



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

March 2022 Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting – Kearney, NE (+ virtual)

Day #1 – Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Governance Committee (GC)

State of Wyoming

Harry LaBonde – Member
Brandon Gebhart – Alternate (virtual)

State of Colorado

Don Ament – Member

State of Nebraska

Jesse Bradley – Alternate
Jennifer Schellpeper – Alternate

Upper Platte Water Users

Dennis Strauch – Member
Bob Mehling – Alternate (virtual)
Owen Williams – Alternate

Downstream Water Users

Dave Zorn – Alternate
John Shadle – Alternate
Lyndon Vogt – Member

Executive Director's Office (EDO)

Jason Farnsworth – ED
Bridget Barron
Justin Brei
Kristen Cognac (virtual)
Patrick Farrell
Julia Grabowski (virtual)
Malinda Henry
Sarah Hinshaw (virtual)
Mallory Jaymes
Kaley Keldsen
Kari Mohlman
Chad Smith
Alicia Uribe

Tim Tunnell
Seth Turner
Malia Volke (virtual)
Jon Wentz
Ed Weschler

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

Brock Merrill – Member (2022 GC Chair)
Brian Hollis – Alternate (virtual)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)

Steve Small – Member (virtual)
Mark Porath – Alternate
Matt Rabbe – Alternate

Environmental Entities

Brice Krohn – Member (virtual)
Bill Taddicken – Member (virtual)
Rich Walters – Member
Melissa Mosier – Alternate

Colorado Water Users

Alan Berryman – Member
Deb Freeman – Alternate
Jason Marks – Alternate
Kevin Urie – Alternate

Other Participants

Cory Steinke & Mike Drain – CNPPID
Jim Jenniges & Jeff Shafer – NPPD
Michael Krondak – NPPD (virtual)
Brian Caruso – Service (virtual)
Jeff Runge – Service
Michelle Koch – NGPC (virtual)
Andy Caven – Trust (virtual)
Jennifer Hoeting – ISAC (virtual)
Dave Marmorek – ISAC (virtual)
David Galat – ISAC (virtual)
Adrian Farmer – ISAC (virtual)
Lauren Ris, Amy Ostdiek, & Emily Zmak – CWCB



#1	WELCOME & ADMINISTRATIVE	Agenda Item Objective: Greetings, roll call, review agenda.
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Introductions – Chair Merrill called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM Central Time. The in-person and virtual groups proceeded with introductions.

Agenda – No modifications offered.

Minutes – The GC approved the following minutes:

GC Motion: *Ament moved and LaBonde seconded to approve the December 2021 GC Quarterly Meeting 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) – Zorn provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC last met on February 23. The LAC discussed Program property issues that will be discussed during GC Executive Session tomorrow.

Water Advisory Committee (WAC) – Steinke provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC last met on February 1. Topics included the Perkins Count Canal; WAP projects; wet meadows; recapture network.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – Merrill provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC last met on January 12. Topics included grassland monitoring protocol; 2021 PP/LT monitoring and fall 2021 WC monitoring; discussed the Extension Science Plan; non-target, non-listed species of concern; the pallid sturgeon research projects.

Finance Committee (FC) – Farnsworth said the FC last met on January 26. Two action items: elected Tom Riley (Nebraska) as the 2022 Chair; approved an RFP for prescribed fire services for spring 2022.

#3	OUTREACH UPDATE	Agenda Item Objective: General update on PRRIP outreach activities.
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PRESENTATIONS

- Jason Farnsworth presented to the Board of the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) at their annual Board Retreat on March 4, 2022, at the Crane Trust in Alda, Nebraska. He presented a Program update and discussed the partnership between the Program and NCF.

EXHIBITS

- The Program exhibited at the annual meeting of the Four States Irrigation Council in Fort Collins, Colorado on January 12-13, 2022. We made 60 contacts.
- The Program exhibited at Colorado Water Congress in Aurora, Colorado on January 26 – 28, 2022. We made 50 contacts.

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS

- Jason Farnsworth will be conducting site visits for South Platte Water Related Activities Program (SPWRAP) and Nebraska Department of Natural Resources staff on March 8, 2022, and March 21, 2022. The site visits are on Program land and provide information about land management activities of the Program.

**MEDIA/OTHER**

- The Kearney Hub and the Omaha World-Herald published several articles about the proposed Perkins County Canal that mentioned the Program.
- The Program is hosting individuals and groups from Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska in Program blinds for the annual crane migration.

#4	PRRIP BUDGET	Agenda Item Objective: General update on current status of FY21 budget.
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Farnsworth provided a review of the FY21 PRRIP budget and updated the GC on the status of the FY22 PRRIP budget. Farnsworth previewed budget action items to be discussed by the GC during this Quarterly Meeting.

