**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP -or- Program)**

**Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting – Kearney, NE**

Kearney Public Library

*Monday, September 18, 2023 & Tuesday, September 19, 2023*

Tom Riley, State of Nebraska – 2023 GC Chair

Jason Farnsworth, PRRIP Executive Director (ED) – Moderator

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PRRIP Governance Committee (GC) Meeting Attendees**  **Day #1 – Monday, September 18, 2023** | | |
| **Name** | **Affiliation** | **Member or Alternate** |
| **Department of the Interior** | | |
| Brock Merrill | Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) | Member |
| Chris Wright | Assistant Regional Director, Missouri Basin & Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas Gulf Regions (USBR) | Attendee |
| Drue DeBerry | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – *2023 Vice Chair* | Member |
| Mark Porath | USFWS | Alternate |
| **State of Wyoming** | | |
| Brandon Gebhart | Wyoming State Engineer | Member |
| Jason Mead | Wyoming Water Development Office | Alternate |
| **State of Colorado** | |  |
| Amy Ostdiek | Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) (virtual) | Member |
| Emily Zmak | CWCB | Alternate |
| Kara Scheel | CWCB | Alternate |
| **State of Nebraska** | | |
| Tom Riley | Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – *2023 Chair* | Member |
| Jennifer Schellpeper | DNR | Alternate |
| **Upper Platte Water Users** | | |
| Dennis Strauch | Pathfinder Irrigation District | Member |
| Bob Mehling | Goshen Irrigation District | Alternate |
| Owen Williams | Upper Platte Water Users Association | Alternate |
| **Colorado Water Users** | | |
| Kyle Whitaker | Northern Water | Member |
| Jason Marks | Denver Water | Alternate |
| Deb Freeman | Trout Raley (virtual) | Alternate |
| **Downstream Water Users** | | |
| Devin Brundage | Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District (CNPPID) | Member |
| Kent Miller | Twin Platte Natural Resources District (TPNRD) | Member |
| Jeff Shafer | Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) | Alternate |
| John Thorburn | Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD) | Alternate |
| **Environmental Entities** | | |
| Rich Walters | The Nature Conservancy (TNC) | Member |
| Brice Krohn | The Crane Trust | Member |
| Melissa Mosier | Audubon Nebraska | 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 | |
| Seth Turner, P.E. | Water Plan Coordinator | |
| Malinda Henry, Ph.D. | Science Plan Coordinator | |
| Justin Brei, P.E. | Engineering/Colorado Coordinator | |
| Jason Bruggeman, Ph.D. | Species Monitoring Coordinator | |
| Alicia Uribe | Executive Office Manager | |
| Patrick Farrell, M.S. | Statistical Ecologist (virtual) | |
| **Other Participants** | | |
| Jennifer Hoeting, Ph.D. | Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC) (virtual) | |
| Dave Marmorek | ISAC (virtual) | |
| Jesse Bradley | Nebraska DNR | |
| Justin Levene | Nebraska Attorney General’s Office | |
| Mike Drain | CNPPID | |
| Barry Lawrence | Wyoming Water Development Office (virtual) | |
| Andy Nicewicz | Colorado Attorney General’s Office (virtual) | |
| Caitlin Kingsley | Nebraska DNR | |
| Avery Dresser | Nebraska DNR | |
| Kari ? | Nebraska DNR | |
| NAME? | Nebraska DNR | |
| George Mosher | State of Wyoming (virtual) | |
| Michelle Hubbard | State of Wyoming (virtual) | |
| Michelle Martin | Anderson Consulting Engineers (virtual) | |
| Brian Murphy | River Works (virtual) | |
| Mike Archer | Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (virtual) | |
| Richard Belt | SPWRAP (virtual) | |
| Lalit Jha | JEO (virtual) | |
|  | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#1** | **WELCOME & ADMINISTRATIVE** | **Agenda Item Objective:** Greetings, roll call, review agenda. |

**Introduction** – Chair Riley called the meeting to order at 2:07 PM Central Time. The in-person and virtual groups proceeded with introductions. Merrill introduced Chris Wright as the new Assistant Regional Director, Missouri Basin & Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas Gulf Regions (USBR).

