

**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP -or- Program)****2025 Q1 Finance Committee (FC) Virtual Meeting** *(held online via Teams)*

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

PRRIP Finance Committee Meeting Attendees		
Name	Affiliation	Member or Alternate
Department of the Interior		
Brock Merrill	Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) – 2025 FC Chair	Member
Mark Porath	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	
Matt Rabbe	UWFWS	Member
State of Wyoming		
Jason Mead	Wyoming Water Development Office (WWDO)	Member
State of Colorado		
Emily Zmak	Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)	Member
State of Nebraska		
Jesse Bradley	Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	Member
Upper Platte Water Users		
n/a		
Colorado Water Users		
n/a		
Downstream Water Users		
Devin Brundage	Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District (CNPPID)	Member
Environmental Entities		
Rich Walters	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Member
Ele Nugent	Ducks Unlimited (DU)	Alternate
Executive Director's Office (EDO)		
Jason Farnsworth	Executive Director	
Chadwin Smith, Ph.D.	Science Policy Coordinator	
Malinda Henry	Science Plan Coordinator	
Tim Tunnell	Land Plan Coordinator	
Other Participants		
n/a		



WELCOME & ADMINISTRATIVE

Introductions – Merrill called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM Central Time. The Teams participant list will be used to record meeting attendees.

Agenda – None offered.

Minutes:

FC MOTION: *Brundage moved and Mead seconded to approve the January 2025 PRRIP FC Virtual Meeting minutes. Motion carried.*

FC BUDGET ACTION ITEMS

Smith summarized the FY25 PRRIP Procurement Table and the discussion item for today.

PRRIP Tract 2021001 Structure Removal

Tunnell summarized the RFB for the removal of structures at Tract 2021001, no expenditure for this project (Program paid for structure). The plan is to have this ready to hit the street once Merrill has official approval. Mead asked about whether bidders have to bid for every structure or individual items and how we will decide between bids. Tunnell said the RFB will be modified to just show individual items. Mead asked what if we get no bids. Tunnell said the next step would be to consider demolition. Mead asked if this is buffer property. Tunnell said there were early discussions about renting the structures or selling the property. The result of those discussions was to keep the property but get rid of the structures and not get into the rental business. Rabbe said the Land Plan spells out what complexes are to look like and since this is part of complex habitat the structures do not fit in wet meadows, buffer, etc. The idea was to remove the structures from the property. Rabbe said we might want to consider prioritizing someone taking it all so we don't end up needing to demo some pieces. Merrill agreed, we don't want a minimum bid, we just want to focus on getting everything taken care of at once. We should consider extending the length of time for bid submission (add another month or two). Farnsworth said we could make the bid time 90 days, it's likely there won't be any moving until fall 2026. Merrill asked about the advertising strategy. Tunnell said he talked to an auction service about advertising it in the Hall County area. RFB announcement will go in the Grand Island paper for local audience. It will also appear on the PRRIP website. Farnsworth said we can clean up the RFB based on this discussion and then move this to the GC for discussion in March.

Edits:

- Longer bid time (90 days)
- Remove option for removing all structures at once
- No minimum bid

FC MOTION: *Brundage moved and Rabbe seconded to approve the Tract 2021001 Structure Removal RFB, as revised by the FC today and contingent on Reclamation confirming resolution of the associated federal review process. Motion carried.*

**PRRIP Grassland Vegetation Monitoring**

Tunnell summarized the RFP for Program vegetation monitoring in 2025. This is monitoring the Program does every three years and we use this same RFP process each time. Mead asked about a reference and whether it is like NRCS ecological site descriptions (reference is on Page 5 under Objectives). Mead is asking about what happens if contractor sees unexpected vegetation (like invasive species) will they recommend actions for management. Tunnell said yes, this has been done in the past. Merrill asked about line 73, and should it reference 2025 instead of 2022? Rabbe agreed and said do a search of dates to make sure they are all 2025.

FC MOTION: Mead moved and Rabbe seconded to approve the 2025 PRRIP Grassland Vegetation Monitoring RFP. **Motion carried.**

The FC agreed to allow the EDO to put this RFP on the street now.

FC MEETING REVIEW & WRAP-UP**USDA Contracting**

Henry summarized contracting issues with USDA-APHIS for predator trapping at PRRIP nesting sites during tern/plover monitoring season. Merrill asked about the efficacy of USDA-APHIS versus another commercial trapper in Nebraska. Henry said the primary issue has been USDA has the required permits, but the former USDA trapper that is now available does already have that permit in hand for 2025. Mead said he thinks it make sense to go forward with the sole-source commercial trapper, but we could also consider not trapping at all. Farnsworth said we need to do trapping based on requirements of the Biological Opinion (BO). We (the EDO) can develop a sole-source memo and draft service agreement, we could get that out to the GC for approval fairly quickly. Zmak said she agrees with Mead and we need to go forward with the one-year contracting option, we just don't think all of the federal government uncertainty will be resolved in time to stick with the USDA-APHIS at least for this year. Rabbe said it is possible the BO has language that needs to be investigated so we are all clear before going forward.

The FC supports the EDO moving ahead with developing a sole-source memo and draft agreement for independent trapping in 2025.

Federal Government Shutdown

General discussion of the potential for a federal government shutdown on March 14. The Signatories will work to get language in front of the GC before that time to approve expending state funds only until the shutdown ends, at which time there will be a catch-up of federal funds. Also, travel may be restricted even if the shutdown does not occur so that may affect in-person attendance at the March GC meeting.

Action Items & Meeting Feedback – None.**2025 FC Virtual Meetings** (all meetings will be in Teams from 10:00-11:00 AM Central Time):

- Tuesday, May 27, 2025
- Tuesday, August 26, 2025
- Tuesday, November 4, 2025



FC MEETING END

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM Central Time.