#5	PRRIP SCIENCE ACTIVITIES & TARGET SPECIES	Agenda Item Objective: Discuss Science Plan implementation activities.
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Jaymes updated the GC on recent changes to the fall 2021 whooping crane (WC) monitoring report.

GC Motion: *LaBonde moved and Ament seconded to approve the 2021 WC Monitoring Report.* **Report approved.**

Mohlman updated the GC on recent changes to the 2021 piping plover/least tern monitoring report. Shadle asked about the primary PP avian predators. Mohlman said owls.

GC Motion: *Shadle moved and Berryman seconded to approve the 2021 Piping Plover/Least Tern Monitoring Report.* **Report approved.**

Farnsworth discussed the purpose and need for LiDAR data acquisition in the lower Platte River related to the pallid sturgeon research projects. Freeman asked if the cost for the LiDAR works include the cost of the 2-D hydrodynamic model? Farnsworth said no, but the EDO anticipates developing that model in-house. Freeman asked if we will end up with a set of target flows for pallid sturgeon? Farnsworth said it might be possible to have flow curves and general relationships, but not specific target flows. Bradley asked if the EDO would look at taking water out below the instream flow threshold. Farnsworth said no, only diversions during times of excess to target flows that could in some scenario impact lower Platte River flows in some way. Galat ask how accurate will a 2-D model be over a wide range of flows based on a single LiDAR flight at one flow vs 2-3 LiDAR flights over a wider range of flows? What is cost vs benefit to 2-D model accuracy of single vs multiple LiDAR flights for Step 2 Water Management Study? Farnsworth said we will pushing our luck to get one really good LiDAR acquisition at low flows, any higher flow makes the lower Platte significantly more turbid and it becomes difficult to collect and analyze useful LiDAR data. Shadle asked about a particular location and flow for LiDAR triggers. Farnsworth said probably something like less than 3,000 cfs at Louisville, but nothing definite yet and we will be working with the LiDAR contractor and the UNL pallid sturgeon team to investigate this further. Strauch asked how much better the data will be if we acquire the LiDAR? Farnsworth said without LiDAR, we may be OK, but with it we have much better odds of getting what we need to develop useful information for the Program on this issue.

GC Motion: *Strauch moved and Walters seconded to approve the Quantum Spatial contract amendment.* **Contract amendment approved.**



#6	INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ISAC)	Agenda Item Objective: Update from the ISAC.
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Smith introduced the ISAC and the context of this session. Marmorek delivered an update presentation to the GC on behalf of the ISAC. GC discussion:

- Freeman asked about the plan for wet meadows research and information. Farnsworth said the EDO is building on the work since 2012 collected wet meadow hydrology and associated weather data, and Kristen Cognac in the EDO is building an analytical tool with the help of those data to be able to speak to interactions between flow and wet meadows. The intention is to ensure there is useful information regarding wet meadows that will be available and useful to the GC in the process of negotiating the Second Increment and considering tradeoffs between the use of Program resources (land, water, learning, money).

#7	EXTENSION SCIENCE PLAN	Agenda Item Objective: Approve Extension Science Plan.
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Henry presented the Extension Science Plan to the GC for review, discussion, and approval. Zorn asked about Attachment #1 in the Science Plan and what is meant by the inclusion and mention of triggers when looking back at the original Big Questions from First Increment. Extended GC discussion regarding explanation of check-in plans for First Increment Big Questions, the focus of Extension Big Questions related to whooping cranes and flow, and Extension Big Questions related to pallid sturgeon. Henry provided context for Big Question reassessment triggers, how they were derived, and how the Program may respond in terms of further investigation and adjusting management. Freeman suggested revising Attachment #1 so the last column reflects check-in activities to keep tabs on First Increment Big Questions rather than quantifiable signals for reassessment of learning. Extended GC discussion regarding the focus of Extension Big Questions related to whooping cranes and flow and the Extension Big Question related to pallid sturgeon. Farnsworth asked whether the issues with the Science Plan were significant enough to warrant modification/halting of what the EDO is currently doing in terms of implementation? The GC said no. Smith asked if the GC is talking more about a revision of the text at the Science-Policy interface to better reflect the current GC discussion? The GC concurred. Farnsworth, Henry, and Smith agreed to re-visit the Extension Big Questions and the language regarding First Increment Big Question check-ins and consider possible edits for GC review through a virtual Special Session prior to the June 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting.

#8	ISAC MEMBERSHIP	Agenda Item Objective: Appoint new ISAC members.
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Smith delivered an update on the process of identifying new members for the ISAC. The ISAC Selection Panel is likely to have ISAC candidates to recommend for GC appointment prior to the June GC Quarterly Meeting.

