

SUMMARY OF COMPACT IMPLEMENTATION TECHNICAL TEAM (CITT) MEETING

**Mission Valley Power
Flathead Indian Reservation – Pablo, MT
October 3, 2023, 9:30am-12:30pm**

In Attendance (Quorum Established)

Casey Ryan, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)
Maya Rao, MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Daniel Lozar, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
Shane Hendrickson, Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (FIIP)

Unable to Attend

David Lake, Irrigator Representative

Call to Order

Chair Casey Ryan called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

Approve Agenda

Mark Simpson, CSKT Irrigation Infrastructure Program Manager, was double-booked and will be unavailable during the CSKT Agency Updates portion of the agenda. Mark will join the CITT Meeting when he is done presenting to the CSKT Tribal Council. Motion by Casey to amend agenda to include Mark Simpson as part of the agenda and to allow Mark Simpson to present updates for the CSKT Irrigation Infrastructure Program when he is able to join the meeting. Second by Maya. Motion approved by 4 of 4 members.

Motion by Dan to approve the agenda as amended. Second by Shane. Motion approved by 4 of 4 members.

Informational Updates

Shane Hendrickson provided updates from FIIP. Larry Nelson has officially retired from the BIA. Shane has been the Acting FIIP Project Manager for one month. On the North District zone Dan Olson has stepped down to Lead Irrigation Service Operator. Koshon LaCount has been promoted to the North District Watermaster. Koshon will also be serving as the interim liaison between FIIP and CSKT for Compact-related activities until the new Project Operator is hired. Shane gave an update on Delivery Entitlement Statements. FIIP is working on their year-end reporting requirements to meet obligations under the US Fish & Wildlife Service Biological Opinion for operation of the project.

Casey Ryan provided updates for CSKT. CSKT water conservation and planning staff have been focused on Operational Improvements. Many identified Operational Improvements have been accomplished, including formation of the team, establishment of a water management coordination process, water measurement requirements, publishing of the FIIP Modernization Plan, and the development of web-based water management tools. The CITT has also worked with the US Bureau of Reclamation to install three additional

AgriMet stations on the Flathead Indian Reservation. The CITT is funding the annual operation and maintenance of all five stations on the Reservation. CSKT and DNRC are working collaboratively on Water Supply Forecasting. CSKT has begun conceptual planning for the development of an Operations Model to assist FIIP with intra-season irrigation water management. CSKT and BIA have been working with consultant to develop a draft FIIP SCADA Plan.

Maya Rao provided updates from DNRC. DNRC has been working with the other parties to the Compact through the Water Court mediation process. DNRC has been working collaboratively with CSKT on Water Supply Forecasting. DNRC has been providing support to Milltown Work Group. DNRC is close to hiring a Hydrologist 3 for the Compact Implementation Program. DNRC also continues to work on the water rights database enhancement.

Dan Lozar provided updates from the BIA. Dan has been working closely with Mark Simpson, CSKT, and FIIP on irrigation infrastructure projects. The BIA is also revising the proposed WIIN Act allocation for FIIP and working with FIIP staff throughout that process. Potential new projects include water measurement and a canal lining project. Dan is also working on a SCADA Plan both for FIIP as well as other BIA Irrigation Projects. Shane added that one of the components of the Jocko Pipeline Project that BIA has been working on is the BIA right-of-way process.

Water Management Coordination

Annual Reporting: Casey Ryan noted the annual water measurement report described in Compact Appendix 3.5. Water Year 2023 ended on September 30, 2023, and Water Year 2024 began on October 1, 2023. CSKT Water Measurement Program staff are now in the QA/QC process to finalize stream gage records for water year 2023. Once those records have been finalized, CSKT hydrologists will compile those records into an annual water measurement report for water year 2023.

Water Operations for Completed Irrigation Season: Skye Cooley presented an overview of FIIP water operations for the 2023 irrigation season. Skye discussed several topics, including potential repairs to the Camas C Canal, evaluation of the liner on the Moiese MA Canal, work with Reservation landowners, FIIP's desire for a new SNOTEL site in the Southern Mission Mountains, Flathead River Pumping Plant, working with individual irrigators on CFR violations and resulting water quality issues, and a summary of water availability during water year 2023. In a typical year FIIP relies on lingering July snowpack in southern Mission Mountains to replenish water delivered during early part of irrigation season. Because of early runoff this year, flows into reservoirs late in the season were very low. That resulted in a shortened irrigation season. Skye reported that there was some frustration on behalf of some water users this year. Skye also discussed FIIP operations, including several Biological Opinion violations that occurred this year. Skye has been working to increase transparency of FIIP's operation to irrigators including producing improved reservoir forecasts for project reservoirs. Skye discussed efforts to avoid future Biological Opinion violations, with the understanding that non-compliance jeopardizes project operation. Skye discussed FIIP organizational challenges and efforts to move forward.

