

2021 PRRIP AMP Reporting Session (Virtual)

February 16, 2021

Attendees – Members of the Governance Committee (GC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Adaptive Management Working Group (AMWG), Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC), and staff of the Executive Director's Office (EDO)

Virtual Session #1 – Welcome & Administrative

Objective: Greetings, roll call, review agenda.

- Introductions
- Agenda – plan for today
- Mentimeter (**Menti**) – use for Q&A, discussion

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Virtual Session #2 – PRRIP Update

Objective: Update on PRRIP governance, land, and water implementation.

- Admin Update – Chad & Jason
- Land Update – Tim
- Water Update – Seth & Scott
- Menti results

BREAK!

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Where is the PRRIP today?

- Second year of Extension (2020-2032)
- Spending down leftover First Increment funds
- Org. structure, decision-making remain the same
- Pandemic – virtual committee meetings in 2020/2021; implementation on the ground continues
- Developing content of Science Plan with AMWG

Second Increment Policy Frame

- Philip Halteman (Compass) facilitated “mock negotiation” process with GC in fall of 2020
- Help structure Program learning in Extension, identify critical information for developing Second Increment
- Key policy & science questions – living document

Second Increment Policy Frame

Scope of Responsibility:

- Remain a RIP (no significant re-structuring)
- Second Increment will focus on maintenance
- Don't anticipate additional target species
- Management objectives remain

Policy question:

Can contribution to pallid sturgeon research (Program-sponsored or conducted by partners) fulfill the Program's requirement to provide defined benefits for that target species?

Second Increment Policy Frame

Regulatory Certainty:

- Achieve Milestones based on defined contributions of land, water, and \$\$
- Implement Program, including science activities
- Separation b/w ESA coverage and benefits to target species outcomes
- Connections b/w Program actions and species outcomes important for decision-making

Policy question:

What is the best way to communicate target species outcomes to the GC regarding Program decision-making (i.e., whether the Program is/is not meeting target species management objectives)?

Second Increment Policy Frame

Defined Contributions (Water):

- Water Milestone will likely fall between 130,000 and 150,000 acre-ft
- Negotiated based on an understanding of incremental target species benefits and costs, constrained by water availability and ability to route flow through choke point

Potential water uses:

- Spring and fall releases during WC migration to increase proportion of cranes stopping on the Platte.
- Spring releases to support wet meadow hydrology for potential WC use.
- Baseflow releases to provide defined benefits to the fish guild hypothesized to comprise a significant forage base for WC.
- Spring/summer releases to suppress germination of in-channel vegetation for the purpose of maintaining suitable in-channel WC roosting habitat.

Balanced against:

- Feasibility or acceptability of securing additional water contributions
- Benefits and costs of using water versus mechanical and/or chemical approaches (where possible) to create and/or maintain species habitat.

Second Increment Policy Frame

Defined Contributions (Target Flows):

- Water Milestone and Program water operations will NOT be based on a requirement to offset remaining deficits to existing or revised target flows.
- No need to peer review or modify target flows.
- Existing target flows will remain as a water administration tool.
- Existing Program Water Action Plan (WAP) project scores based on target flows will remain and be memorialized.
- Program may test flow management actions that exceed or deviate from target flows during certain times of the year.

Policy question:

What regulatory tools could provide protection for flow releases that exceed target flows?

Second Increment Policy Frame

Defined Contributions (Land):

- Land Milestone – contributions expected to come primarily in the form of counting previously uncredited habitat land owned by environmental entities in 1997 within the Associated Habitat Reach.
- Extent of current non-PRRIP conservation ownership and the extent to which those acres support the management objectives for the Program's target species are currently unknown.

Policy questions:

- *Is there a need for crediting existing conservation lands and/or acquiring additional target species habitat in the Second Increment, based on the expected benefits and status relative to target species management objectives?*
- *What conditions must be met for conservation lands to be credited towards a Second Increment Land Milestone?*

Second Increment Policy Frame

Extension Science Framework:

- Science Plan that includes adaptive management (AM) as a component where applicable; direct linkages to Program decision-making and communication of outcomes from those activities could serve as a useful input to making those decisions.
- Some Program science activities in the Extension will focus more on refining incremental benefits of management and will entail more typical and consistent monitoring activities.

Second Increment Policy Frame – Science Questions:

Management objectives:

- *How should we identify and communicate target species outcomes as well as our ability to influence those outcomes?*
- *In what specific ways will the continuation of Program management actions in a Second Increment contribute to Management Objective #4 (non-target species)?*

Management actions:

- *How does current chokepoint capacity constrain ability to implement flow management actions and what are the incremental and relative benefits of increasing capacity?*
- *What are the incremental and relative benefits and costs of using water versus mechanical/chemical means to create and/or maintain suitable in-channel species habitat?*
- *What are the incremental and relative benefits to target species (or target species habitat) of other potential flow actions?*

Land in the Second Increment:

- *How much of the 19,000 acres of pre-1997 conservation land remains under conservation ownership and how many acres have been acquired (non-PRRIP) since 1997?*
- *What proportion of existing non-PRRIP conservation lands benefit target species or species of concern as defined by the Program?*
- *Are existing PRRIP and non-PRRIP conservation lands sufficient to meet the target species management objectives as detailed in the Extension Science Plan?*

Second Increment Policy Frame

Context moving forward & implications for Program science in the Extension

Virtual Session #3 – Target Species: LT/PP

Objective: Discuss monitoring update, status and trends, and LT/PP in the Extension.

- 2020 monitoring update – Kari, Kaley
- LT de-listing update – Service
- Extension Science Plan (LT/PP Summary) – Malinda
- Extension Science Plan (predator mgmt.) – Malinda
- Menti results

LUNCH!

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Virtual Session #4 – Target Species: WC

Objective: Discuss monitoring update, status and trends, and WC in the Extension.

- 2020 monitoring update (spring & fall) – Mallory
- Tools (cellular telemetry & channel width modeling) – Patrick
- Extension Science Plan (WC Summary) – Malinda
- Menti results

BREAK!

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Virtual Session #5 – Target Species: Pallid Sturgeon

Objective: Discuss PS in the Extension.

- **Program Document goal language:** testing the assumption that managing flow in the CPR improves PS habitat in the LPR
- **AMP management objective:** avoid adverse impacts from Program management action on PS population
- Defining “**benefit**”: could be research, managing habitat, or managing flow (“**Thabault Doctrine**”)
- Service considering **genetics project** (Heist) and other potential research options
- Menti results

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Virtual Session #6 – AMP Implementation

Objective: Discuss emerging issues related to AMP implementation, monitoring, & data collection/analysis/synthesis.

- 2020 geomorphology & in-channel vegetation monitoring – Julia
- Sediment augmentation update – Tom
- Germination suppression discussion – Tom & Kaley
- Menti results

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AMP Reporting Session Review & Wrap-Up

Summary discussion
Action items
Meeting feedback

THANKS!

