

SUMMARY OF COMPACT IMPLEMENTATION TECHNICAL TEAM (CITT) MEETING

June 11, 2025

1:00pm-5:00pm

Mission West Community Development Partners Conference Room
407 Main Street SW, Ronan, MT

In Attendance

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

Nick Belcourt, Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (FIIP)

David Lake, Irrigator Representative

Brain Hogenson, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)

Call to Order [00:00:00]

Chair Maya Rao called the meeting to order at 1:08 PM. Four of five CITT members were present, and a quorum was established.

Approve Agenda [00:01:55]

CITT members were given an opportunity to review the draft agenda for the meeting. Dave made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Brian. Approved unanimously.

Informational Updates [00:03:10]

DNRC Updates [00:03:15]

- DNRC hosted a training for recipients of the CITT stock water grant on May 23 at the Mission West CDP building. Nick Belcourt was also present to help grantees who need FIIP consultation before starting their projects.
- 29 grant agreements have been fully executed. No projects have broken ground yet.
- DNRC will provide additional training and office hours to assist grantees.
- DNRC is currently processing fund transfer requests for Task Orders 4 and 11 for annual O&M cost of Agrimet Stations.
- Task Order 13 has been fully executed. Currently MSU Extension and CSKT are working on an MOA.

FIIP Updates [00:05:50]

- Placid drainage is tapering off and is only running at ~20 cfs right now. Upper Jocko Black Lake is under fill restrictions because of leakage in the lower reservoir. Middle Fork Jocko water is being transferred to the North Fork and FIIP will continue diverting at the Middle Fork.
- Additional water is being added to the system at Falls Creek with 280 cfs entering Tabor Feeder Canal. Tabor Reservoir has ~21,600 af in Tabor Reservoir and may be filled in 3-4 days.
- FIIP will start discharging out of Tabor soon and start filling Mission Reservoir. Mission Reservoir is currently supplying water to A, B, C, and 6C Canals. Mission Reservoir will probably fill quickly if diversions are minimized.
- 156 cfs is currently being diverted in the Jocko drainage. Currently irrigation water is being used in the Jocko area. No diversions at Upper S Canal because Big Knife and Agency Creeks are supplying sufficient water. Lower S Canal is diverting water.
- Most of the water for the Dixon Bench is currently being supplied by Revais Creek and Lower J Canal is supplying water for the lower part of the Dixon area.

- FIIP is struggling to get water to the tail ends of canals in the Jocko this year because ramp up was faster than normal and the ditches were not saturated. Other Jocko users have been temporarily shut off until water is delivered to the ends of canals.
- Other parts of the project are struggling to get water to the tail ends.
- Mission Reservoir is at 6,230 af and discharge 480 af per day.
- Cattle walkouts are an issue especially on Mission B Canal.
- McDonald Reservoir is full. FIIP is pushing as much water as possible north and into Kicking Horse Reservoir. The fish screen at Kicking Horse Feeder Canal is restricting flow. Currently pushing 114 cfs at Kicking Horse Feeder Canal and 203 cfs out of S Crow. 147 cfs is flowing from Hammer Dam north to subsidize the North Division.
- Crow Reservoir is at 1,840 af. Hillside Reservoir is full and is subsidizing MA Canal.
- Pablo dropped ~50 af since yesterday. Trying to maintain the current level. Nick does not think that the reservoir will get filled this year.
- People at the recent Mission Jocko Irrigation District meeting were concerned that the quota was only 0.5. This number will be revisited given current water availability.
- Shane Hendrickson took the DRP and Nick is now the acting Project Manager. Potentially a new acting FIIP project manager next Tuesday.
- Marsh Creek and cattle walkouts will be maintenance priorities after irrigation season ends.
- Flathead Pumping Plant is running relatively well. Sometimes the plant gets shut down for an hour to decrease vibrations.

Irrigator Updates [00:31:30]

- AgriMet is showing that the soil is drying out and Dave thinks there is not enough irrigation water to restore soil moisture at this point in the season.
- Dave asked about how much irrigation water was lost to flushing flows
 - Nick explained that they could have released more water in the Mission Division to compensate but there were too many unknowns at that time.
- Dave expressed concerns about the Pablo Reservoir milfoil treatment and the potential impact of treatment on water availability in the Reservoir next season.
- He also requested increased communication with irrigators on water availability and the end of the irrigation season.
- Dave followed up on accuracy of measurements at the Pablo Feeder Canal.
 - Amanda Courville inspected the measurement site and reported an overgrowth of willows potentially causing a backwater condition.

CSKT Updates [00:53:50]

- Jocko Pipeline phases 1-4 set to start this fall. At signature step for easements/right of way.
- Crow Pump Plant project is set to launch this fall.
- Placid PER due this fall. Estimated completion is 2027.
- Lower J project is postponed for a year due to contractor availability issues.
- Falls Creek has been patched up for the year and was able to push 300 cfs. Will hold another meeting to create a permanent fix.
- Amanda Courville has joined CSKT's Water Management Program.

Water Management Coordination [1:02:50]

- Brian presented the water supply outlook for June.
- The Flathead Basin SWE is 59% of the median. A cold period in mid-May resulted in the increase of snowpack at Moss Peak but recent conditions have led to a precipitous decrease in snowpack.
- Brian noted that snowpack in the Jocko drainage runs out earlier in the season than in the Mission drainage, and this trend is mirrored in streamflow.
- The cold temperatures in mid May caused a temporary decrease in streamflow at both Mission and Post Creeks.
- The NRCS streamflow projection was similar to actual streamflow at 6 of 7 sites. Mill Creek produced less water than forecasted.
- The 50th percentile exceedance probabilities from the NRCS forecast aligned with the normal year thresholds for all 7 sites.
- Brian spoke with Lexi Landers of NRCS who reiterated that streamflow forecasts focus on SWE do not account for future weather conditions. She suggested that to be conservative, management decisions could be based on 70th percentile exceedance probabilities.
- The group discussed soil moisture. Nick and Dave mentioned that soil moisture is low in the Mission and Jocko areas.
- There was discussion about timing of water application, conveyance of water, and the potential focus areas for the on-farm efficiency specialist.
- The need for better water accounting was emphasized for improved FIIP operations and delivery of water to irrigators.
- The forecasted streamflow in Little Bitterroot area decreased from May to June, with the 70th percentile exceedance probability being in the dry category. CITT made the decision to change the categorization of the Little Bitterroot to dry.
- Brian made the motion to categorize the Jocko and Mission geographic areas as normal and Little Bitterroot geographic area as dry for June 2025. Dave seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- CITT reviewed and approved the June water year memo.

Meeting break until 3:14 pm

- CSKT will present a historical review of the Mill Creek data at the next CITT meeting.

Stock Water Mitigation [1:57:45]

- 29 of the grant agreements have been fully executed.
- May 23 informational meeting was well attended by grantees.
- Maya expressed appreciation for FRWMB helping grantees with their water rights and Nick helping grantees with special use permits.
- Maya and Samantha will have office hours twice a month at Mission Wealth Community Development Partners to assist with reimbursements and reporting.

Discuss Next Steps and Schedule [2:00:45]

- Next meeting will be July 9, 2025, at 1:00pm at Mission Valley Power.

Public comment [02:01:20]

- The CITT received no public comment.

End Meeting [02:01:50]

Motion to end the meeting by Dave, second by Brian. Motion carries unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm.