

**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP -or- Program)****Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting – Berthoud, CO**

Northern Water Campus

*Tuesday, December 5, 2023 & Wednesday, December 6, 2023*

Tom Riley, State of Nebraska – 2023 GC Chair

Jason Farnsworth, PRRIP Executive Director (ED) – Moderator

PRRIP Governance Committee (GC) Meeting Attendees Day #1 – Tuesday, December 5, 2023		
Name	Affiliation	Member or Alternate
<b>Department of the Interior</b>		
Brock Merrill	Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)	Member
Mark Porath	USFWS	Alternate
Matt Rabbe	USFWS	Alternate
<b>State of Wyoming</b>		
Jason Mead	Wyoming Water Development Office	Alternate
<b>State of Colorado</b>		
Amy Ostdiek	Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) (virtual)	Member
Emily Zmak	CWCB	Alternate
Kara Scheel	CWCB	Alternate
<b>State of Nebraska</b>		
Tom Riley	Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – 2023 Chair	Member
Jennifer Schellpeper	DNR	Alternate
<b>Upper Platte Water Users</b>		
Dennis Strauch	Pathfinder Irrigation District	Member
Bob Mehling	Goshen Irrigation District (virtual)	Alternate
Owen Williams	Upper Platte Water Users Association (virtual)	Alternate
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Kyle Whitaker	Northern Water	Member
Jason Marks	Denver Water	Alternate
Deb Freeman	Trout Raley	Alternate
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Kent Miller	Twin Platte Natural Resources District (TPNRD)	Member
John Shadle	Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD)	Member
Lyndon Vogt	Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD)	Member
<b>Environmental Entities</b>		
Rich Walters	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Member
Brice Krohn	The Crane Trust	Member
Melissa Mosier	Audubon Nebraska (virtual)	Member



Executive Director's Office (EDO)	
Jason Farnsworth, BCES	Executive Director
Chadwin Smith, Ph.D.	Science Policy Coordinator
Tim Tunnell, M.S.	Land Plan Coordinator (virtual)
Seth Turner, P.E.	Water Plan Coordinator
Malinda Henry, Ph.D.	Science Plan Coordinator
Justin Brei, P.E.	Engineering/Colorado Coordinator
Alicia Uribe, B.S.	Executive Office Manager (virtual)
Patrick Farrell, M.S.	Statistical Ecologist (virtual)
Jason Bruggeman, Ph.D.	Species Monitoring Coordinator (virtual)
Mallory Jaymes, M.S.	Wildlife Biologist (virtual)
Kristen Cognac, Ph.D.	Hydrogeologist (virtual)
Ed Weschler, E.I.T.	Junior Civil Engineer
Libby Casavant, P.E.	Hydraulic Engineer (virtual)
Other Participants	
Jennifer Hoeting, Ph.D.	Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC) (virtual)
Justin Levene	NE Attorney General's Office
Mike Drain	CNPPID
Caitlin Kingsley	Nebraska DNR
Ryan Kelly	Nebraska DNR
Rich Belt	SPWRAP
Cory Steinke	CNPPID (virtual)
Dave Zorn	CNPPID (virtual)
Jeff Shafer	NPPD
Jim Jenniges	NPPD
Andy Nicewicz	CO Attorney General's Office

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#1	<b>WELCOME &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Greetings, roll call, review agenda.
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9 **Introduction** – Chair Riley called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM Mountain Time. The in-person and  
10 virtual groups proceeded with introductions.

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12 **Agenda** – No modifications offered.

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14 **Minutes:**

15 **GC MOTION:** Brundage moved and Ostdiek seconded to approve the September 2023 GC Quarterly  
16 Meeting minutes. Minutes approved.

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18 **GC MOTION:** Merrill moved and Strauch seconded to approve the November 2023 GC Virtual Special  
19 Session minutes. Minutes approved.



#2	COMMITTEE UPDATES	Agenda Item Objective: General update on recent work of PRRIP Advisory Committees.
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**Land Advisory Committee (LAC)** – Wagner provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC last met on October 18. The LAC received an update on 2023 land management activities and plans for 2024; discussed the land restoration and management framework; discussion on re-classifying three of the Water Tracts; approved the 2024 Land Budget.

