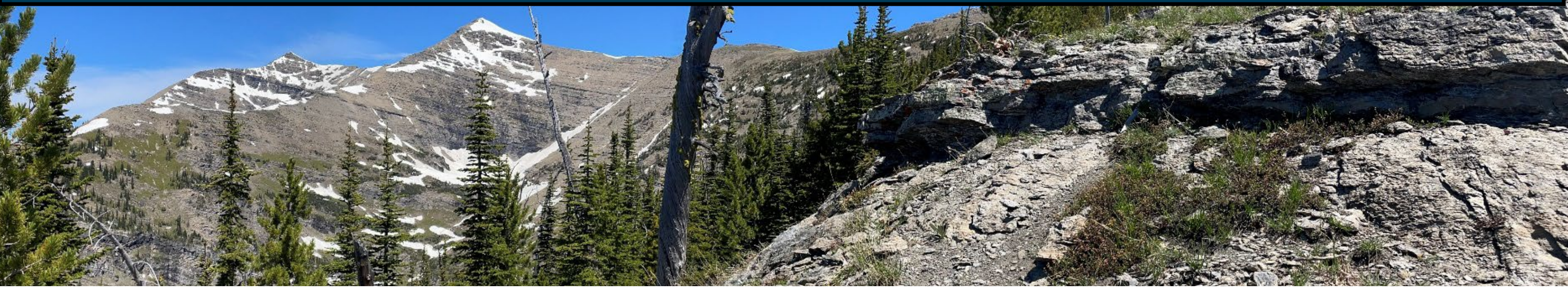

Draft

Flathead Reservation Water Management Board Office of the Engineer Strategic Plan

2026-2028

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Background

The Flathead Reservation Water Management Board was created to deliver unitary management of water rights for Tribal and non-Tribal uses on the Flathead Reservation. The Flathead Reservation Water Management Board (FRWMB) was created via the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes-Montana Compact (Compact) and is comprised of a Board of five voting members and one non-voting member and the Office of the Engineer (OE) with staff to undertake administrative and technical work. This strategic plan is to direct the work of the OE. Many OE work products and deliverables will be presented to the Board for feedback and approval. Updates on strategic plan objectives will be provided regularly at Board meetings.

Vision

Serve as a trusted government institutionality, providing comprehensive water rights policy and customer service to the residents of the Flathead Reservation.

Mission

Administer water rights within the exterior boundaries of the Flathead Reservation

- Single system for appropriation and administration
- Single system of centralized records, regardless of whether use is in State or Federal Law

Strategic Core Areas

For FRWMB to fulfill our mission and build toward our vision, there are five core areas under which specific tasks and goals are organized: finance, permitting, policy, outreach, and long-term continuity. Under each core area, SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) for subtasks are identified and will be the metrics by which progress is identified. Core areas and associated metrics will be used to clearly communicate progress and priorities to the Board, partners, and the public.

Finance

As a small organization with recent staff turnover, our finance goal is to complete an audit and implement suggested improvements by February 2028. Depending upon the time it takes to reconcile accounts, gather documentation for an audit, and secure an accounting firm for an audit, either fiscal year 2026 or 2027 will be audited. Steps toward an audit are to establish internal controls, document which generally accepted accounting practices (GAAP) are used, and provide documentation for an audit as outlined in the Finance Subtask Timeline. While gathering the appropriate documentation, Request for Proposal (RFP), and cost are considerable for a small organization, FRWMB will continue to retain Redtail Consulting to assist in this effort. Having clear and transparent books and costs is relevant to achieving our vision and ongoing support from partners.

SMART Goals - Finance

FINANCE SMART GOALS	
Specific	Complete audit
Measurable	Reconciliation, internal controls, appropriate documentation
Achievable	Assistance from Redtail Accounting
Relevant	Identify sustainable practices & tools for accounting transparency
Time-Bound	Fiscal year 2026 or 2027 by February 2028

TABLE 1 – FINANCE SMART GOALS

Constraint Considerations - Finance

The anticipated cost for an audit is $12,000 to $30,000. The Request for Proposal (RFP) will outline the requirements and qualifications necessary. Cost is included in 2027 Fiscal Budget. Use of some start-up funds may be considered as financial norms are established.