**Agenda** – No modifications offered.

**Minutes****:**

GC MOTION: *Brundage moved and Strauch seconded to approve the June 2023 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes.* Minutes approved.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#2** | **COMMITTEE UPDATES** | **Agenda Item Objective:** General update on recent work of PRRIP Advisory Committees. |

**Land Advisory Committee (LAC)** – Wagner provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC last met on August 16. Discussion topics included: Dyer Tract and Myer Estate property disposal; future role of the LAC; reviewed GIS platforms for Grassland Working Group; comment period for Land Restoration & Management Framework.

**Water Advisory Committee (WAC)** *–* Steinke provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC last met on August 1. Discussion topics included: Platte Basin hydrology; leasing and recharge projects; temporary hydrologic conditions; and plans for a fall EAC/RCC meeting.

**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** – Scheel provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC last met in July. Discussion topics: germination suppression releases; Wet Meadow Hydrology Study; Sediment Augmentation Data Synthesis Compilation; spring whooping crane monitoring report; Ecotope article (on GC agenda); next meeting in October with the ISAC.

**Finance Committee (FC)** – Merrill provided an update on the latest FC activities. The FC last met on August 8. Discussion topics: update on chokepoint engineering project; updated peer review contract form; and an RFQ for in-channel disking.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#3** | **PRRIP BUDGET** | **Agenda Item Objective:** General update on current status of FY22 budget. |

**PRRIP FY23 Budget** – Farnsworth noted the PRRIP had a clean annual federal single audit. Farnsworth provided a status update on the FY23 budget. Brei discussed server needs for the PRRIP and options for an upgrade to server equipment.

GC MOTION: *Merrill moved and Gebhart seconded to approve an increase of $17,300 in approved and available funds in PRRIP FY23 Budget Line Item PD-8 and to authorize acquisition of upgraded server equipment.* Motion passed.

**FY23 Procurement** – Smith summarized major procurement items for the June GC meeting. Marks asked how Peer Reviewers are identified. Smith said from his network of subject matter experts, general exploration of subject matter experts, authors of key papers in the field, and asking for names from EDO staff and PRRIP participants. Mosier asked what will be in the proposed FY24 budget relative to sediment augmentation. Smith said that will be a major discussion topic at the upcoming TAC and ISAC meeting – sand dam RFP only, also include funds for sediment augmentation implementation in 2024? The EDO needs TAC input and guidance on this in getting to the associated FY24 budget discussion with the Finance Committee and Governance Committee.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#4** | **PRRIP SCIENCE PLAN** | **Agenda Item Objective:** Discussion recent Science Plan implementation activities. |

**Whooping Crane (WC):**

Bruggeman summarized the Spring 2023 WC Monitoring Report. Brundage asked if the metrics reported include WC that did not roost on the channel. Bruggeman said unobstructed channel width and nearest forest are calculated for riverine use sites only. Henry said the figures showing flow conditions and WC groups detected include both on- and off-channel observations of WC groups. Whitaker asked if there are other metrics that matter for WC. He asked if we had looked at stay length. Bruggeman said that is a Big Question in the Science Plan. Farnsworth said as clarification we don’t let channels narrow to 650 feet, we try to manage for that as a minimum suitable habitat metric. Riley said for Figure #3 in the report, it would be interesting to show the distribution for all years on another figure.

GC MOTION: *Gebhart moved and Walters seconded to approve the PRRIP Spring 2023 Whooping Crane Monitoring Report.* Motion passed.

**Piping Plover (PP):**

Keldsen provided an update from the 2023 summer tern/plover nesting season. There was one plover nest on a river sandbar this summer. Marks asked if there was any predator control at this location. Keldsen said no. Both plovers and terns did well this year. We had fewer plover nests this year but better nest success, resulting in the highest number of plover fledglings since 2012.

