

# North Dakota's **SOUTHWEST PIPELINE PROJECT**



MAY 2024

## BACKGROUND

The southwestern region of North Dakota has consistently faced issues concerning its water supply, encompassing challenges related to both the quality and quantity. As a result, in 1981, the State Legislature authorized the State Water Commission (SWC) to construct and administer the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP). This project was created to provide a supplemental source of water for most of the area of North Dakota south and west of the Missouri River with water supplies from the Missouri River for multiple beneficial purposes. The 1981 Legislature authorized preliminary design of the SWPP. The 1985 Legislature then authorized the construction of the SWPP, and construction began on the first contract in the spring of 1986.

In 1991, rural water distribution was integrated into the construction of SWPP, and that same year the Legislative Assembly created the Southwest Water Authority (SWA). SWA was created for the tasks of collecting and coordinating rural sign-ups and easements, providing customer service for rural water customers, and collecting user fees, as these are all difficult for a state agency to perform. In its final form, SWA was given specific authority to operate and maintain the SWPP as an agent of the SWC. In January 1996, the SWC assigned all management, operation, and maintenance functions of the SWPP to SWA.

## PROJECT FEATURES

*(Existing)*

**5K+**

Over 5,200 Miles Of Pipeline

**3**

Water Treatment Plants

**35**

Booster Pumping Stations

**32**

Water Storage Tanks  
& Reservoirs

**58K**

People Served



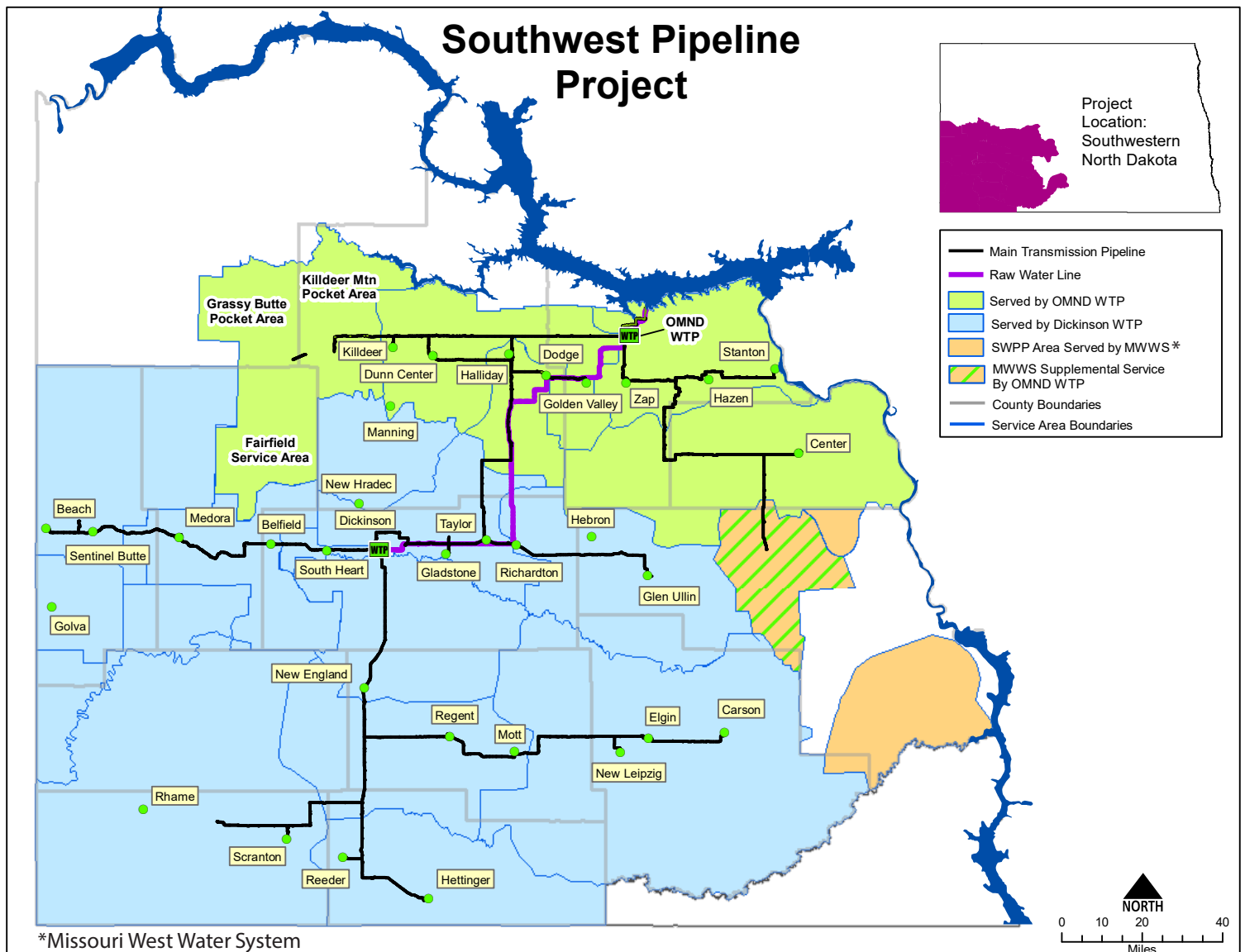
Shared Lake Sakakawea  
Intake with Basin Electric



# THE PROJECT & WATER USERS

SWPP transports raw water from Lake Sakakawea to the Oliver, Mercer, North Dunn (OMND) Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and two water treatment plants located at the city of Dickinson, which include the Dickinson WTP and the Southwest WTP. The treated water is then distributed to water users throughout the region.