Steps and Anticipated Timeline - Finance

Quarter and Fiscal Year X= Complete O=Substantial Work	**Q4-2026**	**Q1-2027**	**Q2-2027**	**Q3-2027**	**Q4-2027**	**Q1-2028**	**Q2-2028**	**Ongoing**
Current Internal Controls Docs	X							
Reconciliation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
GAAP Review	O	X						
Quickbooks Transition Fixes	O	O	X					
RFP for Accountant		O	O	X				
Docs to Accountant				O	X			
Audit						X		
Implement Audit Improvements							X	

TABLE 2 – FINANCE SUBTASK TIMELINE AND ESTIMATED COMPLETION BY FISCAL YEAR QUARTER. Q4-2026 BEGINS IN JULY 2026 AND Q1-2028 BEGINS IN OCTOBER 2027.

Permitting

FRWMB accepts applications for allowances and processes state and Tribal registrations. Currently, FRWMB has approximately 3,000 state registrations and 1,500 Tribal registrations.

Permitting SMART GOALS	
Specific	Process all Tribal and state registrations, accurately
Measurable	Processing rate/month/person
Achievable	Scalable with turnover
Relevant	Key function of organization
Time-Bound	Quarterly update on progress

TABLE 3 – PERMITTING SMART GOALS

Constraint Considerations - Permitting

Staffing and staffing turnover are the primary constraints for processing applications and registrations. Having time-bound goals associated with the number of applications/registrations per person per month is an appropriate goal as this will also aid in identifying staff time allocations and levels. Anticipated timelines associated with current staffing levels will be included in reports to the Board and partners. Processing may also be limited by OE staff capability to enter information into the State of Montana Water Rights Information System (WRIS).

Steps and Anticipated Timeline - Permitting

Quarter and Fiscal Year X= Complete O=Substantial Work	**Q4-2026**	**Q1-2027**	**Q2-2027**	**Q3-2027**	**Q4-2027**	**Q1-2028**	**Q2-2028**	**Ongoing**
Establish Tracking Mechanism	X							
Identify Baseline for Types	O	X						
Process and Track								X
Identify Efficiencies								X
Bring Learning to Staff Meeting								X
Set Deadlines for Registrations			O	X				
Update Subtask with Deadlines				O	X			

TABLE 4 – PERMITTING SUBTASK TIMELINE AND ESTIMATED COMPLETION BY FISCAL YEAR QUARTER. Q3-2026 BEGINS IN JULY 2026 AND Q1-2028 BEGINS IN OCTOBER 2027.

Policy

FRWMB is a government instrumentality created through the authority of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the State of Montana and the United States of America. While much of the focus and work of FRWMB is outlined via the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes-Montana Compact (Compact) and Unitary Administration and Management Ordinance (UAMO), many policies still need to be developed. Policy development continues to arise as more areas of the Compact and UAMO are implemented. Policy documents are important to provide transparency to the public and partners on how different aspects of the Compact and UAMO will be implemented. Documentation also supports staff in outlining clearly defined processes. Policy can also address issues or clarify any change in interpretation.

Policy SMART GOALS	
Specific	Provide user-based documents
Measurable	Develop/update policy quarterly
Achievable	Identify priorities each quarter with workgroup
Relevant	Drives forms, workload
Time-Bound	Quarterly goals remain nimble

TABLE 5 – POLICY SMART GOALS

Constraint Considerations – Policy

Policy development is stronger when partners are able to fully and thoughtfully participate. One of the primary constraints in policy development is in coordinating with partners and providing sufficient time for partner review. Many policies will also have to go to the Board and will therefore have to meet public notice requirements prior to meetings.