Henry provided an update on a recent juvenile eagle mortality event on a PRRIP OCSW site (eagle was caught in a temporary predator fence). The mortality was reported to the USFWS and the USFWS wants the Program to mitigate potential future mortality events. Henry said costs for implementing a different approach to predator fencing will be included in the draft FY24 PRRIP budget.

**Pallid Sturgeon (PS):**

Henry provided a brief update on the status of the PS genetics project with Southern Illinois University and the PS habitat research project with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the lower Platte River. Whitaker asked if the PS found as part of the fish kill had any tracking indication on it. Porath said it had a PITT tag and was a hatchery-raised fish. Riley asked about UNL’s preparation of a data analysis plan. Henry said that plan will be presented by UNL and discussed with the ISAC and TAC in October at the Fall ISAC meeting.

Casavant provided an update on the lower Platte River modeling work. The Proposal Selection Panel selected HDR to conduct the work and HDR presented a scope for this work last week. Final details are expected to be ironed out this week and they should be under contract soon.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#5** | **SCIENCE ONBOARDING** | **Agenda Item Objective:** Discuss issues related to the onboarding of science generated outside the Program. |

Scheel summarized recent TAC discussions about the Ecotope article and the associated TAC recommendations. Riley asked if the TAC wants the GC to do anything with these recommendations. Scheel asked Henry if the EDO was looking for any GC guidance. Henry said yes, for example re-running the WEST analysis. Schellpeper asked if there needed to be more detail or cost estimates for the scope of work. Porath asked if this would be published or peer reviewed. Farnsworth said we would leave that recommendation to the TAC. Whitaker asked about the potential for bias in this re-analysis. Farnsworth said the intent is to use the original assumptions and original dataset with the new landcover classes. Jenniges and Scheel said there were different inputs for these two analyses. There may be subjective discussions that happen after the new analysis is done. Riley asked about reproducibility. Gebhart asked if this would change the results of the WEST report. Jenniges said no, that report is done. This will be a new analysis that utilizes the same models and assumptions, just a different data layer.

GC MOTION: *Mehling moved and Merrill seconded to direct the EDO to re-run the WEST analysis substituting the finer-scale Ecotope landcover classes in place of PRRIP landcover classes, as described on Page 1 of the TAC Ecotope Memo.* Motion passed.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#6** | **PRRIP INDEPENDENT SCIENCE** | **Agenda Item Objective:** Discuss issues related to the Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC) and Peer Review. |

**ISAC:**

* Smith noted the appointment of Dr. Alan Kasprak to the ISAC.
* Smith noted recent discussions with the PRRIP Signatories about a potential conflict of interest with an ISAC member (Dr. Aaron Pearse) related to use of WC telemetry data. That issue has been resolved in a way that preserves Dr. Pearse’s role on the ISAC and ensures the PRRIP will be able to access a set of WC telemetry data for analysis.

**Peer Review:**

* Smith discussed the Wet Meadow Hydrology Report that has been recommended by the TAC for peer review. Schellpeper asked what the objectives of the report are, and what the main conclusions are relative to those objectives. Henry and Farnsworth summarized the report and said it was a roll-up of several years of data collection, and it provides tools that could be used by the GC and others in the future to consider possible alternative management actions at PRRIP wet meadow properties. Marks asked if the results will be published. Brundage asked if it will be used to advise management. Farnsworth said the study provides information and tools relevant to management, but the report itself does not make management recommendations.