#9	OTHER SPECIES OF CONCERN	Agenda Item Objective: GC feedback and direction on other species of concern.
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** This item was discussed by the GC on 03_09_22.*

Henry discussed recent work by a small group to develop a “short list” of other species of concern for GC consideration. Merrill asked the Service what the listing timeline might be for the regal fritillary and monarch butterfly. Porath said they are both in review and they expect to have a listing decision by the end of the year on the regal fritillary. Merrill asked if a consultation will occur if listed? Rabbe said that depends on the listing status. Whittaker asked about management actions related to backwater management and grassland management for the plains topminnow and Platte River caddisfly. Henry



said the work group did not go into detail on management actions for these species prior to bringing the list back to the GC, violet planting to support Regal larvae was researched and a plan presented to the TAC in July of 2021. Farnsworth said it largely would be being mindful of these species in a good faith effort while managing Program properties (grazing on grasslands, etc.). Farnsworth said the EDO together with the working group could come back to the GC with a written explanation of what it would mean to show good faith toward the four “new action” species – regal fritillary, monarch, plains topminnow, and Platte River caddisfly. Brundage asked about providing some kind of a risk analysis in terms of what it would mean for the Program if these species were listed. Vogt suggested the list remain as a good faith list with no formalization. Shadle and Rabbe agreed with Freeman that this should be a living list that is updated regularly depending on the species’ conditions and the direction of Program management on PRRIP properties. Williams asked about implications on Program management and Program lands. Farnsworth and Henry said it depends on the species, likely monitoring as a key action. Merrill said this is something he has brought up before and wondered about the GC appetite to try to get ahead of these issues before potential listing, consultation, and more stringent requirements. LaBonde said the Program should focus on achieving benefits for the target species and if that is in conflict with one of the “new action” species the result should be in favor of the target species. LaBonde said he would support the planting of violet plugs. Merrill asked if the GC was in favor of that approach, it does not require a vote of the GC because the cost (\$6,000) is below the procurement policy threshold. The GC concurred.

GC Motion: *Berryman moved and LaBonde seconded to approve the EDO moving forward with a \$6,000 purchase of violet plugs for planting.* **Motion approved.**

GC MEETING DAY #1 END

5:32 PM Central Time



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

March 2022 Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting – Kearney, NE (+ virtual)

Day #2 – Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Governance Committee (GC)

State of Wyoming

Harry LaBonde – Member
Brandon Gebhart – Alternate (virtual)

State of Colorado

Don Ament – Member

State of Nebraska

Jennifer Schellpeper – Alternate

Upper Platte Water Users

Dennis Strauch – Member
Bob Mehling – Alternate (virtual)
Owen Williams – Alternate

Downstream Water Users

Devin Brundage – Member
Lyndon Vogt – Member

Executive Director's Office (EDO)

Jason Farnsworth – ED
Bridget Barron
Justin Brei
Patrick Farrell
Malinda Henry
Mallory Jaymes
Kaley Keldsen (virtual)
Kari Mohlman
Chad Smith
Alicia Uribe
Tim Tunnell
Seth Turner
Ed Weschler

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

Brock Merrill – Member (2022 GC Chair)
Brian Hollis – Alternate (virtual)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)

Steve Small – Member (virtual)
Mark Porath – Alternate
Matt Rabbe – Alternate

Environmental Entities

Rich Walters – Member
Bill Taddicken – Member (virtual)

Colorado Water Users

Alan Berryman – Member
Deb Freeman – Alternate
Jason Marks – Alternate
Kevin Urie – Alternate

Other Participants

Cory Steinke, Dave Zorn, & Mike Drain – CNPPID
Jim Jenniges & Jeff Shafer – NPPD
Michael Krondak – NPPD (virtual)
Michelle Koch – NGPC (virtual)
Jeff Runge – Service



#10	WELCOME & ADMINISTRATIVE	Agenda Item Objective: Greetings, roll call, review agenda.
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Chair Merrill called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM Central Time. The group proceeded with introductions.