Steps and Anticipated Timeline - Policy

Quarter and Fiscal Year X= Complete O=Substantial Work	**Q4-2026**	**Q1-2027**	**Q2-2027**	**Q3-2027**	**Q4-2027**	**Q1-2028**	**Q2-2028**	**Ongoing**
Review current documents for user-based focus or executive summary	X							
Schedule Regular Quarterly Meetings	O	X						
Identify list of priorities	O	O	X					X
Report Quarterly to Board								X

TABLE 6 – POLICY SUBTASK TIMELINE AND ESTIMATED COMPLETION BY FISCAL YEAR QUARTER. Q3-2026 BEGINS IN JULY 2026 AND Q1-2028 BEGINS IN OCTOBER 2027.

Outreach

With many entities working in water rights, and on the Flathead Reservation, FRWMB would be well served to provide information to applicants and the public about how FRWMB fits into other permitting organizations and how applications to FRWMB fit into the larger water rights process.

Outreach Smart Goal 1

Outreach SMART GOAL 1	
Specific	Develop outreach letter/goal for each form
Measurable	Track by form
Achievable	Staff meeting topic
Relevant	Role of Office
Time-Bound	All forms when developed and backlog complete by Q3 2027

TABLE 7 – POLICY SMART GOALS

Constraint Considerations – Outreach 1

Processing applications and registrations are time limited upon receipt at the office. Outreach work is also important in achieving the FRWMB vision so the primary constraint will be carving out sufficient time.

Steps and Anticipated Timeline – Outreach 1

Quarter and Fiscal Year X= Complete O=Substantial Work	**Q4-2026**	**Q1-2027**	**Q2-2027**	**Q3-2027**	**Q4-2027**	**Q1-2028**	**Q2-2028**	**Ongoing**
Review current documents	X							
Create template for outreach form	O	X						
Complete outreach for each current form	O	O	O	O	X			X
Complete outreach form for each new form created								X

TABLE 8 – OUTREACH 1 SUBTASK TIMELINE AND ESTIMATED COMPLETION BY FISCAL YEAR QUARTER. Q3-2026 BEGINS IN JULY 2026 AND Q1-2028 BEGINS IN OCTOBER 2027.

Outreach Smart Goal 2

Outreach SMART GOAL 2	
Specific	Develop outreach to specific groups
Measurable	Track outreach mailings, calls
Achievable	Included in individual workplans
Relevant	Proactive approach
Time-Bound	Each year, reach a new group

TABLE 9 – OUTREACH SMART GOAL 2

Constraint Considerations – Outreach 2

Processing applications and registrations are time limited upon receipt at the office. Outreach work is also important toward achieving the FRWMB vision so the primary constraint will be carving out sufficient time.

Steps and Anticipated Timeline – Outreach 2

Quarter and Fiscal Year X= Complete O=Substantial Work	**Q4-2026**	**Q1-2027**	**Q2-2027**	**Q3-2027**	**Q4-2027**	**Q1-2028**	**Q2-2028**	**Ongoing**
Letter to Well Drillers	X							
Letter to GWIC Wells without WR	O	X						
Realtors	O	O	X					
Meetings in different communities			O	O	X			
Public coming into office								X

TABLE 10 – OUTREACH 2 SUBTASK TIMELINE AND ESTIMATED COMPLETION BY FISCAL YEAR QUARTER. Q3-2026 BEGINS IN JULY 2026 AND Q1-2028 BEGINS IN OCTOBER 2027.