GC MOTION: *Williams moved and Strauch seconded to approve the Wet Meadow Hydrology Report for peer review.* Motion approved.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#7** | **PRRIP OUTREACH** | **Agenda Item Objective:** General update on PRRIP outreach activities. |

**Quarterly Outreach Report:**

**PRESENTATIONS**

* Jonathan Wentz facilitated a job shadow to a Kearney High School student on August 8th, 2023.
* Chad Smith gave a virtual presentation on Monday, September 11th, 2023, to the UNL National Science Foundation National Research Traineeship (NRT) STEM Graduate Students. He talked about what it means to work for a private natural resources consulting firm with an emphasis on the role of providing the Executive Director and staff for the PRRIP.
* Malinda Henry updates on Pallid Sturgeon Research:
  + Southern Illinois University presented a poster at the American Fisheries Society Meeting in Grand Rapids, MI on August 21st, 2023.
  + University of Nebraska – Lincoln published a project update on Pallid Sturgeon Biology in the Platte River and its Tributaries.
  + *Junman Huang, Amy C. Buhman, Richard Flamio Jr., and Edward J. Heist. Center for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences, Department of Zoology, Southern Illinois University. Presented a poster at the American Fisheries Society Meeting in Grand Rapids MI on August 21, 2023 entitled “GT- seq panel development for Scaphirhynchus spp. for high-resolution species identification, broodstock selection, and parentage analysis”*
  + *Mark Pegg, Kirk Steffensen, Jon Spurgeon, Christopher Pullano, Jenna Ruoss. University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Update on Pallid Sturgeon Biology in the Platte River and its Tributaries. Annual Report of the Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. 2022-2023. Pg 43.*
  + Jenna Ruoss, Christopher Pullano, Jonathan Spurgeon, Mark Pegg, and Kirk Steffensen. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S. Geological Survey, Nebraska Game and Parks. Pallid Sturgeon Movement in the Lower Platte River and its Tributaries: Year 2 Update. Poster presentation to Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at UNL on Sep 13, 2023.
  + Jenna Ruoss, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Assessing Pallid Sturgeon Habitat in the Lower Platte River. Presentation to Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at UNL on Sep 13, 2023.
  + Christopher Pullano, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Passive Acoustic Detection Range in the Lower Platte River. Presentation to Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at UNL on Sep 13, 2023.

**EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS**

* Alicia Uribe and Julie Liakos exhibited at Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island on September 12-14th 2023.

**MEDIA COVERAGE/OTHER**

* The 2021/2022 Biennial Report is now available as an ArcGIS StoryMap.
* Alicia Uribe will present the Outreach Communications Plan to GC.

**UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS**

* PRRIP EDO staff will share a poster presentation on sediment augmentation to the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds conference on October 3rd – 5th, 2023 in Avon, CO.

**Biennial Report:**

Uribe introduced the 2021-2022 PRRIP Biennial Report which this year is presented as an online story map. The biennial report will be available on the PRRIP website and can be accessed at the following link: <https://arcg.is/1aiufr1>.

**PRRIP Education & Outreach:**

Becca gave a presentation on the Platte River Safari Camp (formerly SOAR Camp) that immerses kids in nature. The PRRIP has been a contributor to this program.

Uribe presented a summary of a possible approach to PRRIP Education & Outreach moving forward. Farnsworth said it is up to the GC to provide direction on this, but it likely means the need to hire someone trained in education and outreach to implement a new approach. Zmak said if something were to be done differently, then a scope needs to be developed. Riley said the EDO would distribute the plan summarized by Uribe and then the GC can submit feedback to the EDO. Williams asked where the impetus came from to look into this. Farnsworth said it was his idea in thinking about the fact we have done the same thing since the Program started and it might be time to re-evaluate effectiveness and priorities. Merrill said this will be important to think about for negotiations related to the Second Increment and development of a new EIS. Marks said he would like to talk to Farnsworth more about how to work together with SPWRAP on things like this. Mehling said the Program is changing generations. There used to be a lot of interest, now it is not as known. We will have to bring it back to the forefront as we do this.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **GC MEETING END** | 5:30 PM Central Time |

