



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

Tuesday, June 11, 2019 – 2:00 PM – 5:45 PM

Note: All times Mountain.

Meeting Location:

Wyoming Water Development Commission – Basement Meeting Room
6920 Yellowtail Road
Cheyenne, WY 82009

Governance Committee (GC)

State of Wyoming

Bryan Clerkin – Alternate

State of Colorado

Don Ament – Member

JoJo La – Alternate

State of Nebraska

Jeff Fassett – Member

Jesse Bradley – Alternate

Upper Platte Water Users

Dennis Strauch – Member

Bob Mehling – Alternate

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

Bridget Barron

Dave Baasch

Patrick Farrell

Scott Griebing

Bruce Sackett

Seth Turner

Kevin Werbylo

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

Chris Beardsley – Member

Brock Merrill – Alternate

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)

Matt Rabbe – Alternate

Tom Econopouly – Alternate (by phone)

Environmental Entities

Bill Taddicken – Member

Brice Krohn – Member

Rich Walters – Member

Colorado Water Users

Alan Berryman – Member

Deb Freeman – Alternate

Jason Marks – Alternate (by phone)

Audience Members

Ned Andrews - ISAC

Mike Drain – CNPPID

Chris Elliott – NPPD

John Shadle – NPPD

Kyle Whitaker – Colorado Water Users

Jim Jenniges – NPPD

Brandi Flyr – CPNRD

Jeff Cowley – State of Wyoming

Jeremy Manly – State of Wyoming

Harry LaBonde



TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2019

Welcome & Administrative

Ament called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM Mountain Time and the group proceeded with introductions.

GC Decision – *Czaplewski moved to approve the March 4-5, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes as amended; Beardsley seconded. Minutes approved.*

GC Decision – *Berryman moved to approve the March 29, 2019 GC Conference Call minutes; Fassett seconded. Minutes approved.*

Program Committee Updates

Land Advisory Committee (LAC)

Czaplewski provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC met on May 8 in Kearney. The main order of business was addressing potential changes in the PRRA program (on the GC agenda later today).

Water Advisory Committee (WAC)

Turner provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC met on May 7 in Ogallala. Several items were updated that are on the GC agenda later today. The next WAC meeting is on August 6.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Merrill provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC met on April 30 in Kearney. The TAC discussed edits to monitoring reports, new off channel sand and water habitat on the Dippel tract, plans for predator monitoring with cameras, and other items.

Finance Committee (FC)

Farnsworth said there has not been an FC meeting since the last GC meeting. Smith will be sending out a Doodle poll to set an FC meeting for later this month to address a couple large bid packages.

Program Outreach Update

PRESENTATIONS

- Justin Brei was part of the Rowe Sanctuary Speaker Series on March 7, 2019 at the Kearney Public Library in Kearney, Nebraska. His presentation was titled, “*Past, Present, and Future Water Projects for the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program*”.
- Dave Baasch presented on Whooping Cranes to the Woman’s Educational Society of Colorado College on March 18, 2019 in Kearney, Nebraska.
- Patrick Farrell presented at the Audubon Crane Festival in Kearney, Nebraska on March 23, 2019. His presentation includes updates on the avian species and discussion of the process to reach Program Milestones.
- Scott Griebeling presented at the American Water Resources Association Spring Specialty Conference titled, “*Setting Conditions for the Success of Integrated Water Resources Management*” in Omaha, Nebraska on March 25, 2019. His presentation was titled, *Collaboration for Environmental Benefits and Regulatory Compliance: The Role of Integrated Water Resource Management in the Successful Operations of the Lake McConaughy Environmental Account*”.
- Kevin Werbylo presented at the American Water Resources Association (AWRA) Spring Specialty Conference titled, “*Setting Conditions for the Success of Integrated Water Resources Management*” in Omaha, Nebraska on March 25, 2019. His presentation was titled, “*Applying IWRM to Managed Groundwater Recharge for Environmental Purposes*”.



