

SUMMARY OF COMPACT IMPLEMENTATION TECHNICAL TEAM (CITT) MEETING

March 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)
Brian Hogenson, 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 1:06 PM. A quorum was established.

Approve Agenda [00:02:09]

CITT members were given an opportunity to review the draft agenda for the meeting. Maya made a motion to change Agenda Item 3.c., *Discuss transmittal of ranked list*, from an action item to a discussion item. Seconded by Nick. Approved by 4 of 4 members.

Informational Updates [00:04:13]

FIIP Updates [00:04:15]

- Nick gave maintenance updates. Staff are plowing roads and access points to various canals and diversion points in headwater areas. Rebuilding the roads to access Post and Pablo Feeder Canals.
- Flathead River Pumping Plant rotors and motor were reinstalled. Initial runouts will start on March 24th with the help of Bureau of Reclamation.
- All furloughed employees are now back at work, as of today. FIIP billing is moving forward and will be sent out this month. DRP (Deferred Resignation Program) employee offers were postponed to April 30th.
- FIIP cannot pay vendors (for hardware, gas, tools, etc.) due to the lack of a credit card. Nick is working on a solution via procurement processes, which will take much longer than credit card purchases.
- The Crow Fish Ladder was installed today.
- Little Bitterroot is below 6 CFS minimum in-stream-flow requirements. Soon, the Hot Springs group will not have access to water diverted from the Little Bitterroot.
- Biological Opinion Meeting is scheduled for April 5th at the FIIP Office. Topics include “flushing flows.”
- Annual Irrigation Meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 27th at 2pm at Mission Valley Power.
- Maya asked about the staff training schedule. Nick responded that staff training will be determined once they know more about staffing levels for the upcoming irrigation season.

CSKT Updates [00:18:20]

- Maya welcomed Brian Hogenson to his first meeting as the CSKT Representative.
- 31A Canal Project is under Final Inspection. Jocko Pipeline Project has gone out to bid, with a mandatory meeting next week. The Crow Pump Plant project will go out to bid as early as next week. Lower J project will go out to bid afterwards.
- CSKT held a public meeting on the Bison Range Restoration Reach Project at the Jocko River project site in Ravalli.
- CSKT Water Measurement Team is completing spring maintenance and surveying.

DNRC Updates [00:21:58]

- Maya stated that the DNRC and Flathead Reservation Water Management Board (FRWMB) have been working together on updates to the Water Rights Information System.
- The MT Water Court assigned Basins 76L and LJ to preliminary decree status. All Statements of Claim in those basins will now go through a formal review process.

BIA Updates [00:23:35]

- Dan stated that there is uncertainty at the federal level because the Continuing Resolution ends on March 14.
- ITRC is still planning to install flumes on April 7-11.
- Dan has been working with Eric Bruguier and Nick Belcourt to navigate the next few weeks given the lack of credit cards and staffing uncertainty.

Stock Water Mitigation [00:25:40]

- Samantha Kemp, DNRC Grant Administrator, explained the grant's application and review period timeline: the application and technical assistance period closed on January 10th. DNRC application review and scoring was completed on February 28th, and ranking was completed by March 7th.
- Samantha then explained the scoring categories (Location, Water Rights, Livestock Served, Readiness to Proceed, and Risk Assessment).
 - Location scoring was based on the project's location within the FIIP Stockwater Delivery Area.
 - Water Right scoring was based on the water right information provided, and the final application scoring only used the scores provided by the 1 reviewer with water right expertise.
 - Livestock Served scoring was based on the animal units served by each project. In cases of a tie, the project with a higher Livestock Served score was ranked higher.
- Of the 147 applications, 9 were deemed ineligible. Two applicants voluntarily combined projects after consultation with DNRC. The DNRC recommended 80 projects for funding to use the full funding amount. Only twelve applicant entities were not recommended for funding, based on their ranking and the total funding amount available.
- Nick inquired on any conflict of interest regarding his personal stock water grant award while sitting on the CITT Board. Brian responded that the review committee was removed from CITT and believes that this objective scoring process does not create any conflict of interest for Nick. Maya and Dan commented that the process was transparent and were comfortable with Nick and other Board members voting on this list.
- Maya made a motion to accept the DNRC's recommendation for funding 80 projects for the CITT Off-Season Stock Water Mitigation Grant Program. Brian seconded. The motion carried with 4 of 4 members.