**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP -or- Program)**

**Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting – Kearney, NE**

Kearney Public Library

*Monday, September 18, 2023 & Tuesday, September 19, 2023*

Tom Riley, State of Nebraska – 2023 GC Chair

Jason Farnsworth, PRRIP Executive Director (ED) – Moderator

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PRRIP Governance Committee (GC) Meeting Attendees**  **Day #1 – Monday, September 18, 2023** | | |
| **Name** | **Affiliation** | **Member or Alternate** |
| **Department of the Interior** | | |
| Brock Merrill | Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) | Member |
| Chris Wright | Assistant Regional Director, Missouri Basin & Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas Gulf Regions (USBR) | Attendee |
| Drue DeBerry | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – *2023 Vice Chair* | Member |
| Mark Porath | USFWS | Alternate |
| **State of Wyoming** | | |
| Brandon Gebhart | Wyoming State Engineer | Member |
| Jason Mead | Wyoming Water Development Office | Alternate |
| **State of Colorado** | |  |
| Amy Ostdiek | Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) (virtual) | Member |
| Emily Zmak | CWCB | Alternate |
| Kara Scheel | CWCB | Alternate |
| **State of Nebraska** | | |
| Tom Riley | Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – *2023 Chair* | Member |
| Jennifer Schellpeper | DNR | Alternate |
| **Upper Platte Water Users** | | |
| Dennis Strauch | Pathfinder Irrigation District | Member |
| Bob Mehling | Goshen Irrigation District | Alternate |
| Owen Williams | Upper Platte Water Users Association | Alternate |
| **Colorado Water Users** | | |
| Kyle Whitaker | Northern Water | Member |
| Jason Marks | Denver Water | Alternate |
| Deb Freeman | Trout Raley (virtual) | Alternate |
| **Downstream Water Users** | | |
| Devin Brundage | Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District (CNPPID) | Member |
| Kent Miller | Twin Platte Natural Resources District (TPNRD) | Member |
| John Shadle | Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) (virtual) | Member |
| Lyndon Vogt | Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD) | Member |
| **Environmental Entities** | | |
| Rich Walters | The Nature Conservancy (TNC) | Member |
| Brice Krohn | The Crane Trust | Member |
| Melissa Mosier | Audubon Nebraska | 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 | |
| Seth Turner, P.E. | Water Plan Coordinator | |
| Malinda Henry, Ph.D. | Science Plan Coordinator | |
| Justin Brei, P.E. | Engineering/Colorado Coordinator | |
| Jason Bruggeman, Ph.D. | Species Monitoring Coordinator | |
| Alicia Uribe | Executive Office Manager | |
| Patrick Farrell, M.S. | Statistical Ecologist (virtual) | |
| **Other Participants** | | |
| Jennifer Hoeting, Ph.D. | Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC) (virtual) | |
| Dave Marmorek | ISAC (virtual) | |
| Jesse Bradley | Nebraska DNR | |
| Justin Levene | Nebraska Attorney General’s Office | |
| Mike Drain | CNPPID | |
| Barry Lawrence | Wyoming Water Development Office (virtual) | |
| Andy Nicewicz | Colorado Attorney General’s Office (virtual) | |
| Caitlin Kingsley | Nebraska DNR | |
| George Mosher | State of Wyoming (virtual) | |
| Michelle Hubbard | State of Wyoming (virtual) | |
| Michelle Martin | Anderson Consulting Engineers (virtual) | |
| Brian Murphy | River Works (virtual) | |
| Mike Archer | Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (virtual) | |
| Richard Belt | SPWRAP (virtual) | |
| Lalit Jha | JEO (virtual) | |
|  | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#8** | **WELCOME & ADMINISTRATIVE** | **Agenda Item Objective:** Greetings, roll call, review agenda. |

**Introduction** – Chair Riley called the meeting to order at 9:34 AM Central Time. The in-person and virtual groups proceeded with introductions.