- On March 26, 2018 the Program had a panel at the AWRA conference titled, “The Role of IWRM in Creation, Governance, Success of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program”. The panel was moderated by Scott Griebeling and Panelists were:
 - Jesse Bradley, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Lincoln, NE
 - Thomas Econopouly, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lakewood, CO
 - Brandi Flyr, Central Platte Natural Resources District, Grand Island, NE
 - Jojo La, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Denver, CO
 - Bill Taddicken, National Audubon Society (Rowe Sanctuary), Gibbon, NE
- Dave Baasch presented on the Program to a youth group from Big Red Agricultural Growers (BRAG) on March 28, 2019 in Kearney, Nebraska. BRAG educates youth ages 12-15 about ag-related issues and encourages them to speak up for agriculture.
- Dave Baasch and Patrick Farrell presented on the Program and were part of a panel discussion about large landscape architecture on April 5, 2019 in Lincoln, Nebraska. The panel was part of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Architecture annual Landscape Architecture Symposium. The title of the 2019 symposium was, “Nexus: design, horticulture, ecology”.
- Chad Smith presented an overview of the Program, adaptive management, and decision-making at a national Bureau of Reclamation workshop on river restoration programs on May 2, 2019 in Sacramento, CA.
- Jason Farnsworth presented an overview of the Program to the Nebraska Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association annual seminar on May 3, 2019 in Ogallala, Nebraska.

EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS

- The Program exhibited at the Audubon Crane Festival in Kearney, Nebraska on March 23, 2019. We made 100 contacts.
- The Program exhibited at the AWRA conference in Omaha, Nebraska on March 25- 27, 2019. We made 105 contacts over the three days.

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS

- Staff and Governance Committee members will be presenting on the Program at the Lower South Platte River Basin Tour on June 17-18, 2019. The tour begins and ends in Sterling, Colorado.
- Don Ament and Scott Griebeling will be presenting on the Program; what it is, how it works and the Program’s future as the Colorado response to the ESA listings.
- Jojo La will be presenting on the role of the State of Colorado’s government in the Program and how Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) implements this role.
- Jon Altenhofen will be presenting on how Tamarack works as a site in the context of the Program.

MEDIA/OTHER

- After the March 2019 Governance Committee meeting, the Kearney Hub published an article regarding the Program’s extension.
- After the March 2019 Governance Committee meeting, the Kearney Hub published an article regarding the Broad Scale Recharge and Slurry Wall projects.
- In March 2017 the Program, along with the Crane Trust and Rowe Sanctuary; hosted in their respective blinds on the river, videographers from Silverback Films who were working on their natural history series, *Our Planet*. Produced in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund, *Our Planet* used a combination of stunning photography and technology to present Earth’s remaining wilderness areas and their animal inhabitants. The project took four years to complete, with more than 600 crew members filming in 50 countries across the world to showcase the diversity that exists among habitats, from the remote Arctic wilderness to the jungles of South America. Silverback filmed the sandhill cranes on the



Platte River as part of the Fresh Water episode of the series. The eight-part series was released on April 5, 2019 and continues to be available on Netflix.

PRRIP FY19 Budget Update

Farnsworth discussed the status of the FY19 budget, expenditures, and forecast for the rest of 2019. Beardsley asked about the Elwood recharge projects budget line item and why it is showing a negative balance. Farnsworth said we are over on that line item because of having to pay 2018 invoices with 2019 funds.

PRRIP First Increment Extension

Ament said Sen. Barrasso from Wyoming is the Senate sponsor and Rep. Neguse from Colorado is the House sponsor. Work is underway to get legislators signed on in support. La said an attempt is being made to get all Senators and Representatives from the basin in support of the legislation and we are close to sending in a letter of support from all three governors. Sen. Barrasso has formally requested a hearing that is likely to happen before the August recess and there may be a House hearing in June. Beardsley said he had a briefing with the House Natural Resources committee staff led by Carli Brown. One question – for the Senators who signed on to Sen. Barrasso’s legislation, Sen. Sasse was not signed on. Any reason why? La said she heard Gov. Ricketts sent a letter encouraging everyone to support the legislation.

