



PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP or Program)
Finance Committee (FC) Virtual Meeting Minutes
Meeting Conducted in Microsoft Teams
July 16, 2020

Finance Committee (FC)

State of Wyoming

Brandon Gebhart – Member (Vice Chair)

David Ray – Alternate

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

Brock Merrill – Member

State of Colorado

JoJo La – Member (Chair)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)

Tom Econopouly – Member

Matt Rabbe – Alternate

State of Nebraska

Jesse Bradley – Member

Environmental Entities

John Denton – Member

Water Users (Combined Colorado, Upper Platte, and Downstream)

Alan Berryman – Member

Devin Brundage – Alternate

Executive Director's Office (EDO)

Jason Farnsworth, ED

Chad Smith

Tom Smrdel

Tim Tunnell



WELCOME & ADMINISTRATIVE

Introductions – La (Chair) called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM Central Time. The group completed a round of introductions.

Agenda – No modifications.

Minutes – La asked if there were any edits to the May 27, 2020 minutes. She also asked Denton if the Environmental Entities could work on identifying an official FC member and alternate for 2020 via email to Farnsworth and Smith. Denton agreed.

FC Motion: *Econopouly moved and Gebhart seconded to approve the May 27, 2020 FC minutes. Minutes approved.*

FC Action Item Table – Farnsworth noted the three items in the Action Item Table to be discussed during the FC virtual meeting today.

HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

Clark Island – Tunnell discussed the proposed channel work at Clark Island (Dippel Tract) related to PRRIP FY20 Budget Line Item LP-2. Rabbe asked if we are squared away on issues related to the proper line and islands in the channel. Farnsworth said there is a piece of property in the channel that is part of an adverse possession proceeding. The courts gave that property to a family with explicit meets and bounds boundary (shown in black on the map in the bid package). Access only down a prescribed road. There is an issue in that when the EDO met with the owners of the inholding, they said their opinion was they owned more islands in the channel. The EDO ran it through legal counsel, the judgment was clear at the time. Counsel advised the EDO to clear the island and we will deal with it legally later if necessary. There is no way to resolve it legally before-hand. Farnsworth said it is the east half of the property and our ability to maintain that portion of the channel as habitat is very important and we will aggressively defend our property rights in this case if necessary. Tunnell said Sackett wants to give this map to the owners ahead of time.

Denton said he is familiar with the property and he likes what is being proposed. He asked about the budget estimate and what happens if bids come in higher. Farnsworth said we will discuss that internally, if it is unreasonably high we will decline all the bids and determine how to re-bid it. If it is marginally higher, we will likely move forward. Gebhart asked about the area with the hunting blind on it looks like we are planning to work outside the property line. Farnsworth said when purchased, there was uncertainty about the location of the thalweg. Conversations with landowners on the south bank (a hunt club) indicate that the Program owns south of the island. Rabbe asked if that work will be done under a management agreement. Farnsworth said the legal framework would be a quit claim, fight over the boundary, or come to a general understanding which is what we are doing in this case. Rabbe asked if there would be a benefit to putting that on paper. Farnsworth said we are working on that via a management agreement that will include this issue. The COVID-19 pandemic has slowed conversation with the landowners on this issue. So, work will begin before that agreement is in place. All the boundaries on the map are approximate based on some point in time. La said she is hearing it might be beneficial to change boundary lines for the bid package. Farnsworth agreed. La asked about the timeline, Tunnell said we are hoping for work to begin in August and hopefully be completed before whooping crane migration season.



FC Motion: *Bradley moved and Econopouly seconded to approve the Clark Island Habitat Enhancement Bid Package and associated contract with property boundaries adjusted as discussed. Amended bid package approved.*

SEDIMENT AUGMENTATION

Sediment Augmentation Project – Smrdel discussed the bid package for the fourth year of full-scale sediment augmentation under the existing permit to put 60,000-80,000 tons/year of sediment into the south channel along Jeffrey Island. Gebhart asked if the Program is risking anything by changing the thalwegs. Smrdel said no, there is an agreement in place with the landowner to avoid any risk or problems. Farnsworth said the work we are doing in the channel cannot result in a change in legal boundaries, we have coverage against this.

FC Motion: *Gebhart moved and Merrill seconded to approve the Sediment Augmentation Bid Package. Bid package approved.*

WATER AUGMENTATION

Tri-Basin NRD Water Augmentation Agreement – Farnsworth discussed the proposed agreement with Tri-Basin NRD (TBNRD) related to groundwater recharge around Cottonwood Ranch. This is a pilot-scale project to implement active recapture of groundwater recharge. The challenge is this water finds its way back to the river slowly and it is only 20-30% efficient in terms of Program scoring and requires working with the “neighbor” to place a well and pump water back to the river. This can be a challenge, as well as the legality of the Program doing something like this. TBNRD has this ability so we developed this agreement in partnership with them. Their primary need was for this project to be revenue-neutral for the NRD. This agreement lays out a path for that with an up-front payment. From a water project perspective, this will cost out to about \$20/acre-foot for water that is already in the ground, making it relatively cheap water for the Program.

Econopouly asked about the general language in the agreement for water volumes. Farnsworth said this relates to TBNRD and Nebraska DNR and how they account for water. We will work with both entities closely under this agreement. Econopouly asked if this means we are not agreeing to a particular modeling approach to get specific water volumes. Farnsworth said under this agreement no. The Nebraska DNR has seen this agreement and is on board. Bradley said Nebraska did offer a small edit for Page 16 on assignment, Farnsworth said that has been added to the latest version for the GC. La asked if the EDO has done a preliminary scoring assessment. Farnsworth said that will come later once we know how much water we will be pumping. Brundage asked about the anticipated max flow. Farnsworth said something like 18-20 cfs. Bill Hahn, the EDO Special Advisor, has scoped out wells and water delivery to the river. Phase II of this project will be led by Nebraska and may expand on the amount of water that originates from this project. La asked if this will come back to the FC for additional review. Farnsworth said no, it will go the GC for approval in September because it is a multi-year agreement.

FC MEETING REVIEW & WRAP-UP

Action Items – change boundary on bid package for Clark Island, management agreement on Clark Island, begin sediment augmentation.

La said this is the first time she used Microsoft Teams and asked for any input about the format or platform. None offered. The next FC meeting will be set via Doodle poll when items accumulate that need



to be discussed by the FC. Farnsworth said there was no need to set a meeting yet, there is a possibility we might need another FC meeting before the September GC meeting.

Farnsworth asked if anyone had input on whether the GC meeting in September should be in-person or virtual. La said there are special restrictions in Colorado so they cannot travel. Rabbe said the Service is in the grey zone on travel, airline travel is prohibited through the calendar year. His suggestion is to make in-person available for those that can or want to. Brundage agreed with the hybrid approach. Bradley said to get a good head count to make sure proper physical distancing can be implemented. Rabbe suggested limiting in-person attendance to one person per entity.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 AM Central Time.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS/DECISIONS FROM JULY 16, 2020 FC MEETING

- 1) Approved the May 27, 2020 FC meeting minutes.
- 2) Approved the Clark Island habitat enhancement bid package as amended (property boundaries).
- 3) Approved the sediment augmentation bid package.