Operations Model [00:45:05]

- Brian Hogenson presented the topic of the FIIP operations model to CITT and potential funding sources.
- Brian brought up using a “not to exceed” approach for requesting proposals for \$4 million towards water measurement activities.
- Maya brought up Compact Article 6.1.a, *On Farm Efficiency*, for the purposes of funding an Operations Model.
- CITT members discussed the importance of a potential project developer to shadow and work with FIIP staff in the field.
- Brian pledged to bring cost estimates at the April meeting.

Water Management Coordination [01:05:39]

- Appendix 3.5 of the Compact gives CITT the responsibility to define the water supply and water-year type.
- Brian explained that snowpack is near average for the Flathead Basin and above the median in the Mission Mountains (locally) this year.
- With the addition of North Crow and Agency Creek, all drainages listed in Appendix 3.7 of the Compact now have forecasting models. Brian then explained his initial calculations to determine dry, wet, and normal water year levels for these drainages based on historical information. He will refine further once more forecast data is released in April.
- Dan made a motion to tentatively categorize the Jocko, Mission, and Little Bitterroot drainages as “normal.” Maya seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- Dan offered to assist Brian in checking the spreadsheet for accuracy.

Incremental Implementation of MEFs [1:25:05]

- Maya edited and shortened the Draft 2025 MEF Technical Memo to reflect last month’s discussion.
- CITT discussed the status of operational improvements in Supplement A.
- Brian explained that the approach to determining water-year types was to fully build out the network for seven stream flow gages listed in Appendix 3.7 of the Compact.
- CITT agreed to change Forecasting Procedures to 90% complete.
- CITT engaged in an extensive discussion about adding incremental instream flows in 2025 for points with MEFs but no interim instream flows.
- CITT members discussed how to calculate a baseline number for the locations with no interim instream flows.
- CITT members compared gaging data reflecting current operation of FIIP to potential new IMEFs for Post Creek below McDonald Reservoir.
- Brian emphasized that the locations under consideration were diverse in flow, location, channel, and measurement capabilities.
- CITT members discussed tools that FIIP would need to increase knowledge in preparation for full enforcement of MEFs
- Maya confirmed that based on the language in the Compact, the previous year’s IMEFs would be the default if no additional IMEFs were approved in 2025.
- Brian volunteered to keep working on the Draft 2025 IMEF memo and have more specific recommendations at the next CITT meeting.

On-Farm Efficiency [02:24:30]

- Maya summarized Task Order 13, a 5-year agreement with MSU, and additional \$10,000 not to exceed. amount, to create the On-Farm Efficiency Irrigator Position.
- Brian made a motion to approve Task Order 13. Dan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- Nick made a motion to approve the scope of work associated with Task Order 13 (including the position description and budget). Maya seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- Next step for the task order is to be signed by the DNRC and CSKT.

Next Steps and Schedule [02:32:00]

- Maya will draft an email to the DNRC grant administrator regarding stock water grant transmittal.
- Brian will review the scope of potential costs and draft strategy for the operations model.
- Water management coordination will be revisited in April with new data.
- Maya and Brian will work together to develop IMEF numbers.
- Maya and Brian will gather signatures for Task Order 13.
- Maya will complete past meetings' summaries soon.

Public Comment [02:38:09]

No attendees provided public comment.

End Meeting [02:38:40]

Motion to end the meeting by Dan, seconded by Brian. Motion carries unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Next Meeting

April 16th at 1 pm. Location to be determined.