

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

**Virtual Meeting (Zoom)  
January 17, 2024, 9:00am-1:00pm**

### **In Attendance** (Quorum Established)

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

Daniel Lozar, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

Eric Bruguier, Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (FIIP)

David Lake, Irrigator Representative

Casey Ryan, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)

### **Call to Order**

Chair Casey Ryan called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

### **Approve Agenda**

CITT members were given an opportunity to review the agenda. No amendments to the agenda were proposed. Motion by Eric to approve the draft agenda. Second by Maya. Approved by 5 of 5 members.

### **Informational Updates**

Maya Rao provided updates for the DNRC. DNRC continues work on registrations filed during the 180 days after the water Compact passed. They also have continued attendance to irrigator meetings and exploration of options for on farm efficiency and stock water mitigation. The DNRC is also identifying internal staff members with agricultural expertise who may be able to provide some technical support for these efforts.

Dan Lozar provided updates for BIA. BIA continues to provide technical support for CSKT and FIIP rehabilitation and betterment projects. Current projects include Jocko Pipeline Conversation Project, Jocko K Canal, and Tabor Feeder Canal Diversion at the North Fork of the Jocko. The BIA's National Irrigation Meeting is scheduled during the week of on Jan. 12-16 at Cal Poly University. BIA leadership staff will be present. Dan will discuss stock water mitigation and on farm efficiency with BIA staff during this meeting.

Eric Bruguier provided updates for FIIP. FIIP has been working with Gordon Wind (FIIP Contractor) to conduct research on stock water delivery. FIIP has also been reviewing employment options for the upcoming irrigation season.

Dave Lake provided updates for the irrigators. The irrigators are in communication with the State regarding the status of the pumping fund. The irrigators are also looking forward to hearing updates on the CITT's work on stock water mitigation and on-farm efficiency.

Casey Ryan provided updates from the CSKT. The CSKT has continued outreach efforts with potential partners to assist the CITT in stock water mitigation and on-farm efficiency projects. The CSKT has also attended irrigation district meetings to visit with irrigators and get their feedback on stock water mitigation and on-farm efficiency projects. Casey provided Irrigation Infrastructure Program updates on

behalf of Mark Simpson. Work continues on infrastructure projects including the Flathead Pumping Plant, Falls Creek Headworks, and the Jocko K Canal Headworks.

### **Water Management Coordination**

#### *Review reservoir carryover and initial projection of water supply*

Eric reported that there are 3,000 acre feet of carryover at Tabor Reservoir and 12,000 acre feet of carryover at Pablo Reservoir. Skye Colley, FIIP hydrologist, has been looking at snowpack and potential spring run-off. Skye has also been working on identifying locations for measuring devices for the upcoming irrigation season.

#### *Update on long-range forecast based on climatic indicators*

Casey reported on the water supply outlook to date. The current weather pattern is still categorized as El Niño, which typically results with warmer and drier conditions on the Flathead Indian Reservation and in western Montana. National Weather Service models forecast above average temperatures and below average precipitation for the Flathead Indian Reservation from January through May. Montana Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) SNOwpack TELemetry (SNOTEL) monitoring stations show that snowpack in western Montana was 30%-60% of average as of January 1. Most of the local SNOTEL sites in and around the Reservation show record low snowpack for today's date. Most of these sites have a period of record that goes back 30+ years.

#### *Tentatively categorize water-year type*

The CITT reviewed Compact Appendices 3.5 and 3.7. Appendix 3.5 provides a suggested schedule for CITT water management coordination. That schedule includes a tentative categorization of water-year type during the January meeting. Appendix 3.7 provides the recommended methods for the CITT's determination of wet, normal, and dry normal water-year types. The CITT discussed both appendices and reviewed the current water supply outlook. The current water supply outlook includes record low snowpack at many local SNOTEL sites.

The CITT reached a consensus to tentatively categorize water year 2024 as a Dry Year at this time for all geographic areas. The CITT will continue to monitor water supply forecast and change the water-year type determination as necessary.

### **Stock Water Mitigation**

Eric reported that FIIP has not tracked stock water for the past three years and plans to address that issue. Eric is planning a meeting with irrigators to discuss stock water issues. Eric and his staff reviewed the draft maps that were created in 2017 to identify areas of historic stock water use and concluded that the maps are accurate. The maps will be used to identify areas that may be eligible for stock water mitigation efforts.

CITT members discussed various strategies to address stock water mitigation. Members expressed the importance of data on when, where, and how much stock water is being provided in order to efficiently spend limited funding. Casey mentioned that NRCS works on stock water projects. Casey has reached out to the NRCS and requested that they provide the CITT with more information on their stock water program. Maya suggested that the DNRC meet with FIIP to help identify initial steps in quantifying current stock water use.

### **On-Farm Efficiency Improvements**

Casey reported that he has reached out to the NRCS, the Montana Water Center, and MSU Extension Office to identify possible partners for on-farm efficiency improvements efforts. Casey has not heard back from MSU yet, most likely due to the holidays, but he will follow-up with them. Casey did reach the NRCS and is working to schedule a meeting with the local NRCS offices. Maya stated that DNRC is willing to meet with the CITT to explore how they could provide assistance. Maya offered to schedule a meeting between the DNRC and the CITT.

#### **Discuss Next Steps and Schedule**

Next steps are covered in each agenda item. Casey will email CITT members to identify a date for the next meeting. Dave asked if Casey could provide an overview of the CITT's on-farm efficiency and stock water mitigation efforts at the next Flathead Irrigation District (FID) meeting. The DNRC is has a scheduling conflict this month but offered to attend February's FID meeting and provide updates. There was group consensus for Casey to provide an update from the CITT. Eric will also attend the next FID meeting and provide updates.

#### **Public Comment**

A member of the public asked if Eric and Casey could provide a summary of the CITT meeting at the next FID meeting.

#### **End Meeting**

Meeting adjourned at 11:59am.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next CITT meeting is tentatively planned for February 2024.