**Water Advisory Committee (WAC)** – Turner provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC last met on October 24. The WAC discussed the North Platte Chokepoint study; the Expanded Recapture Study; the 2024 EA AOP; recent operations at recapture projects (cumulative recapture for the year is 2,768 acre-feet and delivered 2,300 acre-feet to Cottonwood Ranch); and discussed the Wyoming Property flow split project.

**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** – Scheel provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC last met on October 10 with the ISAC. The TAC discussed the Wet Meadow Hydrology Report Peer Review panel; land management framework; update on whooping crane (WC) telemetry work; plan for tern/plover predator monitoring; a long discussion about sediment augmentation; and the FY24 science budget.

**Finance Committee (FC)** – Merrill provided an update on the latest FC activities. The FC last met on November 2. The FC discussed some items related to peer review; RFQ for tree removal; RFQ for demolition of the lodge at the Cook-Dyer Property.

#3	OUTREACH UPDATE	Agenda Item Objective: General update on PRRIP outreach activities.
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Uribe provided an update on the latest PRRIP outreach activities.

#### PRESENTATIONS:

- *Jonathan Wentz* (PRRIP EDO) represented the Program at the Leadership Kearney: Ag, Energy, and Environment Day on October 11th, 2023, at the Rowe Sanctuary. He provided participants with information on Program target species, land, and water management.
- *Jason Farnsworth* presented on structure and history of PRRIP to The Nature Conservancy staff meeting on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- *Ed Heist* (Southern Illinois University), *Mark Pegg* and *Jon Spurgeon* (University of Nebraska Lincoln) contributed information presented by *Aaron Deonay*<sup>1</sup> and *Kimberly Chojnacki*<sup>1</sup> at the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC), Lower Basin Fish – Fall Science Meeting, November 1st, 2023
- Progress Report: Telemetry Advances for Lower Missouri River Population Assessment, Effectiveness Monitoring, and Research and Updated Results (2023).
- *Ed Heist*, Southern Illinois University, presented a Progress Report on Genetic Analyses at the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC), Lower Basin Fish – Fall Science Meeting on November 1st, 2023.

#### EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS:

- *Seth Turner* and *Justin Brei* exhibited at the South Platte Forum in Greeley, CO on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**MEDIA COVERAGE/OTHER:**

n/a

**UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS:**

- *Jason Bruggeman* (PRRIP EDO) will be giving a presentation at the Nebraska Association of County Officials Conference on December 13 – 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 about the Phragmites research being conducted by the Program to monitor Phragmites response to June channel inundation and spring and fall herbicide application.
- *Chris Pullano*, Mark Pegg, Jonathan Spurgeon will be giving a presentation at the 84th Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Sioux Falls, SD on Jan 30th, 2024, entitled Between the Braids: Evaluation of Acoustic Telemetry Detection Range in the Lower Platte River, Nebraska.

Riley asked the GC to continue thinking about PRRIP outreach activities and asked for input to keep coming in related to this work.

<b>#4</b>	<b>PRRIP FY23 BUDGET</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> General update on current status of FY23 budget.
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Farnsworth provided a status update on the FY23 budget. All expenditures this year were Extension cash, we will likely flip back to spending First Increment cash for a few months in 2024.

<b>#5</b>	<b>PRRIP FY24 BUDGET</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Discuss/approve FY24 Budget, FY24 Work Plan, and 2024-2028 EDO Contract; discuss Procurement Policy reporting for the coming year and GC action items.
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**PRRIP FY24 Budget, Work Plan, & EDO Contract** – Farnsworth summarized the PRRIP FY24 budget and work plan, and the 2024-2028 PRRIP EDO Contract for Headwaters. The budget in front of the GC today is \$25,000 more than the version of the budget discussed with the GC in November. That is due to an increase of \$25,000 in the PRRIP outreach line item as per direction of the GC. All other line items are the same as discussed in November.

Riley asked about equipment, computers, and other items and how those will be dealt with going forward. Farnsworth said the Program will be charged mileage and basic expenses for vehicles and equipment which is more traditional. Computers and office equipment will be purchased and owned by Headwaters. Marks asked if there has always been multi-year contracts for the EDO. Farnsworth said initially contracts were year-to-year, but the first five-year contract started in 2019 (2019-2023).

