



## **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

### **Land Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

#### **Executive Director's Office, Kearney, NE**

**April 14, 2020**

### **Meeting Participants**

#### **Land Advisory Committee (LAC)**

##### **State of Wyoming**

Harry LaBonde, Member, State of Wyoming  
Jay Smith, Alternate, Wyoming State Engineer's  
Office

##### **State of Colorado**

JoJo La – Member, Colorado Water Conservation  
Board

##### **State of Nebraska**

Ted LaGrange – Member, Nebraska Game & Parks  
Commission  
Melissa Mosier – Alternate, Nebraska Department of  
Natural Recourses

##### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**

Matt Rabbe – Member, USFWS

##### **U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBOR)**

Brock Merrill – Member, USBOR

##### **Power Districts**

Dave Zorn – (Vice-chair) Member, Central Nebraska  
Public Power & Irrigation District  
John Shadle – Member, Nebraska Public Power  
District

##### **Environmental Entities**

Andrew Pierson – Member, Audubon Rowe Sanctuary

##### **Local Nebraska Rep. – Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD)**

Lyndon Vogt – Member, CPNRD

##### **Local Nebraska Rep. – Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD)**

None

##### **Local Nebraska Rep. – Joint CPNRD/TBNRD**

Jim Bendfeldt – Member, CPNRD

#### **Executive Director's Office (EDO)**

Bruce Sackett  
Jason Farnsworth (ED)  
Tim Tunnell  
Justin Brei

#### **Other Participants**

Bryan O'Connor, Nebraska Game & Parks  
Commission

**Welcome and Administrative**

Vice-Chairman Zorn called the meeting to order at 9:32 am Central Time and the group proceeded with introductions.

Zorn asked for agenda modifications. None were offered.

Zorn asked for the LAC's recommendation on the minutes of the October 29, 2019 LAC meeting.

Shadle made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 29, 2019 LAC meeting. Motion seconded by LaBonde and passed unanimously.

**General Update and Other Committee Coordination**

Farnsworth updated the LAC on the activities of the March 2019 GC Meeting. In land-related actions, the GC approved acquisition of tract 1910 – a new OCSW nesting area near Lexington, NE.

Farnsworth updated the LAC on the February 4 WAC meeting. This meeting was primarily an update meeting, with the WAC receiving updates on several projects in the works or completed last year. The WAC is focused on progress towards PRRIP's internal goal of quickly reaching 120,000 AF. The WAC meets next on May 5.

Merrill updated the LAC on the February 24 TAC meeting. The TAC discussed and approved the 2019 species monitoring reports. The TAC also discussed plans for an upcoming predator study which will test a few methods to reduce predation of least tern and piping plover nests on PRRIP sites.

Sackett provided the LAC with an update on the current land objective status. The latest update includes the expected closing of tract 1910, which completes the Extension goal for new OCSW habitat acquisitions.

**2020 Recreation Access Program Recommendations**

Rabbe provided an update to the LAC from the Platte River Recreation Access program subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee recommends reopening the channel at area P for all uses including waterfowl hunting. The channel was closed last year as neighboring agreements were being discussed. La asked about the good neighbor policy as it relates to opening the channel at area P. Rabbe said that PRRIP has made significant effort to reach adjacent landowners but have not has any response. PRRIP is moving forward but will continue those efforts and reevaluate this change if needed. The good neighbor policy requires communication with neighbors but does not necessarily involving giving up PRRIP's rights to use our property. The subcommittee also recommends reopening area B after the Fall 2020 whooping crane season. The groundwater recharge project was completed this spring and will be tested in summer once vegetation is established. Rules or restrictions for this property should be discussed at the WAC as well as the LAC once the site has been tested. Shadle expressed concern with



reopening this area given the expense in construction and infrastructure invested in this site. Especially rifle and muzzleloader hunting, but all types of hunting should be carefully considered. Rabbe said this was also discussed at the subcommittee meeting. The primary use at this tract is waterfowl hunting and the subcommittee believes hunters will be respectful of the structures but it'd be good to hear other opinions, including the WAC.

Rabbe said that surveys reported some confusion with the current signage which says that areas are closed to access except by written permission. New signs have been ordered with clearer language and will be posted this year.

The subcommittee also discussed the possibility of allowing mobile permits as opposed to printed permission slips. NGPC is investigating if the current technology will allow this, but the subcommittee was generally favorable to this approach.

Lastly, the subcommittee discussed two changes to the rifle deer lottery process resulting from surveys. The first is to allow a "buddy lottery", where friends or family members could apply for the same site and if one name were drawn, both would get a hunting slot on that tract. The subcommittee recommended that buddy applications could only apply for one site, where currently individual applications can apply for up to three. The second lottery change would be to allow a second lottery drawing for any unused reservations across all properties, drawing from lottery entrants that did not get drawn in the original drawing.

**LaBonde moved to make the following changes to the PRRA program for 2020:**

- 1. Open the channel of Area P to all uses.**
- 2. Open Area B to all uses except deer hunting, starting after Fall 2020 whooping crane season.**
- 3. Allow buddy applications to the rifle deer hunting lottery, where buddy applications can only apply for one site.**
- 4. Implement a second lottery drawing for unused site reservations using existing lottery applications that were not drawn.**

**Motion seconded by Merrill and passed unanimously. LaGrange (NGPC) abstained.**

**Land Management Update**

Tunnell presented the LAC an overview of the 2019 work report, which describes work accomplished and expenditures in 2019. This information was also presented at the March GC meeting. Notable items from the report included \$1.6 million that was included for construction of an OCSW nesting area at the Dippel tract that was not spent. This project was set aside for now in favor of pursuing purchase of existing sandpits. Another notable work item that was not completed was the annual in-channel disking project. The river levels in 2019 were too high to get disking equipment into the river.



88 Tunnell then discussed preliminary plans for restoration and management at the new Chapman  
89 complex. LAC was in favor of the general direction for the activities. Tunnell will create draft  
90 management plan documents for review prior to the next LAC meeting.

91  
92 **Reorganize Officers**

93 With the retirement of Chairman Czaplewski, Sackett asked the LAC if they would like to elect  
94 new officers for 2020.

95  
96 **Shade moved to nominate and approve Dave Zorn as LAC Chairman for 2020. Motion**  
97 **seconded by LaBonde and passed unanimously.**

98  
99 **LaGrange moved to nominate and approve John Shadle as LAC Vice-chair for 2020.**  
100 **Motion seconded by Rabbe and passed unanimously.**

101  
102 **Public Forum**

103 Chairman Zorn asked for public comments, none were offered.

104  
105 **The next LAC meeting was scheduled for August 11, 2020 at 9:30am Central time. Meeting**  
106 **location will be announced closer to the date of the meeting.**

107 With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Zorn at 11:02 a.m.