**Agenda Modifications** – none offered.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#9** | **PRRIP WATER PLAN** | **Agenda Item Objective:** Update on recent Water Plan implementation activities. |

**North Platte Chokepoint:**

Michelle Martin from Anderson Consulting Engineers gave a presentation on the work so far on the North Platte Chokepoint Engineering Services Project. Martin summarized the “short list” of nine (9) alternatives and subsequent work to be completed in evaluating these alternatives further. Miller asked if the City of North Platte and Lincoln County are on the Chokepoint Work Group. Turner said they are not and have not been a part of the Work Group since the flow test. Miller said he would like them (City Engineer, Lincoln County Emergency Management, and ask the Commissioners whom they would like to have represent the County) added to the Work Group, Turner agreed. Farnsworth asked if Miller wanted to add anyone from his shop at the NRD. Miller said just keep me up to speed. Brundage asked about considerations for resources downstream of the chokepoint being considered as an alternative, such as storage in Elwood. Farnsworth said temporary storage in Elwood has not been part of the discussion so far. Turner said it is something we can consider moving forward as the chokepoint project and the Expanded Recapture Reconnaissance Study are being conducted in parallel. Whitaker asked if it is something we should have Anderson add to their list for consideration. Turner said it probably fits better with the expanded recapture study in terms of operations and benefits. Brei said we will facilitate some coordination between Anderson (chokepoint) and LRE Water (expanded recapture) on this. Whitaker asked if there is other plumbing or other buckets of water that should be considered. Farnsworth said the South Platte alternative is one option, we need to start with the question of how much water we need to store there. Turner said Johnson Lake was considered in the past but it just did not pan out.

Whitaker asked why we are still working on chokepoint capacity and not focusing on increasing staged water or controllable capacity at the top of the AHR. Farnsworth said the Program Document has an objective to get 3,000 cfs through the chokepoint. Number 1, there could be a silver bullet alternative that we missed that we could implement. Or, Number 2, there is an expensive alternative or a bunch of small items that will result in the GC having to work through the trade-offs of going all in on the chokepoint to try to resolve that issues or spend money or effort elsewhere to try to increase controllable flow into the AHR. Miller said he agrees with Whitaker and is not sure why this issue keeps rising to the top. Whitaker said we would not be doing this correctly if we are not looking at all the options. Drain said the Program is still looking at options for putting water, and how much, in the AHR. Farnsworth said it will ultimately come back to the GC through a Structured Decision Making process. Flyr asked if you do nothing and let the chokepoint be, what is the risk of continuing loss of capacity. Martin said it is a concern, our geomorphic assessment will touch on that. But it is clear that capacity will continue to diminish over the long term. Steinke said we have looked at some other options for staging water downstream of the chokepoint, there are no silver bullets. Whitaker said maybe we should look at bronze or primer level options.

Mosier said that the River Design Group looked at a do nothing option at the chokepoint, would it be helpful to provide that information to the Anderson team as something consider and add to the short list of alternatives. Turner agreed. Miller said one of the alternative should be what needs to be done to maintain the capacity we have, which is at least in part the result of a lot of Program work. Steinke said we need to make sure that ongoing VESPR work and the Program are coordinating so there is a clear message about who has done what, and who is still doing work on the chokepoint. Walters said VESPR has nothing else going on now. Steinke said he was part of a recent VESPR field trip and there were local officials there so things like that could be part of a confusing message.

**PRRIP Water Plan:**

Turner gave the GC an update on the Water Milestone Summary and an update on the work of LRE Water so far on the Expanded Recapture Reconnaissance Study.

**Long-Term Water Leasing:**

Brundage said work continues to try to firm up long-term agreements for water leasing. Shadle agreed that NPPD is working on its end as well. Shadle also said they are looking into carbon capture at Gerald Gentleman Station and if that moves forward that will require water that might affect what is available for the Program. Vogt agreed discussions are ongoing about long-term leasing. Vogt said there is pressure from other entities on the same water. Whitaker said he wanted to re-state that he hopes the Districts and the GC make these long-term agreements extend past the end of the Extension to ensure the water is there into the Second Increment.

**CNPPID Irrigator Lease:**

Turner summarized the history of this leasing program. The WAC recommends extending the agreement for this project for one year.

