SUMMARY OF

COMPACT IMPLEMENTATION TECHNICAL TEAM (CITT) MEETING

January 8, 2025

1:00pm-5:00pm
Mission Valley Power Conference Room
Flathead Indian Reservation-Pablo, MT

In Attendance (Quorum Established)
Casey Ryan, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)
Maya Rao, MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Daniel Lozar, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)-attended virtually
David Lake, Irrigator Representative
Nick Belcourt, Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (FIIP)

Call to Order [00:00:00]
Chair Maya Rao called the meeting to order at 1:10 PM. A quorum was established.

Approve Agenda [00:02:00]

CITT members were given an opportunity to review the draft agenda prior to the meeting. Motion to approve agenda by David. Second by Casey. Approved by 5 of 5 members.

Informational Updates [00:02:50]

DNRC Updates [00:03:10]
Maya mentioned that DNRC has been focused on providing support for applicants to the Off-Season Stock Water Mitigation Grant Program. She acknowledged Casey, Brian, and other CSKT staff who have been assisting with the Grant Program.

BIA Updates [00:03:50]
Dan discussed BIA's support of ongoing FIIP construction and design projects. Dan also mentioned that Dr. Howes from ITRC visited in November to evaluate FIIP infrastructure and opportunities for in-house water measurement plan for Mission B and 22C. Once a water measurement plan is completed, Dan will bring it to CITT for discussion.

FIIP Updates [00:06:30]
Nick mentioned that FIIP has been busy helping grant applicants verify tract numbers and answer questions related to the grant application. FIIP is working on the reassembly of the #2 Pump of the Flathead River Pumping Plant. FIIP is working on a revising the water accounting system to help with account for water delivery next season. FIIP will be hiring 11 positions, mostly ISOs, to be filled by spring. The application period for the Flathead River Pumping Plant Operator just closed and FIIP is waiting on a certification list from human resources.

Most of FIIP is currently laid off with a few employees in the office. Two employees will be back on staff this pay period. Five more people are returning on Jan 13th, so fleet repairs and pre-cast fabrication can begin. Everyone else will be back at the end of February. There will be a spring training for all FIIP personnel. FIIP is also working on improving easement encroachment issues. There will also be a biological opinion meeting on January 15.

Irrigator Updates [00:10:30]
David mentioned that Cassie Dellwo, of the Flathead Irrigation District, has been communicating with the Governor's Office about the status of the $30 mil for the pump fund. Dave also mentioned that Mission Valley Power will hold a meeting for irrigators on February 5th concerning impacts, fees, and efficiency.

CSKT Updates [00:11:30]
Casey welcomed new staff, Chris Stark- staff scientist with the legal department, Adam Johnson- hydrologist for DEWR, and Victoria White- Information and Education Program Manager for DEWR.

CSKT provided public outreach in December at the Ronan Community Center with the local irrigation community regarding current projects.

CSKT has also provided support for the Off-Season Stock Water Grant Program by assisting DNRC with help sessions.

Casey provided an update on snowpack. This winter started out warm and dry. December was one of the top 10 warmest on record for temperature in Kalispell, Missoula, and Butte. The December snowfall was the second lowest on record in Missoula and ninth lowest on record for Kalispell. Conditions have recently improved. As of January 8, the Flathead Basin is at 108% of average snowpack. The Upper Clark Fork Basin is at 82 % of median and the Sun, Teton, Marias is at 69% or median. The January forecast is for average to slightly above average for temperature and above average precipitation for the Flathead Basin. The February and March forecast favors below average temperature and above average precipitation.

Casey also provided irrigation infrastructure updates on behalf of Mark Simpson:

- Falls Creek is 95% complete and ready for the upcoming irrigation season. The concrete flume will be poured after the end of the 2025 irrigation season.
- The 31A Canal structure is 15% complete. The energy dissipation structure is being precast offsite. Anticipated completion is April 2025.
- There are several projects in final design and on a construction bid schedule. They are Crow Pumping Plant (95% design), Kicking Horse Dam (90% design), Lower J Diversion (100% design) which has stream restoration occurring on-site, Jocko Valley North Canal to Pipeline Conversion (100% design), and North Fork Jocko Diversion Project (90% design) which has environmental permitting started.
- Projects in design that will occur in the future include Flathead Pumping Plant Pump #1, Pump #3, and spot repairs of pen stocks; Jocko Lower S Canal Diversion (60% design), Jocko Upper S Canal Fish Ladder (60% design), and Placid Canal Diversion (pre-design).
- All project information can be found at csktwatercompact.com

2024 RDA Performance - Sky Cooley [19:40]
Skye Cooley, FIIP hydrologist, presented a summary of FIIP water management accounting from 2024. River diversion allowances (RDAs) are the volume of water that can be diverted for irrigation by FIIP each water year. They will be enacted gradually, starting in September 2026 in the Mission Valley South Area.

