

Paul Seamans:

I have added up the counties populations of the rural water systems that rely on Missouri River water. It is hard to get an exact count because a lot of the water districts don't always follow county lines. I came up with an approximate 2010 census figure of 500,000 people that rely on Missouri River water. The 2010 census figures for South Dakota's population is 814,000. The percentage of South Dakota's population that gets their water from the Missouri would equal around 61%. The 2014 estimates have South Dakota's population at 853,000 and a large portion of that growth is in the Sioux Falls metro area so this figure would be closer to 64%. I think a person is real safe in saying that at least half of South Dakota relies on the Missouri River for their drinking water, in all actuality it is probably closer to two thirds.