summary - WAAO](#)
- [TWG One Page Summary - WMM](#)
- [TWG One Page Summary - OFEG](#)

Ideas for additional fact sheets? Contact the Study Board directly via email: smmr@ijc.org

www.ijc.org/smmr



Happy Holidays!

from the International St. Mary and Milk Rivers Study Board