GC MOTION: *Merrill moved and Gebhart seconded to approve a one-year amended agreement for the CNPPID Irrigator Lease. The Downstream Water Users abstained.* Agreement approved.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#10** | **PRRIP LAND PLAN** | **Agenda Item Objective:** Update on recent Land Plan implementation activities. |

**Land Milestone Summary**:

* Tunnell summarized the Land Milestone Summary. The Program is still about 183 acres short of the Extension Plus-Up goal of 1,500 acres.
* Three contractors are working on in-channel disking now.
* Clark Island tree clearing project has been run through the Service’s Information for Planning and Consultation Tool and has received clearance to proceed.
* The Program put in a boat ramp on the Babb Tract for river monitoring access and contractor access.
* The Program put in a parking area at the Leaman East Tract for recreation access (fishing and hunting).
* The Program will be removing a bridge at the Myer Estate and putting in a culvert.
* Likely will not receive any bids for the Dyer Lodge, which would result in an RFQ for demolition.
* PVWMA fall *Phragmites* spraying started in September. There is also some work on saltcedar near Lake McConaughy.
* The Grassland Working Group recently did a field tour with Tunnell to look at PRRIP grassland areas.
* Restoration & Management Framework for PRRIP properties – This is a living document and the LAC is in the process of reviewing that framework. It will go to the TAC for review in October and back to the GC for the December meeting.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#11** | **PUBLIC COMMENT** | **Agenda Item Objective:** Public comment period on PRRIP activities. |

None offered.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#12** | **EXECUTIVE SESSION** | **Agenda Item Objective:** GC member discussion of sensitive land, water, and policy items. |

GC MOTION: *Williams moved and Brundage seconded to enter Executive Session to discuss issues related to PRRIP land administration and management.* GC entered Executive Session at 10:52 AM Central Time.

GC MOTION: Vogt *moved and Zmak seconded to exit Executive Session.* GC exited Executive Session at 11:01 AM Central Time.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#13** | **EXECUTIVE SESSION MOTIONS** | **Agenda Item Objective:** GC consideration of motions discussed during Executive Session. |

None offered.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#14** | **GC MEETING REVIEW & WRAP-UP** | **Agenda Item Objective:** Discuss action items, meeting feedback, and upcoming meeting schedule. |

Riley asked Merrill to provide an update on the Reclamation/Service agreement. Merrill said Reclamation and the Service have entered into a five-year agreement to provide funding for two positions at the Service to engage with the Program (Rabbe and EA Manager). Porath said as a result the Service is now working on an Environmental Account (EA) AOP that should be ready for review soon.

**Action Items and Meeting Feedback** –Farnsworth noted the December 2023 Quarterly Meeting would be in Loveland, CO. Whitaker said the Northern Water campus could be a good meeting space instead of the Embassy Suites, Farnsworth agreed to investigate.

Upcoming GC meetings:

* **2023 Fall ISAC Meeting:**

October 10-12, 2023 *@ Kearney, NE*

* **GC Virtual Special Session on FY2024 Budget & Work Plan:**

November 8, 2023

10:00 AM-12:00 PM Central Time *via Teams*

* **December 2023 GC Quarterly Meeting:**

December 5-6, 2023 *@ Loveland, CO*

* **2024 PRRIP Science Plan Reporting Session:**

February 20-22, 2024 *@ Omaha, NE*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **GC MEETING END** | 11:15 AM Central Time |

**Summary of Action Items/Decisions from September 2023 GC Quarterly Meeting**

1. Approved the June 2023 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes.
2. Approved an increase of $17,300 in approved and available funds in PRRIP FY23 Budget Line Item PD-8 and authorized acquisition of upgraded server equipment.
3. Approved the PRRIP Spring 2023 Whooping Crane Monitoring Report.
4. Directed the EDO to re-run the WEST analysis substituting the finer-scale Ecotope landcover classes in place of PRRIP landcover classes, as described on Page 1 of the TAC Ecotope Memo.
5. Approved peer review of the Wet Meadow Hydrology Report.
6. Approve a one-year amended agreement for the CNPPID Irrigator Lease (Downstream Water Users abstained).