SWPP annually provides over two billion gallons of treated water to over 58,000 people in 33 communities and 7,600 rural service locations. In addition, 25 raw water customers and 25 contract customers are also served. SWPP also provides potable water to two rural water systems: Missouri West Water System in Morton County and Perkins County Rural Water System in South Dakota. As the population of both urban and rural areas expand, this state-owned project will continue to supply a vital resource to those who depend on it.





## PURPOSE & NEED

Prior to the SWPP, many areas in southwestern North Dakota did not have adequate quantities of high-quality drinking water. The primary challenges with groundwater quality in North Dakota stem from naturally occurring elevated levels of dissolved solids and hardness. The aquifer system in the southwestern region also poses limitations on providing enough ground water due to its thickened sedimentary bedrock. Hence, the construction and administration of the SWPP will continue to be a vital asset in serving high-quality drinking water throughout the southwestern region of North Dakota.



## PROJECT ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING



The state-owned SWPP is administered by the SWC and the Department of Water Resources (DWR), while being managed, operated, and maintained by the SWA. The SWC and DWR's role in the SWPP includes project planning, authorization and management of project funding, engineering, and construction contract administration.

As owner, the State of North Dakota funds construction of the project. The local share is paid through user fees, including perpetual capital repayment, and replacement and extraordinary maintenance funds. For additional funding-related information, scan the QR code above.

## SWPP WATER USE COMPARISON



Missouri River Reservoirs Storage Capacity

**72.4 MAF**  
**(million acre feet)**

Annual SWPP Water Use

**0.007 MAF**

Annual SWPP Water Use

**0.01% of Total**  
**Missouri River Reservoirs Storage Capacity**

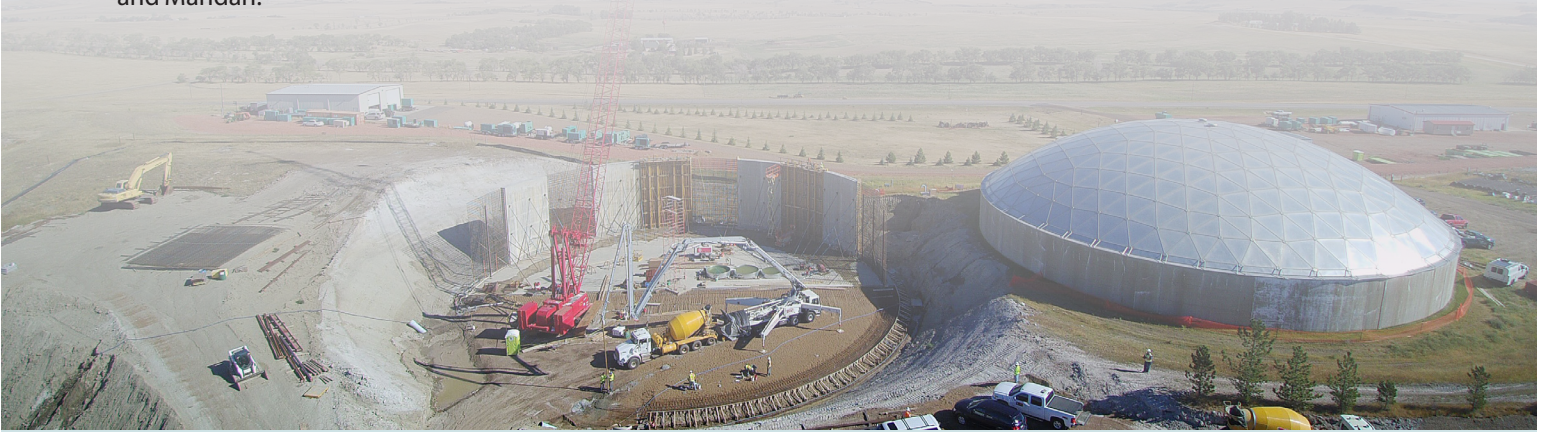




# SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY

As the operating and managing entity for the SWPP, SWA has remained committed to its mission of “Quality water for southwest North Dakota.” SWA has also focused on its vision of “People and business succeeding with quality water.”

SWA is governed by a 15-member, publicly elected board of directors, representing the following counties: Adams, Billings, Bowman, Dunn, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, Mercer, Morton, Oliver, Slope, and Stark, as well as the cities of Dickinson and Mandan.



## SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY BOARD MEMBERS

- 1 Adams County
- 1 Billings County
- 1 Bowman County
- 1 Dunn County
- 1 Golden Valley County
- 1 Grant County
- 1 Hettinger County
- 1 Mercer County
- 1 Morton County

- 1 Oliver County
- 1 Slope County
- 1 Stark County
- 2 City of Dickinson
- 1 City of Mandan

Scan the QR code for current members of the Southwest Water Authority board of directors.



Water Resources



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