**GC MOTION:** *Mead moved and Walters seconded to approve the PRRIP FY24 Budget & Work Plan.*  
Budget and Work Plan approved.

**GC MOTION:** *Shadle moved and Ostdiek seconded to approve the 2024-2028 PRRIP EDO Contract for Headwaters Corporation.* Contract approved.

**PRRIP FY24 Procurement** – Smith summarized projected FY24 budget items related to the PRRIP Procurement Policy.

**PD-8: Program Website and Database** – Brei summarized the 2024 contract for DJ Case to provide PRRIP website and database services. Riley asked how data is backed up. Brei said all website information is backed up in the cloud through Amazon Web Services. Species data and other Program data is kept on servers in Lakewood and Kearney that the EDO maintains on behalf of the Program.



**GC MOTION:** *Ostdiek moved and Merrill seconded to approve the 2024 DJ Case contract. Contract approved.*

<b>#6</b>	<b>PRRIP SCIENCE PLAN</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Discuss recent Science Plan implementation activities.
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**Whooping Crane (WC) Monitoring:**

Jaymes summarized highlight results of fall 2023 WC monitoring. The first observation was October 29. New stay length for a pair of birds at 37 days. 512 crane use days so far in fall 2023 (522 crane use days is the all-time record), and we observed longer stay lengths than usual. Marks asked about stay lengths – is that a good thing or a bad thing? Jaymes said it suggests they are getting what they need and stay because they have no reason to leave.

**GC MOTION:** *Vogt moved and Krohn seconded to approve the 2024 WC Monitoring RFB. RFP approved.*

**WC Telemetry Data Request:**

Henry summarized the status of securing additional WC telemetry data for use in Program analysis. Freeman asked why the Telemetry Tracking Partnership will not share the full set of data. Henry said the Partnership said to share the full dataset they will want to collaborate with the Program and they cannot do so because Pearse is an existing PRRIP ISAC member. Farnsworth said the main issue would be the conflict with collaborating with the Partnership with Aaron Pearse as an existing ISAC member. Vogt asked if we are paying for data that we cannot access. Farnsworth said we are not contributing money to this version of the telemetry work. Rabbe said the data is being housed in Canada now to protect it from FOIAs and other data requests that led to data being using incorrectly during the first collection of telemetry data. Rabbe said this is not unique to the Program. Krohn said the Crane Trust does not have access to more data than the Program will get. Henry said Pearse presented on a paper that has been submitted for publication related to the importance of rivers for WC stopovers during drought, so there is overlap between questions the Program wants to answer and research questions being evaluated by members of the Partnership.

Whitaker asked what an incorrect use of data is. Porath said that is a question that would have to be answered by the USGS. Rabbe said it looks like we will still be able to get a good amount of data that may help us answer our questions. Henry said that could be true, it will be dependent on seeing what we get in terms of data hits within the limited scale across which the Partnership is willing to grant access. Henry said it is important for the GC to understand that we will not be able to assess corridor-wide patterns or how the Platte might differ or what might be unique about the Platte. In addition, a smaller data set limits our ability to evaluate multiple factors in a single analysis to assess the relative importance of factors the Program can control compared to factors it cannot control. Freeman said we should think through what the options are. One would be don't rock the boat, get what you get and let it go, recognizing we may not answer Big Questions the GC has identified as important. Freeman said she is still fuzzy on options for data agreements that would give us access to more data without encumbering issues with data sharing, publication, how to protect that data, etc. Freeman expressed disappointment that we have an issue with Dr. Pearse. She did raise concerns about conflicts of interest when he was being considered for ISAC membership and said she should have been stronger in raising those concerns. Walters said he wonders about whether a group of TAC members and GC members should meet with the Partnership to see if we can explore options for greater access to the data.



Riley said we had a robust conversation about this issue when we went through the ISAC selection process. Porath said Pearse could have been involved in developing the research from the onset or in evaluating the integrity and relevance of the work after it is done. Porath said we would have the same conflict no matter how this plays out. Vogt said this decision about data shows a lack of respect for the GC and the Program.