RDAs were not implemented in 2024, but FIIP performed a retrospective analysis comparing actual water diversions to RDAs to identify area where water management would need to shift in the future.

FIIP focused on goals of better communication and a numbers-based approach to water management in 2024. Skye mentioned that current resources FIIP uses for water measurement include USGS gages, tribal gages, and reservoir monitoring instruments. He stated that there are some areas that water measurement is insufficient such as canal networks, on-farm delivery turnouts.

Skye emphasized the complexity of FIIP and it will require additional staff training for meet RDAs in the future. He also gave an example of RDA performance in the Jocko Area. Some of the administration points would have met the RDAs as early as July and others would have not reached their RDA in 2024.

Points of emphasis for the future include reducing tailwater, diverting water only when it's called for, performing more maintenance prior to the start of irrigation season, and increase ramp up of water diversion. FIIP is also hoping to implement a system where water users call the FIIP office if they want water to be released, the calls for water are recorded, and each ISO records their work daily.

HYDROSS Model Review-Seth Makepeace [50:00]
Seth presented a review of the HYDROSS Model. The model was developed to provide accounting of water supply, distribution, and consumption under varying conditions. Outputs from the Model were used to determine instream flows and RDA allocations in the Compact.

Seth reviewed model inputs. The climate and water supply data used in the Model were based on 1983-2002 period. The irrigation and irrigated lands data used in the model were based on 2009 information. The model identifies water as natural flow which is flow that occurs without human influence, and project flow which is water that would not be present without storage. Seth also discussed how groundwater flow models that were developed and used to refine data within the HYDROSS Model. The model was upgraded and calibrated to 1998-2009 stream, canal, and Flathead Pumping Plant operations data to improve the Model with more recent data. Historical farm delivery was determined by using crop irrigation consumption

Next Model scenarios were built to incorporate operational improvements. The overall objective of the Model was to match water diversion to crop irrigation consumption plus reasonable conveyance, site, and on-farm efficiencies. Seth discusses several assumptions of the model including the assumption that Secretarial Water rights are not part of the FIIP delivery system.

Seth mentioned that the HYDROSS Model assumes low efficiency and conversion from flood to sprinkler irrigation will help stretch the RDA further. He discussed in detail how these scenarios shaped MEFs and adaptive management TIF levels. Since no pipe network was planned for the Jocko area at the time of Model development, seepage loss was expected to be very high in the Jocko Area. The Jocko pipe conversion project will represent significant water savings which CSKT will then incorporate into their MEFs in a CITT approval process. The HYDROSS Model output projected a 23% reduction in diversions in the Mission Area and a 30% reduction in the Jocko area to meet instream flows and diversion allowances in the Compact. These percentages were determined based on unused feeder canal releases, off-stream reservoir releases, non-irrigation season diversions and tail water loses. Part of envisioned operational improvements will include FIIP changing from operating based on water availability to consumer demand. Adaptive management provisions were intended to maximize each year's water supply and create a team approach to Compact implementation.

Break [2:24:30]

On-Farm Efficiency – Brian Hogenson & Patrick Mangan [2:22:40]
CITT members reviewed the updated position description and proposed budget for the On-Farm Efficiency Specialist position, which will be cofounded by MSU Extension and CITT.

Details of the position were discussed among CITT members and Patrick Mangan of MSU Extension. The position will include site visits with producers to do a needs assessment so educational tools can be developed to help producers with on-farm efficiency. Position will be based on the Flathead Reservation and located in the MSU extension office where Patrick is located and will be managed by Dan Lucas, the regional supervisor. CITT members emphasized the importance of having someone fill the position who can work directly with irrigators.

CITT will continue to work with MSU extension to identify needs and objectives for the position. Brian Hogenson and Maya will work on a draft task order for the next CITT meeting.

Stock Water Mitigation [3:28:40]
There has been a lot of interest in the grant application program and FIIP, CSKT, and DNRC have spent a lot of time assisting applicants. The grant closes on Friday at 5pm. After the application period closes, applicants will be reviewed for eligibility by DNRC and FIIP. The grant manager will be training the review panel in late January to discuss criteria used for scoring. Next, the eligible grants are sent via digital files to the panel to be reviewed and scored. The review panel will give scores to grant administer to compile scores then scores will be passed to CITT.

Public Comment [03:36:50]
No attendees provided public comment.

End Meeting [03:38:40]
Motion to end the meeting by Casey, second by David. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:07 pm.

Next Meeting
The next CITT meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2025.