Long-Term Continuity

Small entities must be intentional to ensure continuity across time and staff. Thoughtful planning for ongoing operations beyond current staff are vital to the stability of an organization. OE has made solid headway in establishing operational functionality. Three key goals will further this effort into the future: Development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Creation of a Database, and Office Space Assessment. Each of these is outlined below with SMART Goals, Constraints, and Subtask Timelines.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Long-Term Continuity SMART GOAL SOP	
Specific	SOPs developed for all office activities
Measurable	Forms, processes
Achievable	One staff member is point person
Relevant	Serves continuity of operations
Time-Bound	Q3 2027

TABLE 11 – LONG-TERM CONTINUITY SMART GOAL SOPS

Constraint Considerations – Long-Term Continuity SOPs

Processing applications and registrations are time limited upon receipt at the office. SOP development is also important toward achieving the FRWMB vision so the primary constraint will be carving out sufficient time.

Steps and Anticipated Timeline – Long-Term Continuity SOPs

Quarter and Fiscal Year X= Complete O=Substantial Work	**Q4-2026**	**Q1-2027**	**Q2-2027**	**Q3-2027**	**Q4-2027**	**Q1-2028**	**Q2-2028**	**Ongoing**
Finalize Template	X							
Complete 6 Standard Forms	O	X						
Complete Half of Standard Office Tasks	O	O	O	X				
Be up to date on SOPs for Office	O	O	O	O	X			
Refine SOPs, create new for new								X

TABLE 12 – LONG-TERM CONTINUITY SOPS SUBTASK TIMELINE AND ESTIMATED COMPLETION BY FISCAL YEAR QUARTER. Q3-2026 BEGINS IN JULY 2026 AND Q1-2028 BEGINS IN OCTOBER 2027.

Geodatabase

Long-Term Continuity SMART GOAL Geodatabase	
Specific	Create a Geodatabase or Dashboard
Measurable	Weigh different options, develop
Achievable	Outsource setup, identify maintenance
Relevant	All non WRIS info
Time-Bound	Q4 2028

TABLE 13 – LONG-TERM CONTINUITY GEODATABASE SMART GOALS

Constraint Considerations – Long-Term Continuity Geodatabase

The largest constraint will be weighing the balance between functionality, cost, and need. Limiting ongoing maintenance is a priority. The RFP for services will outline needs, options, and ongoing costs.

Steps and Anticipated Timeline – Long-Term Continuity Geodatabase

Quarter and Fiscal Year X= Complete O=Substantial Work	Q4-2026	Q1-2027	Q2-2027	Q3-2027	Q4-2027	Q1-2028	Q2-2028	Ongoing
Identify Geodatabase Needs	X							
Evaluate Options		X						
Identify Contractor with RFP			X					
Build/Test				X				
Input Data/Troubleshoot					X			
Develop SOP for Geoatabase						X		

TABLE 14 – LONG-TERM CONTINUITY GEODATABASE SUBTASK TIMELINE AND ESTIMATED COMPLETION BY FISCAL YEAR QUARTER. Q3-2026 BEGINS IN JULY 2026 AND Q1-2028 BEGINS IN OCTOBER 2027.

Building

Long-Term Continuity SMART GOAL Building	
Specific	Analyze long term needs
Measurable	Work with partners on options
Achievable	Identify budget
Relevant	Firesafe storage needs, public access
Time-Bound	May 2028

TABLE 13 – LONG-TERM CONTINUITY BUILDING SMART GOALS

Constraint Considerations – Long-Term Continuity Building

Identifying the appropriate building needs is important to ensuring that file storage, public access, office space and meeting space accommodate FRWMB needs. Cost and available rental or purchase options are constraints.

Steps and Anticipated Timeline – Long-Term Continuity Building

Quarter and Fiscal Year X= Complete O=Substantial Work	**Q4-2026**	**Q1-2027**	**Q2-2027**	**Q3-2027**	**Q4-2027**	**Q1-2028**	**Q2-2028**	**Ongoing**
Identify funding mechanisms	X							
Identify building options	O	X						
Determine repairs/construction		O	X					
Put together plan for Board review				X				

Table 14 – Long-Term Continuity Building subtask timeline and estimated completion by fiscal year quarter. Q3-2026 begins in July 2026 and Q1-2028 begins in October 2027.