



PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP or PROGRAM) Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 3rd, 2019 – 1:00 PM to 5:30 PM

Note: All times Mountain.

Meeting Location:

Warwick Denver Hotel
1776 Grant Street
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 861-2000

Governance Committee (GC)

State of Wyoming

Harry LaBonde – Member (2019 GC Chair)
Brandon Gebhart – Alternate

State of Colorado

Don Ament – Member
JoJo La – Alternate

State of Nebraska

Jeff Fassett – Member

Upper Platte Water Users

Dennis Strauch – Member
Owen Williams – Alternate

Downstream Water Users

Mark Czaplewski – Member
Devin Brundage – Member
Joe Citta – Member
Kent Miller – Member

Executive Director's Office (EDO)

Jason Farnsworth, ED
Chad Smith, DED (by phone)
Bridget Barron
Scott Griebeling
Bruce Sackett
Tom Smrdel
Seth Turner
Kevin Werbylo

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

Brock Merrill – Alternate

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)

Steve Small – Member
Matt Rabbe – Alternate (by phone)

Environmental Entities

Bill Taddicken – Member
Brice Krohn – Member (by phone)
Rich Walters – Member (by phone)

Colorado Water Users

Alan Berryman – Member
Deb Freeman – Alternate
Kyle Whitaker – Alternate
Jason Marks – Alternate

Audience Members

Mike Drain – CNPPID
John Shadle – NPPD (by phone)
Loring Crowley – HDR
Jay Smith – State of Wyoming
Jeff Cowley – State of Wyoming



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 03, 2019

Welcome & Administrative

LaBonde called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM Mountain Time and the group proceeded with introductions. Farnsworth said the EDO would like to add a few minutes at the end of the day to discuss the AMP.

GC DECISION – *Ament moved and Fassett seconded to approve the September 10-11, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes and the November 12, 2019 GC Special Session minutes. Minutes approved.*

Program Committee Updates

Land Advisory Committee (LAC)

Czaplewski provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC met on October 29 and discussed the 2020 land budget items; the Dippel Tract land management plan; recommendations on Tracts 1905 and 1910; Czaplewski was elected LAC chair for 2020, Dave Zorn as Vice Chair.

Water Advisory Committee (WAC)

Turner provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC met on October 22 and discussed several items: 2019 WAP update; 2020 Water Plan budget and work plan items; flow summary update. The next WAC meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2020.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Merrill provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC met on October 21 to review and approve the spring 2019 whooping crane monitoring report; discuss acquisition of additional OCSW habitat; the Dippel Tract land management plan; and the draft 2020 budget and work plan. No TAC meetings are scheduled yet for 2020.

Finance Committee (FC)

La provided an update on the latest FC activities. The FC met on November 4 to primarily discuss the draft 2020 budget and work plan. The FC will meet next in early 2020 to discuss contracts and contract amendments.

Program Outreach Update

PRESENTATIONS

- Chad Smith presented on the Program via video to a class of master's students at Western Colorado College taught by Felipe Chavez-Ramirez on Monday, September 16, 2019.
- Jason Farnsworth presented an update on the Program at the Nebraska Natural Resources Districts Annual Conference on September 24, 2019 in Kearney, Nebraska.
- Jason Farnsworth presented a Program update to the Board of Directors of Nebraska Community Foundation on November 15, 2019 in York, Nebraska.
- Jason Farnsworth presented a Program update at the Nebraska State Irrigation Association/Nebraska Water Resources Association joint conference in Kearney, Nebraska on November 26, 2019. The focus of the conference was *Flooding in Nebraska: Before, During & After*.

EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS

- The Program exhibited at Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island on September 10, 11, and 12, 2019 in the Natural Resources Districts building. We made 1,500 contacts over the course of the three days.



- The Program exhibited at the Nebraska Natural Resources Districts Annual Conference on September 23 and 24, 2019 in Kearney, Nebraska. We made 175 contacts at the conference.
- The Program exhibited at the South Platte Forum in Westminster, Colorado on October 23 & 24, 2019 and sponsored a break at the conference. We made 154 contacts at the conference.
- The Program exhibited at the Boo!-Seum at the Kearney Children's Museum on October 24, 2019. Attendance was over 500 children and adults. The Program gave children attending the event candy, environmental coloring books, and kits to make their own bird feeder.

