



Office of the Water Engineer

Job Description: Hydrogeologist

Position Title	Hydrogeologist
Date Effective	2025-03-13
Job Level(s) Being Hired	Level II (experienced), Level III (senior)
Immediate Supervisor	Water Engineer
Position Type	Full-time (40 hours)
Supervision	may be assigned supervisory responsibilities
Classification	Exempt from FLSA
Schedule	Flex Schedule based on either five eight-hour shifts or four ten-hour shifts as determined by the immediate supervisor.
Duty Station	Office of the Water Engineer Primary: Ronan, Montana Some Remote Work Possible
Benefits	Defined by OE Personnel Policy
Pay	\$45.00 to \$57.69/Hour
Requirements	Must be able and authorized to work in the United States
	Must hold a valid driver's license
	Must pass a background check

Who We Are:

The Office of the Water Engineer (OE) is a group of resource professionals coalesced around the mission of providing consistent, fair, and informed water administration and enforcement to citizens living on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Our office is unique; we are not a Tribal, State, or Federal Office and are a standalone entity created by the Water Compact as authorized by Tribal, State, and Federal laws. We operate under the direction of the Flathead Reservation Water Management Board (FRWMB or Board). OE staff must be self-reliant, self-supporting, capable of independent completion of complex tasks, and prepared to make quality decisions that stand up to the rigor of review. As a team, we rely on each other to manage workload, public services, safety, and we maintain a healthy and fulfilling work-life-balance while getting things done. The OE needs people that enjoy solving unique problems, produce quality work, thrive on technical and logistical challenges, complete the job, and cultivate comradery and joy in the workplace. We are public

servants to an amazing community in need of help with their water management issues and we take pride in providing quality services.

OE Job Descriptions are generalized for recruitment purposes; successful candidates will receive a more detailed “position description” that is specific to their individual assignments, skillsets, pay rate, work schedule, and other position elements.

Position Overview:

The Hydrogeologist 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 Hydrogeologist 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 Hydrogeologist serves as a trusted expert for the public trust and is expected to provide thoughtful, informed, and accurate information and recommendations. The Hydrogeologist routinely writes complex technical documents, directly interacts with the public and partners, analyses and presents technical information, reviews and improves OE water right applications, and thinks on their feet to solve a 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 USE ANALYSIS AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ORDINANCE 55%

1. Implements the Ordinance, analyzes and makes recommendations regarding the use, availability, and management of water resources.
2. Processes water right applications, especially those with complex aspects, under the Ordinance and evaluates the accuracy and extent of the applicants request and for claimed and authorized water uses – **trains OE

staff to do this work.

3. Prepares advanced water use maps using Geographic Information System (GIS) and other mapping technology;
4. Prepares scientific reports, technical reports, memorandums, and letters tailored to specific situations reflecting analysis of water use;
5. Creates methods used to evaluate proposed and existing water uses;
6. Reviews and researches scientific literature, 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 – **trains OE staff to do this work;
7. Participates in water right database administration and development.
8. Consults with the Water Engineer, staff legal counsel, water right specialists, and other resource professionals to gain information needed to resolve technical and legal issues relating to proposed and existing water uses;
9. Provides ** and helps develop ** 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 - **trains OE staff to do this work;
11. Provides OE reports and written products and technical review.
12. Provides expert hydrology and hydrogeology reports and publications that are appropriate for professional and scientific publication in peer-reviewed journals and similar government venues;
13. Provides expert hydrology and hydrogeology reports that may be used for litigation and advanced water use assessments;
14. Provides independent and autonomous supervision of OE employees as assigned by the Water Engineer;
15. Provides significant policy and technical product work toward the implementation of the Compact;
16. Provides advanced and professional review and assessment of groundwater management area, other instream flow, new appropriation, change in use application, and other types of advanced water right applications; and
17. Provides autonomous and sometimes longer duration services as the acting OE manager as directed by the Water Engineer.

B. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, COMPLAINTS, AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION 15%

1. Routinely 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 advance 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 Hydrogeologist 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 Hydrogeologist.
 5. Directly supports OE water use complaints and enforcement actions;
 6. Directly supports OE appeals and hearings actions including providing expert testimony, acting as a hearings examiner, administering meetings, and serving in all functions of the process;
 7. Provides substantive, original, and creative contributions toward modernized water solutions designed to implement the Compact, promote water conservation, and reduce water user conflicts;
 8. Provides expert court testimony as needed; and
 9. Resolves complex water user problems including assistance in the design of infrastructure, advanced water measuring schemes, and cutting edge technologies that can be deployed to track and assess water uses as pertaining to compliance with the Ordinance.

C. Hydrological Investigations

15%

This position designs, conducts, and manages hydrological investigations to ensure that accurate and appropriate information is available to support the resolution of water resource management issues identified by local water users, or local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies. Typical investigations revolve around questions of basin water supply (physical availability), implementation of the CSKT-MT Water Compact, irrigation efficiency, drought and flood risks, stream dewatering, instream flow needs, and the distribution of water by court decree. Hydrological investigations are conducted in consultation with the Water Engineer and interested stakeholders that may include water users, watershed groups, Tribal agencies, elected officials and government agency personnel. This position also works closely with other Tribal, State and Federal agencies in collaborative partnerships. The position communicates complex information through fact sheets, written reports, oral presentations, and web-based applications.

D. OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED

15%

1. Provides direct assistance to the Water Engineer regarding operations budget, purchasing, contract management, and other administrative activities;
2. 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;
3. Representing the Board to local groups and communities; and reviewing and commenting on administrative and technical policies and procedures;
4. Completes administrative functions including providing input on OE annual work plans, and other related duties as assigned; and
5. Provides substantive contribution to the design, implementation, building, and acquisition of OE fundamental infrastructure elements.

Direction Received:

The incumbent 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.

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 direction, offering clarification and advice to applicants. 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.

Minimum Qualifications (Education and Experience):

A master’s degree in a field related to Hydrology, Earth Science, Geology, Civil Engineering, Agricultural Engineering, or Water Resources, with an emphasis in groundwater resources and water management is required.

A Hydrogeologist Level II requires a minimum of two years of pertinent, professional, progressively responsible experience in hydrologic investigations, project management, hydrologic measurements, advanced hydrologic modeling, implementation of water rights policy/law, working with diverse stakeholder groups, and public speaking. Level III requires a minimum of four years of experience.

The required knowledge and skills are typically acquired through a combination of education and experience equivalent to a bachelor's degree in natural resource management or natural sciences, plus a minimum of two to four years of experience with water resources.

Coursework in water resources with an emphasis in groundwater, physical or natural sciences, engineering, public speaking, and writing is desirable.

Alternate combinations of education and experience may also be considered at the discretion of the Water Engineer.

Competencies or Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge: The work requires extensive knowledge of aquifer systems, 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. Knowledge includes:

- 1) Principles, theories, and methods of hydrology, hydrogeology, geology, geomorphology, integrated remote sensing, meteorology, geospatial analysis, and groundwater and/or surface water modeling;
- 2) Extensive knowledge of water use and water conservation methods;
- 3) Practical understanding of a multitude of topics, including State and Federal water policies and the implications of water policy decisions;
- 4) Hydrologic field methodologies and use of appropriate instrumentation for water measurement;
- 5) Methods for conducting hydrologic investigations, including techniques and methods for analyzing data, developing hydrologic models, and reporting findings;
- 6) Irrigation system design and practices common to Montana including sprinkler and flood irrigation systems;
- 7) Spatial information development, data management and visualization, GIS software (ArcGIS), spatial data analysis and mapping principles;

- 8) Mathematics, statistics, (especially statistical inference, regression, and probability), and computer methods in hydrologic analysis;
- 9) Water Law and use in Montana, water allocation, interstate and international river basin issues and compacts, water rights, Indian and non-Indian federal reserved water rights.

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 and manipulating data in a computer database environment. Skills include:

- 1) Adaptability and skills in trouble shooting and problem solving;
- 2) Strong writing and public speaking skills necessary to effectively convey complex concepts;
- 3) Effective working relationships with landowners on issues and projects that are sometimes contentious;
- 4) Ability to clearly and accurately express position(s) of the agency while maintaining cooperative working relationships among participants;
- 5) Hydrologic data collection, organization, and interpretation, and analysis using quantitative techniques including models;
- 6) Stream gage installation, collecting stream discharge measurements, and building stage-discharge rating curves;
- 7) Use of computers for hydrologic, mathematical, GIS, mapping, and graphical analyses, and various electronic instruments for measuring water quantity;
- 8) Project management, preparation of funding proposals, contractor oversight and contract management;
- 9) Mentoring, motivating, leading and encouraging other team members; and
- 10) Use of hand and power tools.

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. Abilities include:

- 1) Ability to synthesize technical information on a wide range of water resource topics.
- 2) Communicates objectively when providing information, advice, and guidance to technical and non-technical individuals and groups on complex and controversial issues.
- 3) Initiative and motivation to act independently and take responsibility for evaluating and responding to challenging situations, problems, and opportunities.
- 4) Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with subordinates, supervisors, staff, the Board, DNRC, local, state, and federal agencies, elected officials, special interest groups, and the public.
- 5) Models high standards of honesty, integrity, trust, and openness. Knows and follows through with the correct standards of conduct and moral judgment. Communicates and demonstrates actions in a consistent manner. Respects others, regardless of individual capabilities, agendas, opinions or needs.
- 6) 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 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 Hydrogeologist must be able to work outdoors during bad weather. The Hydrogeologist must rely on experience and judgement as to what safety precautions are prudent. The Hydrogeologist 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.

Possible Pay Boost for Specific Skillsets, Experience, and Education:

- Designee Assignments;
- Primary or Secondary Supervisory Assignments;
- Database Expertise; and
- Computer IT management and services including MS365 Domains, Website content management and editing, networks, and PC app installations/removals, PC and network security.

To Apply:

Submit a letter of interest, resume, college transcripts, and three references in .pdf format to contact@frwmb.gov Resumes should clarify if you are eligible to work in the United States and should also contain start and end dates (including the month and year), hours worked per week, level of experience and examples for each work experience and accomplishment that proves you can perform the tasks at the level required for the position as stated in this position description. Your experience needs to address every required qualification and/or pay boost skill sets for which you have experience or education.

You may be asked to provide certified college transcripts, examples of your writing skills, proof of a valid driver's license and your most recent supervisor's contact information and permission for the OE to call for a reference.

Successful applicants will need to pass a background check and show proof of a valid drivers license.

Priority screening begins **April 04, 2025; Position open until filled.**

The **Office of the Water Engineer and the Flathead Reservation Water Management Board** are Equal Opportunity Employer and do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, non-disqualifying physical or mental disability, national origin, veteran status or any other basis covered by appropriate law. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, merit, and business need.