

**SUMMARY OF
COMPACT IMPLEMENTATION TECHNICAL TEAM (CITT) MEETING
September 10, 2025**

1:00pm-5:00pm

Mission Valley Power Conference Room
Flathead Indian Reservation, Pablo, MT

In Attendance

Nick Belcourt, Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (FIIP)
Brian Hogenson, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)
Daniel Lozar, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
David Lake, Irrigator Representative
Maya Rao, MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)

Call to Order [00:00:00]

Chair Maya Rao called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM. All five CITT members were present, and a quorum was established.

Approve Agenda [00:01:50]

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

Informational Updates [00:02:35]

Irrigator Update [00:02:35]

- Dave said that there was a decent end to the irrigation season.

CSKT Updates [00:3:10]

- The North Fork Jocko Diversion project is ongoing. Contractors have built the wall to establish the clearwater channel and expanded the road.
 - The goals of this project are to replace aging infrastructure and give FIIP better control on the amount of water moved to Tabor Feeder Canal and to protect native bull trout with a new fish screen and more continuity in the North Fork.
 - Nick requested that he view the diversion so FIIP can plan operations for the coming year while the project is underway.
- The Jocko K Canal project phases 1-4 are underway.
- The construction team for the Crow Pumping Plant mobilized this week.
- Brian and his team met with Bear Hughes, acting FIIP Manager, in August.
- The fire season on the Reservation was not as severe as previous years.

DNRC Update [00:11:00]

- DNRC is continuing to administer the Off-Season Stock Water Mitigation Grant Program.
- The current CSKT Compact Coordinator is leaving and the job will be posted in the next few weeks.
- Maya reported that she and Brian gave a presentation to the Western Montana Conservation Commission.

BIA Update [00:12:00]

- Dan has been participating in RDA workgroup meetings with Maya and Brian.
- Dan has also been participating in Crow Pump Plant meetings and meetings related to Crow Pump Canal expansion.
- CSKT and BIA are working with the Bureau of Reclamation to improve slope stability at the Flathead River Pumping Plant. A scoping study should come out soon.
- The development of rehabilitation specifications for #1 pump and #3 pump for the Flathead River Pumping Plant are ongoing with HDR. Once those are finalized, CSKT will begin the bidding process.
- BIA is working with ITRC to develop turnout structures to be installed in Mission A Canal so FIIP can better control the gravity feed systems coming off of the canal.
- Post 22C Canal has a three way split. BIA is working with ITRC to install a flap gate and additional control structures.

FIIP Update [00:16:15]

- FIIP is staging down remaining diversion points. Hot Springs area has been shut down for a while.
- Jocko division has minimal flow.
- Nick provided detail about the staging down of diversions leading up to full shut down on September 15. FIIP is having daily meetings right now so different divisions can coordinate shutdown.
- FIIP drafted a 2026 budget. Since there was a budget cut they had to decrease personnel and supply costs.
- Michelle LittleBoy will be joining the FIIP office through CSKT hiring. All other positions are still frozen.
- Dave asked about the Moiese area. Nick said that Moiese was shut down for a week to let the reservoir recover. There was a blowout on MA Canal, but it is now fixed and FIIP will run water in MA Canal until September 15.
- The trash rack on 31A chute was discussed. The new trash rack was getting clogged and there is now a plan to add an additional trash rack.
- FIIP is getting ready to work on the 22C Canal and replace some pump houses after the irrigation season is over.
- FIIP will start making precast structures and replace several structures in the South Division. Jobs will be prioritized based on biggest benefit to the irrigation project.
- Nick emphasized how well the FIIP operators performed this year.

Mill Creek Historical Data Review [00:35:45]

- Amanda Courville, hydrologist with CSKT gave a 30-year data review of the Mill Creek Drainage area.
- Presentation was prompted by observation by local observations of water supply being lower than normal in recent years.
- Recent fires in the Mill Creek Drainage area include the Chippy Creek Fire in 2007, and the Mill Pocket Fires of 2023 and 2024, which had a smaller impact.
- Amanda discussed the effects of fire such as decreased vegetive cover and changed soil composition, resulting in increased streamflow volume, higher peak runoff, earlier runoff, increased stream temperatures, and decreased soil moisture.

- Hot Springs area had less precipitation and higher temperatures on average during the 1994-2024 period compared to the 1971-2000 period.
- SNOTEL data showed that meltout at Bassoo Peak happened on April 21 this year which was earlier than the historic average of April 30. Snowpack at Bassoo has been below average for the last 6 years.
- According to a 2004 MBMG study, there is a downward trend of groundwater in the area.
- CITT members discussed the benefits of members of the Hot Springs community seeing the Mill Pocket data review.
- CITT members discussed that FIIP does not supply stock water in the Little Bitterroot Area due to limited water availability.
- Nick said that the next year that Little Bitterroot is not experiencing drought, FIIP operations will focus on storing excess water for the subsequent irrigation season.
- CITT members had more discussion about water operations in the Little Bitterroot Area.

Water Management Coordination [00:59:30]

- Brian provided a hindcast for the Jocko, Mission, and Little Bitterroot geographical areas for the April through July 2025 period.
- RDAs are not yet enforceable, and data is provided for information purposes only.
- Brian presented the amount of water diverted within each RDA geographical area based on River Diversion Allowances.
- He compared the NRCS forecast to the observed flow April-July and noted the discrepancy between the forecast and observed flows for the Little Bitterroot Area.
- NRCS is working to refine their projections, but part of the challenge with the Little Bitterroot Area is lack of long-term SNOTEL data.
- The NRCS forecast over-projected the South Fork Jocko and NRCS will review the model input data.
- NRCS custom built forecasts for Agency, Hellroaring, and the observed flow were similar to forecasts.
- The NRCS forecast for North Crow Creek was significantly lower than observed.

RDA Workgroup [01:13:00]

- Brian updated that the RDA workgroup is working on evaluating all of the inputs to each RDA area.
- Workgroup meetings have led to development of a water balance calculation of Upper S Canal at Agency Creek based on existing gauges.
- Focus has been primarily on the Jocko and Mission South will be the next area of focus.
- Group has had a lot of conversations about FIIP's needs to meet RDAs and water movement between RDAs.

On-Farm Efficiency Specialist Hiring Process [01:22:10]

- Maya reported that she recently checked in with Dan Lucas from MSU Extension. He stated that there are a few applicants but MSU will keep the position open until there is a larger applicant pool.

Stock Water Mitigation Grant Program [01:23:20]

- A help session for grantees was conducted last week and there will be another session conducted next week at Mission West Community Development Partners building.
- Maya thanked FRWMB for processing water rights applications and to Nick and FIIP for processing FIIP special use permit applications related to the stock water projects.
- At the time of the meeting there were 28 environmental reviews completed, 20 water rights issued, 18 FIIP special use consultations completed, and \$42,000 in reimbursement requests.

Rotation of CITT Chair [01:27:00]

- Maya noted that CITT's Operating Rules call for the rotation between the Compacting Parties every year.
- Several months ago, CITT decided to shift chair rotation to the end of the water year.
- Dave nominated Brian as chair. Second by Dan. No other nominations were made.
- Dave moved to rotate chair to Brian starting in the October 2025 meeting. Second by Dan.
- 4 of 5 members voted in favor and Brian abstained. Motion passes.

Discuss Next Steps and Schedule [01:30:20]

- Next meeting will be October 15, 2025 at Mission Valley Power at 1pm.

Public comment [01:31:00]

The CITT received no public comment.

End Meeting [01:31:35]

Motion to end the meeting by Brian. Second by Dan. Motion carries unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:52pm.