Riley suggested the GC assemble a small group to go back to the Partnership to see if there is any way to get access to Tier 2 Nebraska sand bed rivers data. Vogt and Miller suggested the Signatories comprise that group, the GC generally agreed but also wanted to add additional TAC members with relevant expertise. Ostdiek wanted to again note that she has a hard time understanding why the Program cannot get access to all the data.

*WC Telemetry GC Discussion Group – Nebraska, Colorado (Freeman), Wyoming, USBR (Merrill), USFWS (Porath and Rabbe), Krohn (Crane Trust), Walters (TNC).*

#### **Extension Science Plan on PRRIP website:**

Discussion tabled until the March 2024 GC Quarterly Meeting.

#### ***Phragmites* RFP:**

Henry summarized the RFP for *Phragmites* research. Riley asked if the TAC has discussed this item. Henry said the idea of contracting out this research was part of the FY24 budget discussion. Riley asked what the TAC would discuss if the GC approved this. Henry said the scope of work. Porath and Rabbe said they would like to see things like this RFP go to the TAC first and then to the GC. Riley agreed. Henry said the data collection and analysis plan annexed to the RFP and forming the basis for the scope of work was discussed at the October joint TAC/ISAC meeting. The RFP was developed only after the GC gave their initial feedback on the FY24 budget in November. Farnsworth said we can send the Scope of Work for this RFP (including the data analysis plan) for TAC review and then come back to the GC for approval of the RFP and appointment of Proposal Selection Panel members. The GC agreed.

#### **Break – 4:10-4:25 PM**

<b>#7</b>	<b>PRRIP INDEPENDENT SCIENCE</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Discuss issues related to the Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC) and Peer Review.
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Smith summarized the Sediment Augmentation Data Synthesis Compilation and the process to get the document ready for peer review and to recommend candidates.

**GC MOTION:** *Merrill moved and Mead seconded to approve the Sediment Augmentation Data Synthesis Compilation for peer review and appoint the following members to the Sediment Augmentation Data Synthesis Compilation Peer Review Panel: James Brasington, Ph.D.; Mark Smith, Ph.D.; Richard Williams, Ph.D. Motion approved.*

<b>#8</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNT (EA)</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Discuss 2024 EA Annual Operation Plan (AOP).
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Rabbe discussed the FY24 EA AOP. Highest priority for releases in 2024 is germination suppression.



<b>#9</b>	<b>PRRIP WATER PLAN</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Update on recent Water Plan implementation activities.
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Turner provided a status update on the Water Milestone Summary, the North Platte Chokepoint Engineering Services Project, and the Expanded Recapture Reconnaissance Study.

<b>#10</b>	<b>PRRIP LAND PLAN</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Update on recent Land Plan implementation activities.
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Tunnell provided a status update on the Land Milestone Summary. Tunnell said we have RFQs ready for tree removal at Clark Island and structure demolition/removal at the Cook-Dyer Tract. Farnsworth summarized the three-year agreement with UFarm for PRRIP Farm Management Services including establishing a non-interest bearing farm account with UFarm to pay taxes, utilities, collect rent, etc. Riley asked if the GC or FC will need to approve the seed payment for taxes to the farm account. Farnsworth said that money is in the FY24 budget and the ED is authorized to pay those taxes through an expedited request process so that will not come before the FC or GC.

**GC MOTION:** Vogt moved and Whitaker seconded to approve the 2024-2026 UFarm contract for PRRIP Farm Management Services. Contract approved.

<b>#11</b>	<b>PUBLIC COMMENT</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Public comment period on PRRIP activities.
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Riley asked for public comment. None offered.

<b>#12</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SESSION</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> GC member discussion of sensitive land, water, and policy items.
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**GC MOTION:** Walters moved and Brundage approved to enter Executive Session. Motion approved, GC entered Executive Session at 4:58 PM Mountain Time. Motion approved.

**GC MOTION:** Krohn moved and Whitaker seconded to exit Executive Session. Motion approved, GC exited Executive Session at 5:18 PM Mountain Time. Motion approved.

<b>#13</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SESSION MOTIONS</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> GC consideration of motions discussed during Executive Session.
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**GC MOTION:** Miller moved and Marks seconded to authorize the EDO to negotiate a price for acquisition of Tract 2024001. Motion approved.

