

Recognized Beneficial Uses

W.S. 41-3-101 states, “Beneficial use shall be the basis, the measure and limit of the right to use water at all times,.....” In determining allowed beneficial uses of water in Wyoming, there are two primary methods/processes. First, the Wyoming Legislature and Governor have enacted statutes which by reference name beneficial uses of water or directly established the beneficial uses. These include:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Heat extraction from water | W.S. 41-3-101 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irrigation | W.S. 41-3-101 & 102 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water for drinking purposes for both man & beast (Domestic and stock) | W.S. 41-3-102 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal purposes | W.S. 41-3-102 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steam engines & general railway use | W.S. 41-3-102 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Culinary, laundry, bathing, refrigerating manufacture of ice, Steam & hot water heating plants, and steam power plants | W.S. 41-3-102 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial purposes | W.S. 41-3-102 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydropower (water turbines or impulse water wheels) | W.S. 41-3-102 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highway construction or repair | W.S. 41-3-110 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Railroad construction or repair | W.S. 41-3-110 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drilling or producing operations | W.S. 41-3-110 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental (regulatory certainty under the Endangered Species Act) | W.S. 41-2-1301 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instream Flow | W.S. 41-3-1001 |

The State Engineer in his duties of reviewing new applications for permit to use the State’s water requires that the beneficial use be stated on the application. In reviewing new applications the State Engineer makes a determination as to whether the proposed use is beneficial. The following list represents a comprehensive list of beneficial uses recognized by the Legislature and the State Engineer.

- Bathing
- Chemical
- Coal Bed Natural Gas

- Commercial
 - Aquaculture
 - Bottling Water
 - Culinary
 - Dairy
 - Maintenance (Equipment Washing)
 - Medicinal
 - Other (Must be explained)
 - Stockyard
- Consumptive Instream Flow
- Domestic-Surface Water
- Domestic (under 25 gpm)
- Domestic Supply
- Environmental
- Erosion Control
- Fire Protection (must be in addition to another use)
- Fish Propagation (may include aesthetics as a secondary use)
- Flood Control
- Flow Through Pond
- Ground Water Recharge
- Heat Extraction From Water
- Hydropower
- Ice Cutting
- Industrial
 - Drilling
 - Heat Extraction
 - Manufacturing
 - Mechanical
 - Milling
 - Mining
 - Other (must be explained)
 - Power
 - Pollution Control
 - Reclamation Watering
 - Refining
 - Sedimentation
 - Snow Making
- Irrigation
- Instream Flow-court awarded
- Instream Flow-only State of Wyoming can apply

- Miscellaneous (Groundwater only for new applications)
 - Domestic &/or Stock greater than 25 gpm
 - Commercial Agriculture (i.e., feedlots)
 - Fire Protection
 - Highway Construction (temporary)
 - Large Scale Landscape/Lawn Watering greater than 1 acre
 - Mine Dewatering
 - Oil & Gas Well Drilling
 - Others-Miscellaneous
 - Potable & Sanitary Supply for Churches, Schools
 - Reservoir Supply
 - Stock Water Pipelines
 - Subdivisions, Water Districts, etc.
 - Water Hauls
 - Wetlands
- Municipal
- Oil Refining/Production
- Other (must be explained)
- Public Utility
- Railroad
- Recreation (may include aesthetics as a secondary use)
- Reservoir Supply
- Steam Engines
- Stock (under 25 gpm)
- Temporary
 - Construction
 - Dust Abatement
 - Hydrostatic Testing
 - Municipal (emergency)
 - Other (temporary use must be explained)
 - Road Construction
 - Stock Watering
 - Tree Watering (non-commercial)
 - Well Drilling
- Transportation
- Wetlands (may include aesthetics as a secondary use)
- Wild & Scenic-only United States Government can apply when authorized by Federal Wild and Scenic legislation
- Wildlife (may include aesthetics as a secondary use)