Summary of Action Items/Decisions from the 2025 Q1 FC Virtual Meeting:

- 1) Approved the January 2025 FC virtual meeting minutes.
- 2) Approved the Tract 2021001 Structure Removal RFB, as revised by the FC today and contingent on Reclamation confirming resolution of the associated federal review process.
- 3) Approved the 2025 PRRIP Grassland Vegetation Monitoring RFP and agreed to allow the EDO to put the RFP on the street now.

**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP -or- Program)****2025 Q1 Finance Committee (FC) Virtual Meeting** *(held online via Teams)*

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

PRRIP Finance Committee Meeting Attendees		
Name	Affiliation	Member or Alternate
Department of the Interior		
Brock Merrill	Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) – 2025 FC Chair	Member
Matt Rabbe	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (UFWFS)	Member
State of Wyoming		
Jason Mead	Wyoming Water Development Office (WWDO)	Member
David Ray	WWDO	Alternate
State of Colorado		
Emily Zmak	Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)	Member
State of Nebraska		
Jesse Bradley	Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	Member
Upper Platte Water Users		
n/a		
Colorado Water Users		
n/a		
Downstream Water Users		
Devin Brundage	Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District (CNPPID)	Member
Environmental Entities		
Rich Walters	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Member
Executive Director's Office (EDO)		
Jason Farnsworth	Executive Director	
Chadwin Smith, Ph.D.	Science Policy Coordinator	
Malinda Henry	Science Plan Coordinator	
Seth Turner	Water Plan Coordinator	
Justin Brei	Water Resources & Engineering Manager	
Other Participants		
n/a		

**WELCOME & ADMINISTRATIVE**

Introductions – Merrill called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM Central Time. The Teams participant list will be used to record meeting attendees.

Agenda – None offered.

2025 FC Chair:

FC MOTION: *Zmak moved and Rabbe seconded to appoint Merrill as 2025 FC Chair.* **Motion carried.**

Minutes:

FC MOTION: *Ray moved and Walters seconded to approve the 2024 Q4 FC Virtual Meeting minutes.* **Motion carried.**

FC BUDGET ACTION ITEMS

Smith summarized the FY25 PRRIP Procurement Table and the discussion item for today (PRRIP Public Outreach).

PRRIP Website & Database

Brei summarized the 2025 scope and budget for DJ Case to provide Program website and database services. Zmak asked about a feature that DJ Case is exploring to add to the website to facilitate electronic voting that sometimes occurs with the Governance Committee (GC). Farnsworth said DJ Case is exploring their own programming options that could be integrated within the PRRIP website to facilitate better GC communication, voting, and information sharing as opposed to just using email. They are also exploring a public-facing website design refresh since our current website is about 6-7 years old. Rabbe asked if editing/commenting on documents will be part of the online interface. Farnsworth said he is not 100% sure how that might work and that may be one of the last items that will be addressed once the other items are ironed out.

FC MOTION: *Ray moved and Rabbe seconded to approve the 2025 PRRIP Website & Database Contract Amendment.* **Motion carried.**

PRRIP Expanded Recapture Reconnaissance Study (now Elwood Outlet Feasibility Study)

Turner summarized the 1-year Contract Amendment for LRE Water to continue work on the Elwood Outlet Feasibility Study. Zmak asked if the GC voted on continuing design work on the Elwood outlet. Turner said he doesn't recall a specific vote, this continued work is based on discussion with the GC in September and the guidance was to continue looking into the design of the Elwood outlet. Merrill asked the results of this will be queued up for the September 2025 GC meeting. Turner said yes, Merrill said that is good timing for the GC to look at this and how things are in flux with the Water Plan.

FC MOTION: *Rabbe moved and Zmak seconded to approve the 2025 PRRIP Elwood Outlet Feasibility Study Contract Amendment.* **Motion carried.**

**PRRIP Trapping Projects**

Henry summarized the 2025 scope and budget for USDA-APHIS predator trapping at PRRIP properties. Mead asked if we are getting our money's worth for what USDA charges versus what they actually do (especially as it relates to pooled costs). Henry said their overhead time is comparable to what we see being charged for other contractors like UNL and SIU on the pallid sturgeon projects. Mead asked how we pay out the pooled costs. Henry said we typically don't hit the topline budget, not sure how that annual amount breaks down in terms of what is paid for pooled job costs. Merrill said overhead costs were similar to Federal overhead, for example Bureau overhead is usually between 16-18%. Pooled costs were somewhere around 30% when USGS was doing the monitoring, so APHIS charging 11% is lower compared to that.

FC MOTION: *Walters moved and Bradley seconded to approve the 2025 PRRIP Trapping Projects Contract Amendment.* **Motion carried.**

FC MEETING REVIEW & WRAP-UP

Action Items & Meeting Feedback – None.

2025 FC Virtual Meetings (all meetings will be in Teams from 10:00-11:00 AM Central Time):

- Tuesday, February 25, 2025
- Tuesday, May 27, 2025
- Tuesday, August 26, 2025
- Tuesday, November 4, 2025

FC MEETING END

Meeting adjourned at 10:31 AM Central Time.

Summary of Action Items/Decisions from the 2025 Q1 FC Virtual Meeting:

- 1) Appointed Brock Merrill 2025 FC Chair.
- 2) Approved the 2024 Q4 FC virtual meeting minutes.
- 3) Approved the 2025 PRRIP Website & Database Contract Amendment.
- 4) Approved the 2025 PRRIP Elwood Outlet Feasibility Contract Amendment.
- 5) Approved the 2025 PRRIP Trapping Projects Contract Amendment.