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS

- Scott Griebeling and Patrick Farrell will be presenting at Audubon's Crane Festival in Kearney, Nebraska on March 21, 2020.
- The Program will be exhibiting at the annual meeting of the Four States Irrigation Council in Fort Collins, Colorado on January 8-10, 2020.
- The Program will be exhibiting at Colorado Water Congress in Denver, Colorado on January 29 – 31, 2019.

MEDIA/OTHER

- On October 23, 2019 the US Fish & Wildlife Service issued a press release on a proposal to delist the interior least tern due to recovery. Comments on the proposal are due by December 23, 2019 at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

PRRIP FY19 Budget Update

Farnsworth discussed the status of the FY19 budget, expenditures, and forecast for the remainder of 2019.

PRRIP FY20 Budget and Work Plan

Farnsworth discussed the latest draft of the FY2020 PRRIP budget and work plan. He discussed changes to the budget and work plan since discussing an earlier draft of both documents with the GC on November 12, 2019.

GC DECISION – *Merrill moved and Ament seconded to approve the FY2020 PRRIP Budget and Work Plan. FY2020 PRRIP Budget and Work Plan approved.*

GC DECISION – *Fassett moved and Taddicken seconded to approve the FY2020 PRRIP EDO Contract First Amendment. FY2020 PRRIP EDO Contract First Amendment approved.*

PRRIP First Increment Extension

LaBonde stated on November 12 the GC approved the Extension proposal for a 13-year extension of the First Increment and then the Signatories started working on getting Governor and Secretary signatures on that proposal. Signatory updates:

- Nebraska – Fassett said the agreement has been signed by Governor Ricketts.
- Colorado – La said the agreement has been signed by Governor Polis.
- Wyoming – LaBonde met with Governor Gordon but he deferred his signature until his "personal attorney" who advises strictly the Governor has a chance to review the documents. Gov. Gordon seemed positive & supportive, his signature is expected. La asked if LaBonde got a sense of timing. LaBonde said no.



- Ament asked if there is a liaison between Senator Barrasso's office and Gov. Gordon's office. LaBonde said the two offices have been in contact but he was not aware of either office encouraging the other office to move things forward.
- Reclamation – Merrill said they are still working through process to get the Secretary's signature. There is a black-out period where the Secretary doesn't make any decisions at the end of the year but Merrill doesn't know when the period starts and ends or how long it lasts
- LaBonde said the second piece is getting Congressional authorization and the President's signature on the legislation authorizing the Extension. That bill is now up for consideration by the full Senate but there is a hold on legislation due to an unrelated matter. Ament and Fassett suggested there should be one more press release about the purpose and need for the Extension and the large amount of local and state support for authorization of the Extension. Merrill said Reclamation has authority to implement the Program through September 2020 under the current legislation.

Environmental Account (EA) Annual Operating Plan (AOP)

Econopoulou discussed the draft 2020 EA AOP. Drain said that Central and NPPD try to work together to avoid issues related to effective capacity and reset. Water that is re-set is still sent down the river. All target flows would likely be met if Lake McConaughy reaches effective capacity. LaBonde said this is an issue for Pathfinder as well.

Tiered Consultation Templates

Econopoulou discussed the Service's draft Biological Assessment (BA) templates for the states that are part of the Tiered Consultation process. Freeman said each one is tailored to the respective state's depletions plan. Czapslewski asked if there should be some mention of the status change of the interior least tern in this set of documents (possibly a footnote). LaBonde said a better approach may be to wait until there is a final legal determination that the tern is officially de-listed. Freeman said the distinction is that the Program document includes these documents as part of the package and it was anticipated they would be updated over time, which would require GC review and approval.

GC DECISION – *Ament moved and Merrill seconded to approve the BA templates for Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska.* BA templates approved.

Water Action Plan (WAP) Update

Turner provided an update on the WAP. Werbylo provided an update on the Lakeside slurry wall project and the Cottonwood Ranch broad-scale recharge (BSR) project.

J2 Agreement

Farnsworth discussed the J2 agreement amendment and the redline version that contains changes from Central and the State of Nebraska. The term of the original agreement expired at the end of 2019 and all cash would be distributed back to original contributors, this agreement allows more time (three years) to disburse the money to allow for easier accounting.

GC DECISION – *Taddicken moved and Berryman seconded to approve the J2 Agreement Amendment.* Brundage, Czapslewski, and Miller abstained. Amendment approved.