Brian Hogenson presented an overview of the long-range water supply forecast based on climatic indicators. The National Weather Service reports that El Niño conditions are present, as represented in current oceanic and atmospheric observations. A continuation of El Niño is extremely likely this fall and winter, with over a 95 percent chance through January-February-March 2024. Additionally, a strong El Niño is likely by late fall and early winter, with approximately a 70 percent chance of occurrence during the November-December-January

2023-24 season. For western Montana this increases the probability of warmer than average temperatures and below average precipitation.

Amend 2021 CITT Elevation-Capacity Table for Mission Reservoir to correct an incorrectly-listed water level due to typographical error

Casey provided some background for this voting item.

FIIP operations at Mission Reservoir are governed by FIIP’s operational guideline documents, which include the 2005/2008 BIA Operation and Maintenance Guidelines for the Flathead Indian Irrigation Project, and the BIA Standard Operating Procedures for each dam facility.

In 2021 the CITT completed a reservoir bathymetry project to update the original FIIP reservoir stage-storage curves using modern high-resolution survey technology. Deliverables from that CITT project included updated reservoir capacity tables for each dam facility. Each elevation-capacity table contains an easy-to-reference table of calculated reservoir volumes based on reservoir elevation. The documents also contain additional information for facility operators, including interim minimum reservoir pool elevations and Compact minimum reservoir pool elevations. Unfortunately, it was discovered this year that the CITT document for Mission Dam contains an erroneous value for the minimum reservoir pool elevation at Mission Dam. The 2021 CITT Work Product listed a minimum reservoir pool elevation requirement of 3,370.0 feet, which is incorrect. The minimum reservoir pool requirement for Mission Dam is 3,377.0 feet - this requirement has been in place for more than 15 years, and is reflected in the current BIA Operation and Maintenance Guidelines for the Flathead Indian Irrigation Project as well as the BIA Standard Operating Procedures for Mission Dam. The error appears to have originated in Appendix 3.4 to the Compact, where an incorrect interim minimum reservoir pool elevation is listed (3,370.0 feet). That value is not consistent with any previous documents. That value also contradicts the listed minimum reservoir volume requirement of 763 acre-feet (which corresponds to 3,377.0 feet). This inconsistency can only be explained as a typographical error.

Reservoir operations are ultimately governed by the BIA operational guidelines set forth for FIIP. To rectify the typographical error in the CITT document and align it with FIIP’s established operational standards, the CITT would need to conduct a vote to update their 2021 work product – specifically, the 2021 CITT Reservoir Capacity Table for Mission Reservoir. The proposed voting item would not change FIIP’s operational requirements at Mission Reservoir, but would rather serve to rectify a typographical discrepancy and ensure that the CITT’s 2021 work product is consistent with FIIP’s current and longstanding operational requirements.

A motion was made by Shane to amend the CITT’s 2021 CITT Elevation-Capacity Table for Mission Reservoir to correct the listed interim minimum pool level from 3,370.0 feet to 3,377.0 feet. Second by Maya. Motion approved by 4 out of 4 members.

CSKT Irrigation Infrastructure Program Update

Mark Simpson provided updates on current CSKT Irrigation Infrastructure Program projects. Those included Flathead River Pumping Plant, Jocko K Canal Conversion Project, Jocko K Canal Headworks, Mission South, and the North Fork of the Jocko Headworks.

Flathead River Pumping Plant: Pump #2 is being repaired. The Bureau of Reclamation is working on a plan for erosion control around the penstocks.

Jocko K Canal Conversion Project: Approximately 25% of the pipeline has arrived and is being staged. Additional supplies necessary for the project are also arriving.

Jocko K Headworks. DAC is moving back in to start the next phase of the project. The site should have power within the next several weeks. Concrete placement is projected to be complete by Christmas.

Mission South: The CSKT is working on a water conservation and irrigation infrastructure plan for the Mission South service area.

North Fork Diversion: Currently at 30% design. 60% design should be complete soon.

Next Steps and Follow-up

Next steps and follow-up items discussed during the meeting were reviewed by the team.

Public Comment

The CITT received public comment.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33am.

Next Meeting

The next CITT meeting is planned for December 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