



1 **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**  
2 **Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
3 Nebraska Game and Parks Commission – Lake McConaughy Visitor Center  
4 October 2, 2018

5  
6 **Meeting Attendees**

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8 **Water Advisory Committee (WAC)**

9 **State of Colorado**

10 Jojo La – Member

11 Eric Skeie

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13 **State of Wyoming**

14 Bryan Clerkin – Member

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16 **State of Nebraska**

17 Kari Burgert

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19 **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

20 Tom Econopouly - Member

21 Jeff Runge – Alternate

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23 **U.S. Bureau of Reclamation**

24 Brock Merrill – Alternate

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26 **Downstream Water Users**

27 Cory Steinke – Chair

28 Jeff Shafer – Member

29 Brandi Flyr – Member (on phone)

30 Tyler Thulin

31 Nolan Little

32  
33 **Colorado Water Users**

34 Jon Altenhofen – Member

35 Luke Shawcross - Alternate

36 Jason Marks

37  
38 **Upper Platte Water Users**

39 Dennis Strauch - Member

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41 **Environmental Groups**

42 Jacob Fritton – Member (on phone)

8 **Executive Director’s Office (EDO)**

Jason Farnsworth, ED

Courtney Black

Scott Griebbling

Seth Turner

Kevin Werbylo

15  
16 **Contractors**



44 **Welcome and Administrative:** *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*

45 Introductions were made. There were no modifications to the agenda. There were no edits to the  
46 August WAC meeting minutes. Shafer made a motion to approve, second by Merrill, unanimous  
47 approval.  
48

49 **WAP Projects and Other Brief Water Updates**

50 ***Cottonwood Ranch Broad-Scale Recharge: Kevin Werbylo, EDO***

51 Werbylo reported that bids for construction were opened last week. The winner was Myers  
52 Construction out of Broken Bow, Nebraska. Their bid of about \$4.2 million was slightly higher  
53 than the engineer's estimate of about \$4.1 million. The construction period for berms and water  
54 control structures is expected to be October 15, 2018 through May 1, 2019.  
55

56 CNPPID is also proceeding with the construction of the pipeline from Phelps County Canal to  
57 Cottonwood Ranch. Bids were accepted. Steinke said construction may be completed by  
58 December but has to be done by March 31, 2019.  
59

60 The project is expected to begin full operation in May or June 2019.  
61

62 ***Lakeside Gravel Pit: Kevin Werbylo, EDO***

63 Werbylo reported that the engineer's estimate increased to the \$8-9 million range. The EDO  
64 asked the GC for permission to continue with the project by proceeding with the final design  
65 work, which was approved at the GC special session in August. However, approval of moving to  
66 final construction would occur at a later time. Design engineer JEO is expecting to have 90-95%  
67 design prior to December GC meeting, including nearly final cost estimates, etc. One significant  
68 change to the project is that the wellfield (to withdraw water from the Platte River) will be  
69 expanded, and the proposed infrastructure to deliver surface water from the Peterson Drain will  
70 not be included in this final design. There will be 8-10 wells capable of providing about 30 cfs  
71 inflows to the Lakeside gravel pit.  
72

73 ***CPNRD Water Leasing: Brandi Flyr, CPNRD***

74 Flyr reported that a pilot project agreement was reached with CNPPID to keep surface water  
75 allocated to the Thirty Mile, Cozad, and Orchard-Alfalfa canals in Lake McConaughy and then  
76 transfer that water to the EA. CPNRD is also working with the Nebraska DNR on the  
77 implementation of this pilot project, which is being done as an exchange outside the full statutory  
78 surface water transfer process. The full transfer volume is 14,251 AF, and it is expected to be  
79 transferred to the EA in early October. Farnsworth said there was an amendment to the water  
80 lease contract between the Program and CPNRD to allow the Program to purchase the water  
81 transferred to the EA. The unit cost for transferred CPNRD surface water was \$154.50/AF in  
82 2018.  
83

84 Altenhofen asked if this project will be scored; Farnsworth said eventually, assuming the project  
85 has long-term viability. As water contributed to the Lake McConaughy EA, the CPNRD surface  
86 water exchange would have an estimated score of about 12,000 AFY.



87  
88 Flyr also said there were recharge diversions in the three canals from the end of the irrigation  
89 season through the end of September.

90  
91 ***NPPD Water Leasing: Jeff Shafer, NPPD***

92 Shafer said NPPD is working with CPNRD, CNPPID, and Nebraska DNR on a surface exchange  
93 similar to CPNRD's, to hopefully implement in 2019. Excess flows were diverted for recharge  
94 in the Gothenburg and Dawson County canals in September.

