



PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
February 5, 2018

Meeting Attendees

Water Advisory Committee (WAC)

State of Colorado

Jojo La – Member
Eric Skeie - Alternate

State of Wyoming

Bryan Clerkin – Member
Jeff Cowley - Alternate

State of Nebraska

Jessie Strom – Member
Jennifer Schellpeper - Alternate
Kari Burgert - Alternate

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Tom Econopouly - Member
Jeff Runge – Alternate

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Brock Merrill – Member

Downstream Water Users

Cory Steinke – Chair
Jeff Shafer – Member
Brandi Flyr - Member
Nolan Little

Colorado Water Users

Jon Altenhofen – Member
Luke Shawcross – Alternate
Jason Marks

Upper Platte Water Users

Dennis Strauch - Member

Environmental Groups

Bill Taddicken - Member

Executive Director's Office (EDO)

Chad Smith, DED
Courtney Black
Scott Griebeling
Seth Turner
Kevin Werbylo

Contractors



Welcome and Administrative: *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*

Introductions were made. There were no modifications to the agenda. October 2018 WAC meeting minutes, with edits from Shafer and La, were approved without discussion.

WAP Projects and Other Brief Water Updates

Cottonwood Ranch Broad-Scale Recharge: Kevin Werbylo, EDO

Werbylo reported that construction started in October 2018 and is coming along nicely. The date of final completion is still set for May 1. Work has been somewhat limited by cold and wet weather, but the contractor and engineer are comfortable with progress to date. Recent focus has been on concrete flume structures, of which there will be 7 total (4 are complete, 2 are partially complete). As of the end of January 2019, \$1.3M of the total construction budget of \$4.3M has been spent. The remaining \$3M includes several more expensive items. Construction is estimated to be about 50% complete.

Lakeside Gravel Pit: Kevin Werbylo, EDO

Werbylo reported that a near-final design was presented to the GC in December 2018, with a final cost estimate from JEO of just under \$10M. The storage capacity of the pit at this stage of the design is about 970 AF. Griebeling ran a preliminary scoring model, and the project score is estimated to be in the 2,800 AF to 3,200 AF range, depending on operations. The GC halted further progress on project design while the EDO is evaluating potential seepage into and out of the gravel pit and coordinating with Nebraska DNR regarding permitting. Werbylo said the EDO will coordinate with CPNRD and TBNRD as well and will hopefully have more information to present to the GC in March. Of the total \$735,000 design and construction administration budget, about \$445,000 has been spent as of the end of January.

CPNRD Water Leasing: Brandi Flyr, CPNRD

Flyr reviewed the agreement reached last year with CNPPID and Nebraska DNR to transfer 14,251 AF from the three CPNRD canals to the Lake McConaughy EA as a pilot project, rather than returning that water directly to the river at the canal headgates. Another pilot project is in the works for 2019, with similar acreage enrollment and volume transfer anticipated.

NPPD Water Leasing: Jeff Shafer, NPPD

Shafer reported that NPPD has a commitment from management to pursue an agreement similar to that between CPNRD, CNPPID, and Nebraska DNR. Tentatively, about 3,600 acres could be enrolled, resulting in a transfer of 1,800 AF to the Lake McConaughy EA, but those numbers could increase. NPPD will need to work out an agreement with the Program. Steinke clarified that both the CPNRD and potential NPPD transfers involve water that is not diverted by the canals but stays in Lake McConaughy and is then moved to the EA.

Taddicken asked about potential issues with delivering all of this water from the Lake McConaughy EA to the habitat reach, given capacity issues at the choke point. Griebeling said this should not be an issue in terms of overall volume. Econopouly confirmed that USFWS can plan accordingly to get the desired water to locations downstream. Griebeling added that there is



a planned choke point conveyance test in the spring, and an ad hoc committee is meeting soon to discuss.

CNPPID Water Leasing (Phelps, Elwood, Irrigators): Cory Steinke, CNPPID

Steinke reported that a lot of water has been diverted for Program recharge since mid-November. At present, 2,904 AF has been diverted into Phelps County Canal for the Program. These diversions were recently shut off, as groundwater levels were approaching monitoring well thresholds.

Unofficially, 18,240 AF was diverted into Elwood Reservoir for the Program, but that total may change somewhat due to allocations for the state and TBNRD. Diversions into Elwood were terminated to save adequate storage space for CNPPID irrigation operations.

For the CNPPID irrigator lease, 2,948 acres were enrolled for the next season, just under the 3,000-acre cap in the new contract. This project results in a credit of 9" per acre into the Lake McConaughy EA for the Program.

Preview of 2019 Water-Related Activities: Scott Griebeling and Seth Turner, EDO

EDO staff provided information on water-related activities planned for the coming months.

AMP Update

Griebeling presented an overview of several questions that will be pursued in the AMP update: (1) evaluate target flows and hydrologic conditions? (2) can we meet species objectives with 120,000 AF? and (3) how do we best manage our water? Species objectives were reviewed along with potential options for a limited- or broad-scope approach to evaluation of target flows and hydrologic conditions. Griebeling also discussed model development and other analyses that the EDO is working on, including suitability curves (species needs), a 2D hydraulic model (channel conditions), an operations model (flow routing), and water availability (EA water accounting), all of which are inter-dependent. Griebeling recommended that committee members review several documents pertaining to adaptive management, target flows, and hydrologic conditions that were posted on the Program website. There was additional discussion of related issues that the EDO intends to discuss at the March GC.

Accounting

Turner said the EDO is abandoning the Phelps-only recharge report of past years and instead developing a new accounting memo to include all active WAP projects. This first accounting memo will cover 2017-2018 non-irrigation season through late-2018 credits to the Lake McConaughy EA. A draft memo is in progress and is expected to be sent to the WAC for review prior to the May meeting.

Project Scoring

Turner said the EDO is hoping to resolve any remaining issues that Nebraska DNR has with the Elwood recharge modeling so that the recommended score can be presented to the GC in March.



The EDO then plans to begin work on score analyses for the CNPPID irrigator lease and expects to reconvene the Scoring Subcommittee in mid- to late-April. Later in the year, the EDO plans to score the CPNRD and NPPD groundwater recharge projects.

Fact Sheets

The draft Tamarack I fact sheet is available for the committee to review. The EDO will update other existing fact sheets with new numbers from the analyses associated with the accounting memo. Additional fact sheets may be developed later in the year for WAP projects such as Cottonwood Ranch broad-scale recharge.

Additional Business: *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*

The next WAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 7. Annual depletions plan updates will be presented. Shafer asked about a Wyoming Glendo Reservoir study; Clerkin plans to present on that at the May WAC meeting.

Econopouly requested that the spring EAC-RCC meeting be scheduled for early March. The USFWS is not planning a February 15-March 15 EA release but will make releases for whooping cranes (starting around March 23) and in late spring for the choke point test.

Action Items

General WAC

- Review reading materials related to target flows and the AMP update (3 documents, posted on website).
- Submit depletions plan documents to EDO prior to May WAC meeting.

ED Office

- Upload Griebeling's AMP update slides and meeting schedule to Program website.