

SUMMARY OF COMPACT IMPLEMENTATION TECHNICAL TEAM (CITT) MEETING

Sherrri McDonald Hospitality Room, Salish Kootenai College

Pablo MT, Flathead Indian Reservation

June 1, 2023, 09:30am-12:30pm

In Attendance (Quorum Established)

David Lake, Irrigator Representative

Casey Ryan, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)

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

Daniel Lozar, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

Lawrence Nelson, Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (FIIP) (attended remotely)

Call to Order

Chair Casey Ryan called the meeting to order at 9:36am.

Approve Agenda

No additions were made to the agenda. Motion by Larry to approve the agenda. Second by Dave. Agenda approved by 5 of 5 members.

Informational Updates

David Lake provided an irrigator update. The irrigators are frustrated with the proposed rate increases. They feel there is very little maintenance or improvements. Generally, the irrigators are unhappy with communication and the process. According to Mr. Lake, The Flathead District is ~80% in favor of doing a cooperative management entity with CSKT. The irrigators would like to pen up a dialog with Tribal Council regarding a cooperative management entity.

There is a lot of misinformation out there right now and the irrigators would like to see better communication. The irrigators would also like to see balance during rehabilitation and betterment activities. The irrigators would like to host a farm tour for CSKT and the CITT.

Casey Ryan provided an update from the CSKT. The Water Measurement Program is building a reservoir-level dashboard for the CSKT water data website. Jace Smith has resigned as the CSKT Irrigation Infrastructure Program Manager; this will result in short-term challenges to capacity for new rehabilitation & betterment projects while CSKT hires and trains a replacement Irrigation Infrastructure Program Manager.

Mr. Ryan also provided updates on the status of CSKT-managed FIIP facility rehabilitation projects including:

Restoration Projects

- Most rehabilitation and betterment projects incorporate an element of restoration.
- The CSKT Restoration Program also has several individual restoration projects in the planning phase.

31A Valley View Canal Chute:

- All NEPA/permitting is done.
- Project has been awarded to Native Montana Construction.

Jocko Valley Service Area Canal Conversion:

- The Draft EA public comment period has closed. Documents have been submitted to BIA for final approval.
- Trucking bids are in. The bid will be awarded soon.
- The current goal is to complete Phase 1 and 2 this fall, and phase 3 and 4 in the spring.

Jocko Lower J:

- Permitting is in progress.

Jocko K Canal Headworks:

- Concrete work is done in the main structure. The contractor is finishing the fish ladder.
- 2nd part of project to occur late fall. Restoration to occur in late fall/early winter.
- The site should have power by late June/early July.
- The fish ladder can be operated manually without power.

Falls Creek Diversion:

- Permitting is nearing completion.

North Fork Jocko Headworks:

- Moving towards 60% design.
- Project was awarded. Working towards a design and preconstruction process that is complete by first quarter 2024. The headworks is likely a 2025 project.

North Fork Jocko Bridge Replacement:

- Goal is July 15-November 1 timeline. This timeline is subject to delay due to procurement challenges. Construction estimated to take 6 weeks. Permit requires project to work around the bull trout spawning window.

Mission Valley South:

- Close to having a consultant contract to develop water conservation and irrigation improvement plan for Mission Valley South. Focus will be rehabilitation and betterment of project south of Post Creek and north of Mission Creek.

Maya Rao provided updates from the DNRC. The DNRC continues to collaborate with CSKT on modeling and water supply forecasting. DNRC staff joined CSKT staff for several field reviews of current and upcoming rehabilitation and betterment projects. The DNRC will be participating in the upcoming Charlo Planning Area meeting.

Dan Lozar presented updates from the BIA. The BIA continues to assist with rehabilitation and betterment projects, and has also provided funding for some of these projects through 1128 BIA construction funding and WIIN Act funding. Some of those projects include North Fork Jocko, Jocko K Headworks, several canal liner

projects, and the 31A Canal Chute Replacement. BIA will be participating in the upcoming Charlo Planning Area meeting.

Larry Nelson provided updates from the Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (FIIP). Larry introduced Mr. Skye Cooley, the new hydrologist for FIIP. Mr. Mercier, the BIA Regional Director, will be here on June 13th, 2023 to meet with FIIP staff. FIIP will formally extend an invitation to the Mission and Jocko Districts, the Flathead District, and the Tribal Council.

Water Management Coordination

Casey Ryan delivered a water supply outlook presentation on behalf of Brian Hogenson, CSKT Water Conservation and Planning Scientist. Brian prepared a PowerPoint presentation but was unable to be present for the meeting. The presentation provided data on current trends in snowpack and drought conditions and a water supply forecast summary for the May-July time period. Snowmelt happened early and rapidly this year.

Maya Rao asked for an update on reservoir storage. Larry responded that all the reservoirs are more than 75% full. FIIP was able to start the year with carryover water in Pablo Reservoir. Reservoir storage is currently above average for this time of year and Larry said that there is more water stored in reservoirs than he has seen in the last few years at this time.

Categorization of Water Year Type for Informational Purposes

Data from the NRCS water supply forecasts were reviewed for the index gages from Appendix 3.7. In most cases the seasonal projected streamflow forecast volumes have slightly decreased. Observed CSKT & USGS streamflow data from April was compared against the NRCS May-July streamflow volumetric forecasts as a potential method of updating the April-July streamflow forecast. Using this method, the South Fork Jocko River forecast decreased but remained above the threshold defined as a **Wet Year**. The Mission Creek and South Crow Creek forecasts decreased but remained within the range defined as a **Normal Year**. For the Little Bitterroot area, the Mill Creek forecast decreased but remained within the range defined as a **Normal Year**. The consensus of the group was that the forecasts in most locations were trending towards a Normal Year.

**Note this categorization is currently provided for information purposes only, as the RDAs, MEFs, and TIFs are not yet in effect and because the CITT is continuing to refine its forecasting procedures.*

Next Steps and Follow-up

- Dan Lozar highlighted the value of SCADA for project operations, and volunteered to bring forth some ideas on SCADA deployment for CITT consideration.
- Maya Rao discussed water supply forecasting, and noted that the team will be working on this topic during an upcoming workshop.
- *(Maya Rao left the CITT meeting to attend another meeting).*
- Larry discussed the need for FIIP water measurement on lateral and sub lateral canals.
- Casey discussed other potential Operational Improvements for group consideration, including operations models, on farm efficiency improvements, stock water mitigation, headworks automation, and software for farm delivery accounting.

- Casey noted that CSKT technical staff are finalizing and will be presenting the Jocko Valley canal seepage study to the CITT.
- The team will continue to communicate on these topics to determine potential recommendations for future CITT meetings.

Public Comment

The CITT received public comment.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:17am.

Next Meeting

The next CITT meeting is planned for October 2023.

Copies of the CITT meeting materials and presentations are posted at <https://dnrc.mt.gov/Water-Resources/Compacts/Compact-Implementation-Technical-Team>.

Key: Underline = Action item
Normal = Discussion, comment and/or update