



## PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP -OR- PROGRAM)

**TO:** Governance Committee  
**FROM:** Jason Farnsworth, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Director's Report  
**DATE:** March 14, 2025

This report provides a high-level summary of current Program activities and priorities with a focus on items of relevance to the GC.<sup>1</sup>

### Organizational Update

- The Program's website contractor (DJ Case) will initiate the public website and intranet update in Q2.

### Budget and Procurement Update

- 2024 Annual expenditure summary attached.
- 2025 Q1 (interim, does not include March data) budget summary attached.
- Astralis United selected to assist the Program in updating our education and outreach strategy.
- Contracts finalized so far in 2025 – EDO Special Advisor (groundwater modeling), Expanded Recapture Reconnaissance Study Amendment, Lower Platte River Modeling Amendment, Whooping Crane Monitoring (three contractors), Predator Trapping.

### Land Plan Implementation

- Review/ approval of the 2024 Land Work Report and Request for Bids for the structure removal at the Meyer Estate (2021001).

### Water Plan Implementation

- EA volume is estimated to be about 136,000 AF including contributions from Lake McConaughy storable natural inflows (SNI) between October and mid-March. The EA release for germination suppression is expected to begin around May 24.
- LRE Water has begun work on the 30% design of a pipeline outlet to Plum Creek.
- The EDO continues to work through a list of necessary maintenance activities at the Cottonwood Ranch recharge project and is coordinating with CNPPID on the transition of operational responsibilities. Testing of cavitation in the pipeline outlet control valves is tentatively scheduled for late May.
- Enrollment in the CNPPID irrigator lease for 2025 totaled **1,129 acres** at \$160/acre, an increase of 76 acres over the enrollment in 2024. This will result in 847 AF credited to the Lake McConaughy EA in October.
- Following review by the TAC and WAC in February, the EDO started a process of removing instruments from more than 50 monitoring wells that are no longer actively used. Some of these wells will be formally removed and decommissioned.

<sup>1</sup> GC-Governance Committee, ED-Executive Director, EDO-Executive Director's Office, LAC-Land Advisory Committee, WAC-Water Advisory Committee, TAC-Technical Advisory Committee, ISAC-Independent Science Advisory Committee, FC-Finance Committee, AHR-Associated Habitat Reach.



### **Science Plan Implementation**

- EDO developing an updated System-Scale Geomorphology and Vegetation Monitoring Report including data from 2017-2023. Metrics reported will be utilized to help assess channel conditions in response to June germination suppression flow releases.
- EDO working with TAC on data analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of June germination suppression flow releases on maintaining suitable whooping crane roosting habitat.
- EDO implementing a monitoring protocol for assessing J2 Return Channel changes in absence of sediment augmentation (no-aug experiment).
- EDO working with Stantec for reconnaissance-level investigation of passive alternatives to provide long term sustainable means of augmenting sediment.
- EDO working with TAC to perform data analysis to evaluate the relationship between flow and crane stopovers on the Platte as well as compare/contrast stopover behavior on the Platte and other Nebraska river systems.
- UNL gearing up for a final field season beginning in the spring of 2025. EDO working with UNL to revise data analysis methods and expand to include PRRIP prioritized explanatory variables. EDO working with hydraulic model contractor (HDR) to revise two-dimensional hydrodynamic model of the lower Platte to be used in hydraulic/habitat analyses over the next several years.
- EDO updated plover and tern monitoring protocol to reduce river surveys to once a month from May to August. EDO preparing for 2025 monitoring season, including continued predator management and monitoring to document predation on nesting sites.

### **Independent Science and Peer Review**

- The ISAC completed their work on the 2025 Q1 ISAC Discussion Question. That included a written report delivered to the GC in February and a virtual presentation to the GC, TAC, and EDO also in February. The ISAC will present their conclusions and recommendations again during the 2025 Q2 GC Meeting in Cheyenne, WY.
- Independent peer review of the PRRIP Wet Meadow Hydrology Study is ongoing. The EDO is working with an independent groundwater modeling expert (Dr. Calvin Miller) to finalize edits to the study related to comments from one peer reviewer regarding groundwater modeling. This issue was discussed with the TAC in January and the TAC agreed to have the EDO make final changes to the study and present the revised document and all related peer review materials to the GC for final approval. The EDO expects this discussion will occur during the 2025 Q2 or Q3 GC Meeting.