

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

**February 11, 2026**

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Mission Valley Power Conference Room

Flathead Indian Reservation, Pablo, MT

### **In Attendance**

Daniel Lozar, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

Brian Hogenson, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)

Nick Belcourt, Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (FIIP)

David Lake, Irrigator Representative

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

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

Chair Brian Hogenson called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Five of the five CITT members were present, and a quorum was established.

### **Approve agenda [00:02:08]**

Brian mentioned that, with Amanda Courville absent from meeting, Brian will be providing the water supply update. Additionally, Dan Lucas will be attending the meeting virtually to give an update regarding the hiring of the recruitment of the on-farm efficiency specialist. Motion by David to approve agenda with these revisions, seconded by Dan, approved by all 5 members present.

### **Informational Updates [00:04:04]**

#### **BIA Updates**

- Dan attended the annual BIA irrigation meeting at ITRC/Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, CA on February 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **CSKT Updates**

- Brian provided an update on the irrigation infrastructure projects:
  - Brian attended the Crow Pumping Plant job site on Feb 5<sup>th</sup> to provide information on gage site placement. The project looked to be moving forward well.
  - Pipeline conversion project construction continues in the Jocko.
  - NF Jocko construction scheduled to resume in April 2026.
  - The Mud Lake Trail AgriMet station is not reporting correctly and needs a software update. CSKT and BOR have plans to address the error.
- The CSKT Water Measurement Program are undergoing a final review process for WY '25 records with the hopes to present an annual report at the March CITT meeting.

#### **FIIP Updates**

- Furloughed employees were brought back to work the first week of February. Crews are attending trainings at ITRC.

- Maintenance crews working on structures at Post 22C project.
- Working on gravity feed systems off the Pablo A Canal.
- No plan has been implemented to allow new hires at FIIP

#### Irrigator Updates

- No updates

#### DNRC Updates

- Pat Lauridson, in attendance at the meeting, was introduced by the State as the new CSKT Compact Coordinator.
- FRWMB currently has a vacancy for the fifth board member.

#### **Water Management Coordination (Brian Hogenson) [00:12:35]**

- January was unseasonably warm and dry (Flathead basin received 50% of its mean monthly precipitation).
- The NWS Mar-Apr-May seasonal outlook forecasts normal temperature and precipitation trends (1/15).
- The NWS Jun-Jul-Aug seasonal outlook forecasts dry and warm conditions (1/15).
- SWE levels were discussed in detail:
  - Near Median values at high elevation sites (NF Jocko, Moss Peak).
  - Low elevation sites display low SWE values compared to the period of record Median (34% Median Bisson, 36% Median Bassoo).
- Reservoir carryover was discussed through showing graphs comparing WY25 to WY26. Of note, Pablo Reservoir is looking better for over-winter storage.
- Moving forward, in March we'll have forecasts provided by NRCS for the seven forecasted natural streamflows. At that point, there will be more numbers to discuss related to water supply.

#### **On Farm Efficiency Specialist Recruitment Update (Dan Lucas, MSU-Extension) [00:23:14]**

- Dan Lucas gave a recruitment update on a Teams video call.
  - Emphasized the CITT has been doing terrific work with the job search.
  - The Position has received applicants who are academically strong but lack practical skills. Another candidate seemed qualified but couldn't agree on salary.
- Maya inquired on Extension's view on increasing the position's salary if the CITT provided funding. She also inquired on Extension's policy regarding the position requiring a Bachelor's degree and the potential for remote work in the winter months. Dan mentioned he will look into these possibilities, including if a non-faculty staff position could be a good work-around.
- Dan (Lozar) inquired what other factors are making hiring difficult. Dan Lucas mentioned certain applicants are unfamiliar with a northern irrigation schedule (snowpack driven/four seasons). Lozar also inquired if a part-time job schedule would expand the applicant pool (recent-retirees). Dan Lucas mentioned that a seasonal workload could be more appropriate; 40+ hour weeks during spring/summer with decreased winter hours.

### **RDA Working Session Update [00:50:23] (Dan Lozar)**

- The Working group met the morning of 2/11/26.
  - Discussed water challenges in Mission South.
  - New measurement sites/site upgrades were suggested.
  - Field trip will be planned to observe current measurement stations.

### **CITT Website Discussion (Maya Rao) [00:53:05]**

- Discussed CITT website traffic.
  - 591 views to website in last year.
  - 192 Active users (visit longer than 10 secs) with most activity in Mar/Apr.
  - Group agreed web traffic was low and to leave website in its current format.

### **Operations Model Discussion Contd. (Seth Makepeace - CSKT) [00:57:09]**

- Discussed a computational system presenting a visual way applicable for FIIP's system. Mentioned that the Colorado DNRC has a similar model for major basins.
- Outlined a three-step system.
  - 1. Data Collection
  - 2. Computational Model/Processor
  - 3. Concise presentation to FIIP
- Proposed Model objectives to present to consultants. This process would be to define a time step for within-year water management and incorporate functional display/visualization.
  - Model development is a collaborative process between FIIP/CSKT/Developer. Seth mentioned that it is important to think about scale (RDAs, laterals, etc.) and who maintains and operates the model.
- A productive conversation ensued with Seth and members of the CITT.
  - Details of HYDROSS model were discussed.
  - Nick mentioned priorities including the quantity of water available.
  - Brian/Maya prioritized that the tool is useable by FIIP.
  - Model capacity for future buildout/refinement was discussed (i.e. RDAS→laterals→sub-laterals).
  - Concept of looking back or looking forward was discussed. Should model be demand driven or usage driven?
  - Dave asked about funding of the model. Brian/Maya emphasized that CITT should focus on identifying objectives and next steps, and those steps will inform the funding.
  - A phased approach to contracting was discussed, so that the contractor could refine the proposed tool more after shadowing FIIP for a season.
- Brian discussed a schedule/Next Steps
  - Review draft of RFQ.
  - Define objectives w/ CITT before March meeting.
  - Scope of contracting/budgeting.
  - Emphasized on-site coordination between FIIP/CSKT/consultant during WY '26 irrigation season in anticipation that a model be developed for Mission South irrigation in WY '27.

**Discuss Next Steps and Schedule [02:31:27]**

- CSKT Water Measurements will present a WY '25 report at the next meeting.
- NRCS will produce a forecast for March which will aid in water year coordination.
- Continue to work with MSU-Extension regarding the on-farm specialist recruitment process.
- Will schedule a field trip to the Mission South area to refine plan for additional measurement.
- Continue to host CITT website on DNRC's parent website.
- RFQ for the operational model will be refined in the next month.
- Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> 1:00 pm at the MVP boardroom.

**Public Comment [02:35:52]**

- Seth Makepeace, CSKT Projects Officer, mentioned potential improvements to the Little Bitterroot River and Camas A Canal.
- Dan Lozar inquired as a follow-up about the timeline for the on-farm efficiency specialist position to determine whether other options should be considered.

**End Meeting [02:46:06]**

- Motion to end the meeting by Dan. Second by Nick. Motion carries unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.