

**SUMMARY OF  
COMPACT IMPLEMENTATION TECHNICAL TEAM (CITT) MEETING**

**February 12, 2025**

1:00pm-5:00pm

Mission Valley Power Conference Room  
Flathead Indian Reservation-Pablo, MT

**In Attendance** (Quorum Established)

Daniel Lozar, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

Nick Belcourt, Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (FIIP)

David Lake, Irrigator Representative

Casey Ryan, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)

Maya Rao, MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)

**Call to Order [00:00:00]**

Chair Maya Rao called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM. A quorum was established.

**Approve Agenda [00:01:45]**

CITT members were given an opportunity to review the draft agenda prior to the meeting. Casey made a motion to move agenda item 8, On-Farm Efficiency, to become the new agenda item 3, to honor the time of the guest presenter for that agenda item. Second by David. Approved by 5 of 5 members.

**Informational Updates [00:02:40]**

*BIA Updates [00:02:40]*

- Dan stated that the FIIP measurement work with ITRC is continuing to progress. Five sites on Mission B Canal and three sites on Post C Canal will have steel flumes installed. The flumes are currently being fabricated.
- Flumes at 9B, 54B, 60B, 22CA, and at the end of 22C are scheduled to be installed before the beginning of the irrigation season.

*FIIP Updates [00:04:35]*

- There are three employees doing fleet maintenance preparing for the upcoming irrigation season.
- Assembly of #2 Pump for the Flathead Pumping Plant is ongoing. FIIP is working with BOR to schedule on runout and alignment checks.
- Skye Cooley, FIIP Hydrologist, gave a brief update about reservoir levels. He said that they are encouraged by recent snowpack. FIIP is not catching much water currently. Only 2% change in reservoir levels from last month.
- Dave inquired about Eric Bruguier's (FIIP Project Operator) retirement. Nick clarified that Eric's retirement is not official, but when there is an official announcement, it will be publicly recognized.
- Hiring has been frozen at FIIP due to an executive order.
- Maya asked about staffing and the Fork in the Road Memo. Nick stated that several FIIP employees, especially those close to retirement, are interested in the resignation option. Nick stated that up to 50% of FIIP's current staff may resign but he could not provide definitive information about FIIP

staffing. BIA HR will notify FIIP formally about which employees are leaving, once there is a legal ruling.

- Nick stated that it could be very challenging for FIIP if the final resignation numbers are not received until right before irrigation season. In that case, he would need to shift all maintenance staff to operations.

*Irrigator Updates [00:11:00]*

- Dave stated that irrigators are concerned about the uncertainty at FIIP.

*CSKT Updates [00:11:20]*

- Irrigation infrastructure updates were provided by Casey on behalf of Mark Simpson:
  - Falls Creek is 95% complete and ready for the upcoming irrigation season. The ramp and the water measurement flume will be installed after the end of the 2025 irrigation season.
  - The 31A Canal is 45% complete. The energy dissipation structure has been placed. Slight construction delay, due to cold weather but project should be finished before the start of irrigation season.
  - There are several projects in final design and on a construction bid schedule. Crow Pumping Plant, Lower J Diversion, and Jocko Valley North Canal to Pipeline Conversion are all at 100% design and will go to bid in the next few months. Stream restoration at Lower J Diversion is now complete.
  - Kicking Horse Dam and North Fork Jocko Diversion Project are both at 90% design, and design is anticipated to be complete for both projects soon.
  - Projects in design include Jocko Lower S Canal Diversion (60% design), Jocko Upper S Canal Fish Ladder (60% design), and Placid Canal Diversion (pre-design).
- Casey announced that Brian Hogenson will be the new official CSKT representative to CITT as of February 13. Casey has taken the position of Division Manager for CSKT's Division of Engineering and Water Resources.

*DNRC Updates [00:15:20]*

- DNRC has been working with FRWMB on enhancements to the water rights database.
- DNRC has finished the eligibility review for stock water grant applications and is preparing for next steps of the grant process.
- Maya thanked FIIP for their help in verifying eligibility of applicants.

**On-Farm Efficiency [00:16:20]**

- CITT members discussed the drafts of the task order, scope of work, position description, and proposed budget for the On-Farm Efficiency Specialist Position which will be co-funded by MSU Extension.
- Maya asked CITT members whether they preferred a five or 10-year memorandum of agreement (MOA) with MSU for the position. After discussion and input from Patrick Mangan, MSU Extension Agent, CITT agreed to a 5-year MOA.
- CITT also discussed budget for the position. CITT members agreed to increase the 5-year budget not-too-exceed amount from \$390,000 to \$400,000 to account for potential statutory pay increases or increases to the operational budget.
- CITT members will do a final review of draft documents and then they will be posted on CITT's website at least two weeks prior to the CITT meeting on March 12.

- CITT's funding of Agrimet stations was also mentioned. CITT members expressed interest in Agrimet as a future meeting topic.

#### **Jocko K Canal 2025 Seepage Study [00:51:30]**

- Amanda Courville from CSKT's Water Measurement Program presented on the Jocko K Canal seepage study that will occur this spring.
- This seepage study will focus on the portion of the Jocko K Canal downstream of LaMoose Creek and will include collection of both continuous and synoptic data. The study will be limited to the 2025 irrigation season.
- This study will build upon CSKT's previous seepage studies in the Jocko K Canal area and will eventually be combined in a larger canal seepage report for the area.
- The Jocko K Canal will be converted to pipe as part of CSKT's rehabilitation and betterment (R&B) efforts. CSKT will use the results from the studies to develop a water reallocation report.
- It was clarified that under Appendix 3.5, one of the roles of CITT is the reallocation of water following R&B activities. CITT must directly measure water available following a R&B action, unless measurement is not possible, in which case CITT must estimate water savings.
- Since there will be no seepage after the conversion from pipe to canal is complete, the data from the seepage studies will be used to determine water savings.

#### **Operations Model RFQ [01:15:00]**

- Brian Hogenson presented the topic of the FIIP operations model to CITT.
- Appendix 3.5 of the Compact gives CITT the responsibility of creating operation models for FIIP.
- Brian asked CITT members to identify what scale of model would be most appropriate for FIIP operations.
- CITT agreed that a modeling effort should initially focus on headworks diversions and reservoirs with the option to build in more complexity in the future.
- Nick stated that FIIP water management is broken into two phases: catching and storing water in the spring and distributing water throughout the irrigation season. The model would need to capture both phases.
- CITT members stated the importance of the model being usable by FIIP staff than involve complex modeling design.
- Skye Cooley talked about a simple spreadsheet model that was used in WY24.
- CITT members voiced support for a model with a map interface (ie GIS) paired with spreadsheets
- A theme of the discussion was that the potential contractor interacting with FIIP staff and ideally creating written documentation of institutional knowledge
- Brian will take the feedback from the meeting and develop next steps.

#### **Water Management Coordination [02:16:10]**

- Brian Hogenson provided a water management coordination update.
- Brian stated that Appendix 3.5 establishes that CITT review reservoir carryover and initial projection of water supply and tentatively categorize water year type in the February meeting.
- In reviewing NRCS's report, Brian noted that low soil moisture in previous seasons can affect water availability in the current season.
- There was not very much precipitation in January in the Flathead Basin, but an early snow event in February improved conditions and snowpack is at normal levels.
- NOAA predicts that La Niña will continue through April which will result in colder than average temperatures and more precipitation than average in Western Montana.

- NRCS will begin its annual forecast for the The gages at North Crow Creek and Agency Creek gages will incorporated in NRCS's forecasts for WY25 for the Flathead Basin.
- CITT members agreed by consensus to forego tentative water year categorization in February because it was too early in the season to make an informed decision.

#### **Incremental Implementation of MEFs [2:27:00]**

- Nick briefed CITT on FIIP's response to incremental MEFs in WY24 and the potential response of FIIP operators to incremental RDAs.
- CITT engaged in an extensive discussion about the merits of adding incremental RDAs for Water Year 2025 (WY25) and agreed to hold off on implementing incremental RDAs in WY25.
- CITT members engaged in extensive discussions about whether any of the operational improvements that occurred in the previous year warranted adjustments to incremental MEFs put in place in 2024.
- Casey stated that sites without interim MEFs were left out of the interim MEF table for WY24. He recommended that CITT include incremental MEFs for those sites in WY25 so that FIIP staff are aware of all future MEF locations.
- CITT agreed by consensus to add incremental MEFs for unadministered locations in WY25.
- CITT also agreed to remove stock water mitigation from the calculation of operational improvements for the Little Bitterroot area, since that area was not eligible for the stock water grant.
- Maya will prepare a memo for the next CITT meeting reflecting the agreed-upon changes for incremental MEFs in WY2025.

#### **Stock Water Mitigation [03:15:50]**

- DNRC has completed the eligibility review for the stock water applications with FIIP verifying FIIP tract numbers and the location of projects relative to the priority area. DNRC also conducted an eligibility review of proposed expenses for each project.
- Currently, the panel of three reviewers are reviewing and scoring applications.
- 147 applications were submitted for the grant program with total funding request of ~\$8.4 million.
- After the project eligibility and expense eligibility reviews, there were 138 eligible applications with total eligible request totaling ~\$6.7 million. Average request was ~\$50,000.
- DNRC will be asking applicants who have projects that are in close proximity with no significant barriers (roads or waterways) if they are willing to voluntarily combine projects.
- Casey reminded CITT members that the grant guidelines require that the list of ineligible applications be sent to CITT and that ineligible applicants be notified.
- CITT will vote on the list of projects recommended for funding at the next meeting on March 12. CITT members agreed to vote on the entire ranked list of applications so that if there is money left over after projects are completed, money can be awarded to the next-highest ranked projects.
- CITT agreed that the list should include project rank, project name (which includes applicant name) and eligible award amount, with a visible indicator (eg yellow highlight) of projects recommended for funding.
- CITT members requested that the list be posted on the CITT website and the grant website.

#### **Next Steps and Schedule [03:37:10]**

- CITT received an invitation to present at the MSU Extension's Producers Summit in March. CITT agreed to decline the invitation but expressed interest in presenting in 2026.
- Brian agreed to present on behalf of the CITT at the next Flathead Irrigation District meeting.

**Public Comment [03:42:20]**

No attendees provided public comment.

**End Meeting [03:42:40]**

Motion to end the meeting by Casey, second by Dave. Motion carries unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

**Next Meeting**

Next meeting will be on March 12 at 1 pm at Mission Valley Power.