PRRIP Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) Update Process

Smith discussed the status of the process of updating the Program AMP and how to address the issue of examining target flows. Issues discussed:

- Differences between the specifics of the AMP and management objectives and higher-level Program concerns of ESA compliance.
- How to address performance indicators for migratory species like whooping cranes that are affected by so many things outside the control of the Program.

PRRIP Water Action Plan (WAP) Update

Turner discussed the Water Objective Summary and the WAP Accounting Memo. Rabbe asked about the discrepancy between the score and the yield on some of these projects and whether we will look back at projects over time and realize we are not getting as much water as anticipated. Turner said we just need more time with these projects to see what the reality is of score vs. yield. Werbylo discussed the Cottonwood Ranch broad-scale recharge project and the Lakeside slurry wall project. Andrews asked about the expected yield for the BSR project. Farnsworth said around 3,000 AF/year.

CNPPID Irrigator Lease Scoring

Drain discussed the scoring recommendation for the CNPPID irrigator lease. Rabbe asked about the caveat language and wanted to add “and modification” to the language. Drain and Turner agreed.

GC Decision – *Strauch moved to approve the recommended score of 1,900 AF for the CNPPID Irrigator Lease project with the amended caveat language; Berryman seconded. All Downstream Water Users abstained. Score approved.*

NPPD Surface Water Exchange Agreement

Farnsworth discussed the surface water exchange agreement. The Program is in the second year of a pilot surface water exchange agreement with CPNRD. The NPPD agreement is identical to the CPNRD agreement. NPPD will withhold water from irrigation and CNPPID will credit it to the Environmental Account in the fall. The Program will pay the same amount as for CPNRD water.



The parties are working on ways to transition to a longer-term agreement that will revise cost to use a “cost of service” approach. Farnsworth indicated that the current line item budget WP-4(f)ii was not sufficient to cover the 2019 cost as more water is available than anticipated. He recommended that \$379,246 be moved from WP-4(i) to cover 2019 costs.

GC Decision – *Mehling moved to approve the NPPD surface water exchange agreement and the associated movement of \$379,246 funds from WP4-I to WP-4(f)ii; Fassett seconded. All Downstream Water Users abstained. Agreement approved.*

Elwood Recharge Agreement

Farnsworth discussed the recharge agreement. Last year the Program amended the Elwood agreement to increase the recharge cap to 30,000 acre-ft. In the fall of 2018, there was a lot of recharge water and the State of Nebraska declined to take its share. As a result, the entire 30,000 acre-feet has been used and it is a good time to transition to a longer-term agreement. The new agreement retains same general provisions but specifies 30,000 acre-feet can be recharged annually over a five year term.

A portion of 2018 recharge water was not billed until 2019 and was posted to the 2019 budget. As such, budget line item is currently over budget. CNPPID anticipates that 15,000 acre-feet of recharge could be available in the fall. Farnsworth recommended transferring \$1,120,000 from WP-4(i) to cover previous 2018 expenditures as well as potential fall recharge operations.

GC Decision – *Williams moved to approve the Elwood recharge agreement; Taddicken seconded. All Downstream Water Users abstained. Agreement approved.*

GC Decision – *Williams moved to approve the movement of \$1,120,000 from WP4-i to WP-4(b)i for the Elwood recharge agreement; Taddicken seconded. Agreement approved.*

Platte River Recreational Access (PRRA) Program

Sackett discussed the NGPC agreement for managing the PRRA and recommended PRRA changes from the LAC.

GC Decision – *Czaplewski moved to approve the agreement with the NGPC for PRRA management; Berryman seconded. Agreement approved.*

The GC discussed issues at the Dippel tract related to waterfowl hunting in the channel and trying to work with the adjacent landowner on a management agreement. The GC also discussed opening several properties to use during the summer tern/plover nesting season.

