



**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP or PROGRAM)  
Governance Committee (GC) Conference Call Minutes**

**Governance Committee (GC)**

**State of Wyoming**

Bryan Clerkin – Alternate

**State of Colorado**

Don Ament – Member

JoJo La – Alternate

**State of Nebraska**

Jeff Fassett – Member

**Upper Platte Water Users**

Dennis Strauch – Member

**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

Scott Griebeling

Tim Tunnell

**Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)**

Brock Merrill – Alternate

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

Matt Rabbe – Alternate

**Environmental Entities**

Rich Walters – Member

Kristal Stoner – Alternate

**Colorado Water Users**

Alan Berryman – Member

Deb Freeman – Alternate

**Audience Members**

Cory Steinke – CNPPID

Michelle Koch – NGPC

John Shadle – NPPD

Jason Mead – State of Wyoming

Jim Hawks – City of North Platte

**Welcome & Administrative**

Ament called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM Central Time and Smith proceeded with a roll call.

**North Platte Choke Point Test Flow**

Farnsworth gave a short update on the status of discussions regarding issues related to indemnification and insurance. Ament asked for clarification of who was discussing indemnification issues. Farnsworth said he is working with Brundage and Central legal counsel to get clarification and revised language that would then be presented to State of Colorado and Colorado Water User GC representatives to discuss next steps. Ament and Freeman agreed. Smith discussed the status of planning for the test flow. Ament said he thinks postponement until next year would be wise. Rabbe said there was severe flooding in central Nebraska (Wood River) so there are many landowners and homeowners that did experience flooding in and around the Associated Habitat Reach and we are very sensitive to this recovery and repair. There is always scrutiny with releases so from our perspective there is the potential for backlash to the test flow, even if unwarranted. The Service believes any release this year in particular will come with a high degree of sensitivity and there is not a lot of appetite within the Service for doing the test flow this year. Fassett agreed with those comments and things waiting a year will be wise. Brundage agreed. Citta said NPPD would support a delay. Mead said Wyoming is on the same page as everyone else. Miller said he supports delaying for a year as well. Ament asked if it is OK to continue working on issues like indemnification even if the test flow is delayed for a year. Brundage said Central is committed to finishing the indemnification/insurance issue and the rest of the GC agreed.

**GC Decision** – The GC concurred with delaying the choke point test flow for a year.

Rabbe discussed the EA and the status of potential EA releases the remainder of this year. The Service believes it will need to release some water, likely at the end of summer or in the fall, to avoid debits to the EA for not using water and then being re-set to 100,000 acre-feet. The Service is continuing to wrestle with this issue. Steinke said he has a gut feeling that the Service may see “free” flows of a similar magnitude to the test flows because of the snowpack and the forecast for wet weather. The re-set, if any, would be small and there will be a lot of water moving through the system anyway because there is so much water that is going to have to move downstream. Farnsworth said we may do some internal planning to capture any possible results of natural flow events moving through the choke point and other parts of the system that may occur as a result of the expected high spring inflows.

**Future Meetings & Closing Business**

Ament said it appears that Sen. Barrasso from Wyoming will be the primary sponsor of the Extension legislation and the bill is likely to be introduced and hearings held after the April Congressional recess. Strauch asked if anyone on the House side would introduce a companion bill and Ament said not at this point. La said she talked to Rep. Perlmutter’s office and Rep. Neguse’s office (both from Colorado) and they are both briefed on the subject

Fassett wondered if anyone had comments about the spring migration. Rabbe said it looks to be a slightly later start to the migration than in past years because of weather-related issues, but what he has gathered is that the birds we have seen have been staying in Nebraska with the snow line still being in southern South Dakota. No whooping crane sightings so far in the Dakotas but there have been observations on the Platte in several places. Baasch said the current Platte count is eight (8) birds so far. Barron said Rowe and the Crane Trust have been impacted by road closures due to flooding and mud. They have had numerous blind reservations canceled and it will impact them financially.

Ament said he appreciated everyone calling in today and making time to discuss this issue.



Upcoming 2019 GC meetings:

- GC Quarterly Meeting – **June 11-12, 2019** @ Cheyenne, WY (WY Water Development Commission offices)
- GC Quarterly Meeting – **September 10-11, 2019** @ Kearney, NE (EDO Conference Center)
- 2019 AMP Reporting Session – **October 8-10, 2019** @ Omaha, NE (Hilton Garden Inn Omaha Downtown)
- GC Special Session (FY20 Budget/Work Plan) – **November 12, 2019** (conference call/webinar only)
- GC Quarterly Meeting – **December 3-4, 2019** @ Denver, CO

Strauch moved to end the conference call; Rabbe seconded. **Meeting adjourned at 12:37 PM Central Time.**

**Summary of Action Items/Decisions from March 29, 2019 GC Conference Call**

- 1) Provided guidance to delay the North Platte choke point test flow for a year.