Cottonwood Ranch Sponsorship Agreement

Farnsworth discussed the Cottonwood Ranch sponsorship agreement. The original lease ends in 2019, this agreement extends that agreement and includes some minor language changes to sync up with the



Broadscale Recharge agreement. No money involved with this lease. Freeman pointed out a typo on Page 8. Farnsworth agreed to fix that typo.

GC DECISION – *Williams moved and Ament seconded to approve the Cottonwood Ranch Sponsorship Agreement. Czaplewski, Miller, and Citta abstained. Agreement approved.*

2020 Dippel Land Management Plan

Farnsworth discussed the 2020 Dippel tract land management plan.

GC DECISION – *Czaplewski moved and Berryman seconded to approve the 2020 Dippel Tract land management plan. Land management plan approved.*

PRRIP Land Management

Farnsworth discussed the RFPs for 2020 prescribed fire and chemical application activities. Taddicken asked if the chemical application activities were outside the phragmites spraying project. Farnsworth said yes.

GC DECISION – *Ament moved and Fassett seconded to approve the 2020 Prescribed Fired RFP and the 2020 Chemical Application RFP. RFPs approved.*

Public Comment

None offered.

Executive Session

*Merrill moved and Strauch seconded to enter Executive Session. **GC entered Executive Session at 3:19 PM Mountain Time.***

GC exited Executive Session at 3:55 PM Mountain Time.

PRRIP Executive Session Motions

GC DECISION – *Merrill moved and Williams seconded to cease further pursuit of Tract 1905. Motion approved.*

GC DECISION – *Czaplewski moved and Fassett seconded to approve the acquisition of Tract 1910 as non-complex sand and water habitat; the GC recognizes this tract is immediately outside the Associated Habitat Reach (AHR) but will be included as Program land. Motion approved.*

Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) Update

Smith discussed the upcoming interviews of GC members and alternates by Philip Halteman of Compass regarding target flows, as well as soliciting feedback from GC members regarding any ways the EDO can improve its performance for the GC and the Program. Freeman asked if the target flow questions would be distributed before the interviews. Smith said yes. Ament asked who developed the question set. Smith said Halteman developed an initial set and then Smith and Farnsworth edited the questions and provided additional questions for the list.

**Future Meetings & Closing Business**

GC DECISION – *Fassett moved and Merrill seconded to appoint Small 2020 GC Chair and appoint LaBonde 2020 GC Vice Chair. Motion approved.*

Proposed 2020 GC meetings:

- GC Quarterly Meeting – **March 10-11, 2020 @ Kearney, NE**
- GC Quarterly Meeting – **June 09-10, 2020 @ Cheyenne, WY**
- GC Quarterly Meeting – **September 15-16, 2020 @ Kearney, NE**
- 2020 AMP Reporting Session – **October 2020 @ Omaha, NE** (specific dates TBD)
- GC Special Session (FY21 Budget/Work Plan) – **November 10, 2020** (conference call/webinar only)
- GC Quarterly Meeting – **December 01-02, 2020 @ Denver, CO**

GC DECISION – *2020 meeting schedule approved.*

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 PM Mountain Time.

Summary of Action Items/Decisions from December 03, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting

- 1) Approved the September 10-11, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes.
- 2) Approved the November 12, 2019 GC Special Session minutes.
- 3) Approved the FY2020 PRRIP Budget and Work Plan.
- 4) Approved the FY2020 PRRIP EDO Contract First Amendment.
- 5) Approved the BA Templates for Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska.
- 6) Approved the J2 Agreement amendment.
- 7) Approved the Cottonwood Ranch Sponsorship Agreement.
- 8) Approved the Dippel Tract 2020 land management plan.
- 9) Approved the 2020 prescribed fire RFP.
- 10) Approved the 2020 chemical application RFP.
- 11) Approved motion to cease further pursuit of Tract 1905.
- 12) Approved following motion – acquire Tract 1910 as non-complex sand and water habitat; the GC recognizes this tract is immediately outside the Associated Habitat Reach (AHR) but will be included as Program land.
- 13) Appointed Steve Small 2020 GC Chair and Harry LaBonde 2020 GC Vice Chair.
- 14) Approved the following 2020 meeting schedule:
 - GC Quarterly Meeting – **March 10-11, 2020 @ Kearney, NE**
 - GC Quarterly Meeting – **June 09-10, 2020 @ Cheyenne, WY**
 - GC Quarterly Meeting – **September 15-16, 2020 @ Kearney, NE**
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