<b>#14</b>	<b>GC MEETING REVIEW &amp; WRAP-UP</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Discuss action items, meeting feedback, and upcoming meeting schedule.
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**2024 GC Chair and Vice Chair** – The GC named Drue DeBerry (USFWS) as 2024 GC Chair and Brandon Gebhart (Wyoming) as 2024 GC Vice Chair.

#### **2024 GC Meeting Schedule:**

- 1) **2024 PRRIP Science Plan Reporting Session:** February 20-22, 2024 @ Omaha, NE
- 2) **March 2024 GC Quarterly Meeting:** March 11-12, 2024 @ Kearney, NE
- 3) **June 2024 GC Quarterly Meeting:** June 11-12, 2024 @ Cheyenne, WY
- 4) **2024 Summer ISAC Meeting:** July 16-18, 2024 @ Kearney, NE
- 5) **September 2024 GC Quarterly Meeting:** September 10-11, 2024 @ Kearney, NE
- 6) **GC Virtual Special Session on FY2025 Budget & Work Plan:** Wednesday, November 13, 2024; 10:00 AM-12:00 PM Central Time *via Teams*
- 7) **December 2024 GC Quarterly Meeting:** December 3-4, 2024 @ Loveland, CO

Farnsworth distributed Christmas gifts to GC members from Headwaters.



**GC MEETING END****5:25 PM Mountain Time****Summary of Action Items/Decisions from December 2023 GC Quarterly Meeting:**

- 1) Approved the September 2023 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes.
- 2) Approved the November 2023 GC Special Session minutes.
- 3) Approved the PRRIP FY2024 Budget and Work Plan.
- 4) Approved the 2024-2028 PRRIP EDO Contract for Headwaters Corporation.
- 5) Approved the 2024 DJ Case contract for PRRIP website and database support.
- 6) Approved the 2024 WC Monitoring RFB.
- 7) Authorized peer review of the PRRIP Sediment Augmentation Data Synthesis Compilation and appointed the following members to the Sediment Augmentation Data Synthesis Compilation Peer Review Panel: James Brasington, Ph.D.; Mark Smith, Ph.D.; Richard Williams.
- 8) Approved the 2024-2026 UFarm contract for PRRIP farm management services.
- 9) Authorized the EDO to negotiate a price for acquisition of Tract 2024001.
- 10) Named Drue DeBerry (USFWS) as 2024 GC Chair and Brandon Gebhart (Wyoming) as 2024 GC Vice Chair.
- 11) Set the 2024 GC Meeting Schedule:
  - 2024 PRRIP Science Plan Reporting Session: February 20-22, 2024 @ Omaha, NE
  - March 2024 GC Quarterly Meeting: March 11-12, 2024 @ Kearney, NE
  - June 2024 GC Quarterly Meeting: June 11-12, 2024 @ Cheyenne, WY
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Dave Zorn	CNPPID (virtual)
Jeff Shafer	NPPD (virtual)
Jim Jenniges	NPPD (virtual)
Andy Nicewicz	CO Attorney General's Office (virtual)
Barry Lawrence	State of Wyoming (virtual)
Michael Krondak	NPPD (virtual)
Randy Zack	NPPD (virtual)
Michelle Hubbard	State of Wyoming (virtual)
Mike Archer	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (virtual)
Robert Sakata	(virtual)
Christopher Wright	USBR (virtual)
Abigail Boudewyns	(virtual)

<b>#15</b>	<b>WELCOME &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Greetings, roll call, review agenda.
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**Introduction** – Chair Riley called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM Mountain Time. The in-person and virtual groups proceeded with introductions.

**Agenda Modifications** – none offered.

**#16 PRRIP HISTORY/STRUCTURE/FUNCTION**

**Agenda Item Objective:** Public session with GC to discuss the history of the PRRIP, organizational structure and function, and implementation direction for the remainder of the Extension.

Farnsworth and Smith delivered a joint presentation to the GC on the history, structure, and context for the PRRIP. General GC discussion occurred during and after the presentation. The presentation and discussion were recorded in Teams and that recording is available as a public YouTube video here:

<https://youtu.be/rKrKu12gF4s>

This video will also be made publicly available on the PRRIP website.

**GC MEETING END****10:00 AM Mountain Time**