GC Decision – *Williams moved to amend the LAC PRRA recommendation for Area P and remove in-channel waterfowl hunting; Walters seconded. Motion approved.*

GC Decision – *Williams moved to accept the remaining PRRA recommendations from the LAC; Beardsley seconded. Those recommendations included:*

- *Add Coyote and fur bearer incidental harvest (during open hunting seasons) to Appendix B of Public Access Policy – list of compatible uses, but not allowing calls and trapping during open season on other hunted species.*
- *Remove the “limited access” period from Appendix A of the Public Access Policy, effectively opening Areas A, D, E, H, and I during tern and plover nesting season within the channel portion of the properties.*



- *Keep Program-owned portion of the Cottonwood Ranch complex closed for public availability for this year due to continued broadscale recharge project construction (Area B).*
- *Enroll remaining land on Area L and open to access (SE portion of property).*
- *Open river access to the center of the channel at the following properties: Area J, N, G, and western half of L.*

Motion approved.

Public Comment

Ament asked for public comment. LaBonde said the Program is doing fine work and needs to keep it up.

Executive Session

Berryman moved to enter Executive Session; Fassett seconded. GC entered Executive Session at 4:43 PM Mountain Time.

Fassett moved to e Executive Session; Beardsley seconded. GC exited Executive Session at 5:16 PM Mountain Time.

PRRIP Executive Session Motions

GC Decision – *Czaplewski moved to approve the acquisition of Tract 1804 and all acquired acres would count toward the 1,500-acre Extension plus-up; Beardsley seconded. Service abstained. Motion approved.*

GC Decision – *Williams moved to approve the exchange of Tract W1802 for a portion of Tract W201701; Mehling seconded. Motion approved.*

Future Meetings & Closing Business

Upcoming 2019 GC meetings:

- GC Quarterly Meeting – **September 10-11, 2019** @ Kearney, NE
- 2019 AMP Reporting Session – **October 8-10, 2019** @ Omaha, NE
- GC Special Session (FY20 Budget/Work Plan) – **November 12, 2019** (conference call/webinar only)
- GC Quarterly Meeting – **December 3-4, 2019** @ Denver, CO

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 PM Mountain Time.

Summary of Action Items/Decisions from June 11, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting

- 1) Approved the March 4-5, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes as amended.
- 2) Approved the March 29, 2019 GC Conference Call minutes.
- 3) Approved the recommended score of 1,900 AF for the CNPPID Irrigator Lease project with the amended caveat language.
- 4) Approved the NPPD surface water exchange agreement and the associated movement of \$379,246 funds from WP4-I to WP-4(f)ii.
- 5) Approved the Elwood recharge agreement.
- 6) Approved the movement of \$1,120,000 from WP4-i to WP-4(b)i for the Elwood recharge agreement.
- 7) Approved the agreement with the NGPC for PRRA management.
- 8) Amended the LAC PRRA recommendation for Area P and remove in-channel waterfowl hunting.
- 9) Accepted the following PRRA recommendations from the LAC:



- Add Coyote and fur bearer incidental harvest (during open hunting seasons) to Appendix B of Public Access Policy – list of compatible uses, but not allowing calls and trapping during open season on other hunted species.
 - Remove the “limited access” period from Appendix A of the Public Access Policy, effectively opening Areas A, D, E, H, and I during tern and plover nesting season within the channel portion of the properties.
 - Keep Program-owned portion of the Cottonwood Ranch complex closed for public availability for this year due to continued broadscale recharge project construction (Area B).
 - Enroll remaining land on Area L and open to access (SE portion of property).
 - Open river access to the center of the channel at the following properties: Area J, N, G, and western half of L.
- 10) Approved the acquisition of Tract 1804 and all acquired acres would count toward the 1,500-acre Extension plus-up.
- 11) Approved the exchange of Tract W1802 for a portion of Tract W201701.