



Office of the Water Engineer

Position Description: Water Resources Specialist II - Carrer Ladder

Employee Name	Tyrel Fenner
Job Title	Water Resource Specialist
Date	2025-02-27
Job Level(s) Being Hired	Level II – Career Ladder Focus toward Hydrologist Position
Immediate Supervisor	Water Engineer
Position Type	Full-Time 40 Hours/Week
Classification	Exempt from FLSA
Schedule	Flex, focused on Mon – Thurs 8:30 to 17:30 (likely to change when office switches to five days/week)
Duty Station	Office of the Water Engineer Primary: Ronan, Montana for three days/week Remote: one to two days/week (see conditions below)
Pay	<i>Set by Offer of Employment</i>
Project Assignments	OE GIS and Remotely Sensed Data Manager OE Water Measurement Specialist OE Agrimetrics Specialist
Requirements	Must be able and authorized to work in the United States
	Must hold a valid driver's license
	Must pass a background check

Position Overview:

This position is structured as a career ladder position, starting as Water Resources Specialist with potential promotion to Hydrologist upon successful orientation to the position of Water Resources Specialist and completion of a Hydrologist Promotion Plan. This PD is for the Water Resources Specialist II phase, which will last for the entirety of successful orientation to the Water Resources Specialist position and is likely, but is not required, to last the entirety of the initial six-month probationary period. Subsequent to completion of full orientation to the Water Resources Specialist II position, as determined by the Water Engineer, the position will engage in the Promotion Plan.

The Water Resource Specialist is responsible for performing a broad variety of duties associated with managing water resources within the Flathead Indian Reservation under the direction of the Water Engineer, Board and the Unitary Administration and Management Ordinance (“Ordinance”) of the Water Compact between the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Tribes), the State of Montana, and the Federal Government. The Specialist works closely with the Office of the Engineer’s staff, the Tribes’ water resources staff, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Water Resource Division, the Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (FIIP), and the citizens and water uses on the Flathead Indian Reservation (FIR). The Specialist serves as a trusted expert for the public trust and is expected to provide thoughtful, informed, and accurate information and recommendations. The Specialist routinely writes technical documents, directly interacts with the public and partners, analyses technical information, discovers historic documents that inform work, reviews and improves digital and physical map products, and thinks on their feet to solve range of complex problems, not all of which relate directly to water.

Essential Duties, Responsibilities, and Expectations:

These essential duties are not inclusive of all the duties that may be assigned.

A. WATER RIGHT ANALYSIS AND ORDINANCE ADMINISTRATION 60%

1. Implements the Ordinance, analyzes and makes recommendations regarding the use, availability, and management of water resources.
2. Processes a wide variety of water right applications under the Ordinance and evaluates the accuracy and extent of the applicants request.
3. Prepares maps using Geographic Information System (GIS) and other mapping technology;
4. Prepares technical reports, memorandums, and letters tailored to specific situations reflecting analysis of water use applications;
5. Evaluates validity of proposed, existing, and historical water rights;
6. Reviews and researches technical literature, county records, historic water right documents, legal records, deeds, trust documents, articles

of incorporation, and other information needed to resolve water use applications and issues;

7. Participates in water right database administration and development.
8. Consults with the Water Engineer, staff hydrologists, staff legal counsel and other resource professionals to gain information needed to resolve technical and legal issues relating to historical, existing, and proposed new water uses;
9. Provides information regarding policies, positions and viewpoints to stakeholders, Tribal, state, and local entities such as conservation districts, local planning boards, and student groups;
10. Assists the OE with developing policies, forms, procedures, and work processes needed for start-up and implementation of the Ordinance;
11. Provides technical review of OE reports and written products;
12. Performs independent field investigations;
13. Provides technical and investigative assistance to Engineer and Board attorneys regarding objections and water quantification issues for new applications;
14. Conducts comprehensive analyses of all water uses in basins being considered for groundwater and surface water closures and provides technical water availability information. Monitors activities related to groundwater management areas, Tribal water rights, state-based water rights, and federal reserved water rights;
15. Determines if elements of a water right application have been met and may then modify, remark, condition, or deny the water right;
16. Appears as an expert witness providing testimony, expert opinions, and supporting evidence in contested-case hearings.
17. Attends public meetings as needed on a variety of water resource issues. Analyzes hydrologic data and information to determine if water rights of a prior appropriator will be adversely affected and if the proposed means of diversion, construction, and operation are adequate; and
18. Analyzes the applicant's justification and calculations for the requested flow rate and volume to determine if the amount of water requested is reasonable.

B. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, COMPLAINTS, AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION 25%

1. Supports, sometimes independently, opening, operating, and closing the OE for all phases of general office operations including greeting and direct interface with the public, either at the office or at remote

meetings;

2. Researches water use information, well log information and land ownership records specific to individual requests from the public;
3. Provides precise information and interpretations using a variety of sources including the Ordinance, county clerk and recorder records, county assessor tax records, and other records.
4. Compiles research information to develop reports and create GIS maps for the general public, attorneys, water users, and consultants. The Specialist must often present information that is contrary to the opinions of others and may face debate and confrontation. Considerable economic investment and land use decisions may be based on the accuracy of the information provided by the Specialist.

C. OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED

15%

1. Performs a variety of other professional and technical duties in support of the Office of the Engineer and the Board. This includes activities such as attending training and educational programs, meetings, and conferences;
2. Completes administrative functions including providing input on OE annual work plans, and other related duties as assigned; and
3. May be delegated authority to issue some water rights.

Direction Received:

The Water Resource Specialist receives direction from the Water Engineer who makes general and broad assignments. The incumbent is expected to use technical experience and education to complete assignments in a timely and professional manner.

Due to the “start up nature” of the FRWMB compact implementation, the incumbent is expected to discuss precedent setting situations with the Water Engineer, prior to implementation.

The Water Resource Specialist will resolve most situations using expertise and experience.

Working Relationships:

Incumbent works with other professionals as an official representative of the FRWMB and the Water Engineer. Most contact is giving directions, offering clarification and advice to applicants and customers. Will work directly with

complex situations and complicated water rights applications. Is expected to communicate professionally and clearly so that processes are understood and transparent to the public.

Will interface with State, Tribal and Federal staff as part of a team in support of full compact implementation.

Competencies or Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge: The work requires extensive knowledge of water resource-related management theories, principles, concepts, and practices; field investigation methodologies; and negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution techniques. Knowledge of the CSKT-Montana Compact and Ordinance or other reserved compacts recommended. Knowledge required of local water availability, water use practices, water measurement techniques and devices, irrigation methods and designs and land ownership records.

Skills: The position requires skill in effective communication with people of varied technical levels. Must be skilled in operation of computers, MS365, Word, Outlook, Excel, and Adobe. Must be skilled in project management, conducting legal research, and reading technical data and reports. The incumbent must be capable of becoming proficient in GIS application (ArcView) and accessing, analyzing, and manipulating data in a computer database environment.

Abilities: The position requires the ability to analyze and appraise facts, evidence, legal documents, and records to make defensible decisions. Must communicate effectively verbally and in writing. Demonstrated proficiency in adjusting to meet changing priorities while simultaneously working on multiple projects. Communicates objectively when providing information, advice, and guidance to technical and non-technical individuals and groups on complex and controversial issues. Initiative and motivation to act independently and take responsibility for evaluating and responding to challenging situations, problems, and opportunities. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with coworkers, supervisor, the Board, state and Tribal agencies, local governments, and the public. Models high standards of honesty, integrity, trust, and openness. Knows and follows through with the correct standards of conduct and moral judgement. Communicates and demonstrates actions in a consistent manner. Respects others, regardless of individual capabilities, agendas, opinions, or needs. Focuses to achieve results. Actively participates and respects the ideas

of others. Looks for alternative ways to work with others that will create better results and working relationships.

Physical Demands & Working Conditions:

[described demands are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.]

The position is based in Ronan, Montana and approximately 75% of the work occurs in a normal office and approximately 25% of the work is eligible to occur in a remote office setting. Frequent travel and field work are required between the months of April and November. Travel may exceed 1,500 miles per month and will occasionally be two (2) to three (3) days in duration. The position requires the ability to walk over rough and steep terrain to carry field equipment to data collection sites. The position must be able to work outdoors during bad weather. The position must rely on experience and judgement as to what safety precautions are prudent. The position must have good, driving skills required for both on-road and off-road travel and during times of inclement weather. Some irregular hours, evenings, and weekends are involved.

Remote Work:

Remote work is not a guarantee and will be conducted according to OE Personnel Policies. A formal remote work agreement is required before implementing a remote work schedule and until executed, all work must be conducted in-person at the OE physical address.

Project Assignments:

The assignments below are under development with this position and will be incorporated into the position's Promotion Plan.

- OE GIS and Remotely Sensed Data Manager – Serves to develop, manage, and publish needed OE GIS information and remotely sensed data. Trains OE staff on GIS tools and services. Develops standard formats and procedures.
- OE Water Measurement Specialist – Water measurement is focused on use compliance, administration, and supply/compliance monitoring. Serves to collect and manage OE water measurement needs for wells, streamflow, and reservoirs. Serves to develop OE water measurement procedures and trains OE staff.

- OE Agrimetrics Specialist – Serves to help develop calculation standards and to organize and provide quality check of calculated evaporation, evapotranspiration, irrigation efficiency, weather information, crop water use, and other elements of agricultural water use.

Acknowledgement

My signature below indicates the statements in the position description are accurate and complete.

Date

Ethan Mace, Water Engineer

My signature below indicates that I have read and acknowledge the requirements of the position description.

Date

Tyrel Fenner, Water Resources Specialist II