

LEWIS & CLARK REGIONAL WATER SYSTEM

In the same trailblazing spirit as our namesake explorers, we are dedicated to constructing and operating a first of its kind tristate drinking water system that will benefit an estimated 350,000 people in southeast South Dakota, northwest Iowa and southwest Minnesota.

- Lewis & Clark was incorporated in January 1990 and authorized by Congress in July 2000. It is a wholesale provider of treated water to its 20 cities and rural water systems in southeast South Dakota, northwest Iowa and southwest Minnesota. The source of water is a series of wells that tap into an aquifer adjacent to the Missouri River. Ground water rights are issued by the State of SD. The treatment plant is located near Vermillion, SD.
- A groundbreaking ceremony was held in August 2003. The first 11 members began receiving water in July 2012. Eighteen of the 20 members are currently connected, with Madison scheduled to be connected in mid-2024 and Sibley in early 2025.
- When completed the “Base System” will produce 44.19 million gallons a day (MGD) and benefit an estimated 350,000 people in the tristate region. The System is self-sustaining with water rates covering the operations and maintenance expenses.
- Construction funding for the Base System comes from a series of grants – roughly 80% from the federal government, 10% from the three states and 10% from the local members.
- The three states and 20 members have paid 100% of their cost share – a combined \$154.1M. These 23 governmental entities were “paid up” at different times between 2007 and 2015. The three states also prefunded \$54.2M from their state budgets in order to keep construction moving forward as federal funding lagged. These “federal funding advances” are zero interest loans that will be repaid with future federal funding. Minnesota advanced \$39M, South Dakota advanced \$8.2M and Iowa advanced \$7M.
- Through FY23 the federal government has appropriated \$497M (roughly 90% of its cost share). This includes a combined \$142.5M from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill for FY22 – FY24. The remaining federal cost share of roughly \$30M continues to be indexed for inflation.
- Based on Bureau of Reclamation parameters, Lewis & Clark was meant to address the water needs of its members for 40 years. With growth exceeding projections and a sustained drought, construction started in 2022 to expand the System to 60 MGD and is expected to be completed in 2031. There is no federal funding for the expansion.
- Looking ahead to the long-term water needs of the 20 members (2030 – 2070), a study is currently underway on a possible second expansion of Lewis & Clark beyond 60 MGD that would potentially double the size of the System.

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