#11	GRASSLAND MONITORING	Agenda Item Objective: Approve grassland monitoring RFP.
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Tunnell summarized the purpose, need, and content of the Memo and RFP for Program grassland vegetation monitoring. Rabbe asked if approving the RFP would be for monitoring through the rest of the Extension. Tunnell said it would just be for 2022. Merrill said it would be hard to contract for this under one RFP so it would be best to just issue an RFP each time monitoring is necessary. LaBonde said it seems like Option #1 (discontinue monitoring) might work since Tunnell and other Program staff are always on the properties and can keep an eye on any changes. Tunnell said he is on the properties often but he does not approach that from the standpoint of vegetation diversity or other similar dynamics, the Program has historically managed for structure. Rabbe said this went through the LAC and the TAC and both felt Option #2 (monitoring every three years) was the best approach. Merrill asked if this could also be considered providing benefits to other species of concern. Rabbe said yes but it is also for the benefit of the target species. LaBonde asked if the Program has changed management as a result of previous monitoring. Tunnell said no significant changes in management, but the EDO does watch trends in grasslands and how it might interact with grazing, fire, and other management. LaBonde asked if the \$67,000 is worth it in terms of informing management, or could we rely more on Tunnell and staff making recommendations for management changes as they watch properties over time.

Henry asked if the GC wants documentation of how grasslands are changing over time. Merrill said it was part of the intent of this effort to monitor transitions that might be occurring over time on Program grassland properties. LaBonde asked the conservation entities and the Service if they do this monitoring on their properties. Walters said yes, Rabbe said the Trust does this as well. Williams said he manages grazing lands and monitoring is one of the most important things he does. Taddicken said Audubon does this level of investigation every other year and that has been a big benefit to informing management. Porath said grasslands are a Service priority, this year they are working with partners to try to reduce conflicts between grassland management and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

GC Motion: *Taddicken moved and Vogt seconded to approve grassland monitoring Option #2 and issue the grassland monitoring RFP.* **RFP approved.**

#12	RECAPTURE WELL NETWORK	Agenda Item Objective: Approve recapture well network contract amendment.
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** This item was discussed by the GC on 03_08_22.*

Turner summarized the purpose, need, and content of the recapture well network contract amendment with Tri-Basin NRD.

GC Motion: *Ament moved and Bradley seconded to approve the recapture well network contract amendment.* **Contract amendment approved.**

#13	PRRIP LAND MANAGEMENT	Agenda Item Objective: Discuss 2021 Land Work Report.
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** This item was discussed by the GC on 03_08_22.*

Farnsworth summarized the 2021 PRRIP Land Work Report.



#14	PUBLIC COMMENT	Agenda Item Objective: Public comment period on PRRIP activities.
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None offered.

#15	EXECUTIVE SESSION	Agenda Item Objective: GC member discussion of sensitive land, water, and policy items.
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GC Motion: Ament moved and LaBonde seconded to enter Executive Session. **GC entered Executive Session at 9:01 AM Central Time.**

GC Motion: Ament moved and Strauch seconded to exit Executive Session. **GC exited Executive Session at 9:30 AM Central Time.**

#16	EXECUTIVE SESSION MOTIONS	Agenda Item Objective: GC consideration of motions discussed during Executive Session.
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GC Motion: LaBonde moved and Ament seconded to direct the EDO to seek appraisal of and pursue acquisition of Tract 2201 as complex acres counting toward the 1,500 plus-up acres for the Extension.

Motion approved.

#17	GC MEETING REVIEW & WRAP-UP	Agenda Item Objective: Discuss action items, meeting feedback, and upcoming meeting schedule.
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Upcoming GC meetings (in-person meetings depend on local and national public health conditions and travel restrictions):

- **June 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting** – June 7-8, 2022 @ Cheyenne, WY
- **September 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting** – September 13-14, 2022 @ Kearney, NE (in conjunction with Fall 2022 ISAC Meeting)
- **GC Virtual Special Session on FY2023 Budget/Work Plan** – November 9, 2022; 10:00 AM-12:00 PM Central Time via Teams
- **December 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting** – December 6-7, 2022 @ Denver, CO

LaBonde said his involvement with the GC will end on June 30, 2022. He will be in Alaska for the June GC Quarterly Meeting so he wanted to say farewell to the group now and wished everyone good luck. He will likely attend future GC meetings. Gebhart thanked LaBonde on behalf of Wyoming for all his work over the years. The GC gave him a round of applause for his long service to the Program.

GC MEETING DAY #2 END	9:34 AM Central Time
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Summary of Action Items/Decisions from March 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting

- 1) Approved the December 2021 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes.
- 2) Approved the Fall 2021 whooping crane monitoring report.
- 3) Approved the 2021 plover/tern monitoring report.
- 4) Approved the Quantum Spatial contract amendment for lower Platte River LiDAR.
- 5) Approved the expenditure of \$6,000 on violet plugs for planting on PRRIP properties.
- 6) Approved grassland monitoring Option #2 and issuing the grassland monitoring RFP.
- 7) Approved the recapture well network contract amendment.
- 8) Approved seeking appraisal of and pursuing acquisition of Tract 2201 as complex acres counting toward the 1,500 plus-up acres for the Extension.