95  
96 ***CNPPID Water Leasing (Phelps, Elwood, Irrigators): Cory Steinke, CNPPID***

97 Steinke reported that the CNPPID Board approved a 5-year agreement with the Program to  
98 continue the irrigator lease project. The full available amount based on 2,055 acres enrolled in  
99 2018 will be transferred to the EA retroactive to October 1. Maintenance operations in the E-65  
100 system are underway and anticipated to be finished by November 15. At that point, when target  
101 flows drop, it is anticipated that water will be diverted to Elwood Reservoir for recharge. There  
102 has not yet been any recharge in the Phelps County Canal due to inspections of siphons and  
103 anticipated construction of the pipeline head (for deliveries to Cottonwood Ranch) prior to  
104 November 15. After that, CNPPID intends to divert water into Phelps for recharge if possible.

105  
106 Runge raised the issue of having flexibility in the timing of when water is credited to the EA.  
107 Given changes in the maximum operating capacity of Lake McConaughy around the same time  
108 additional water is typically credited to the EA in early October, USFWS wants to avoid hitting  
109 capacity and then having the EA debited after water was just added to the account. Runge  
110 suggested crediting the EA at a later date, in November or early in the next year. Steinke said  
111 chances of a reset in the fall are small and Shafer added that most of the water credited to the EA  
112 is from irrigation sources and therefore credited at the end of the irrigation season. Shafer told  
113 Runge that once Program water projects stabilize, the EA manager should be better able to  
114 budget EA releases to minimize the risk of the reservoir "hitting capacity." If USFWS wants to  
115 develop a proposal for changing the timing of adding water to the EA, they can bring it to  
116 CNPPID and NPPD for consideration, but CNPPID and NPPD are not interested in just  
117 transferring risk from the EA to the Districts.

118  
119 ***Project Scoring Update: Seth Turner, EDO***

120 Turner reported that additional analyses requested by the Scoring Subcommittee for Elwood  
121 Reservoir groundwater recharge were completed, an update to the Pathfinder Municipal Account  
122 Lease scoring was completed and submitted to the Scoring Subcommittee in mid-August, and a  
123 second Scoring Subcommittee conference call was held on August 27. The Scoring  
124 Subcommittee recommended an updated score of 6,350 AFY (increase of 2,350 AFY over the  
125 original 4,000 AFY) for the Pathfinder Municipal Account Lease, which was approved by the  
126 GC in September. A score was also recommended for Elwood Reservoir groundwater recharge,  
127 but presentation to the GC was deferred after the Nebraska DNR raised questions about the  
128 COHYST model underlying the recharge analysis. Griebeling said the questions are related to  
129 changes in stream depletion factors. Burgert said Nebraska DNR is reluctant to have different



130 versions of the same model (COHYST) showing different results in the same area (Plum Creek).  
131 The EDO and Nebraska DNR are meeting in mid-October to discuss. It is anticipated that these  
132 issues will be resolved, and the recommended Elwood score will be presented to the GC in  
133 December.

134  
135 **Water Portfolio Review:** *Scott Griebeling, Seth Turner, and Kevin Werbylo, EDO*  
136 Turner, Griebeling, and Werbylo provided a review of Program water projects. This was intended  
137 to be a refresher for long-time committee members, a more detailed introduction for new  
138 committee members, and a companion piece to the water project fact sheets developed by the  
139 EDO. The presentation began with a recap of the Program's First Increment Water Objective  
140 and Milestone #4, followed by descriptions of the three initial state projects (Lake McConaughy  
141 EA in Nebraska, Pathfinder EA in Wyoming, and the Tamarack I groundwater recharge project  
142 in Colorado). Altenhofen provided some additional detail regarding Tamarack. From there, the  
143 presentation progressed through Water Action Plan projects contributing to the Lake  
144 McConaughy EA and the various water leasing and groundwater recharge projects implemented  
145 in collaboration with the Central Platte NDR, CNPPID, and NPPD. Information was also  
146 provided on the Cottonwood Ranch broad-scale recharge project, now entering the construction  
147 phase, and the Lakeside slurry wall gravel pit, which is nearing a final design stage. The  
148 presentation concluded with brief discussions of potential future projects and the EDO's plans  
149 for scoring additional Water Action Plan projects.

150  
151 **FY2019 Draft Water Plan Budget:** *Seth Turner and Kevin Werbylo, EDO*  
152 Turner reviewed the water-related line items in the draft budget for FY2019. Farnsworth  
153 provided additional information regarding the proposal to work with the North Platte NRD on  
154 water conservation measures.

155  
156 Black and Turner presented information on the streamflow forecast work performed by  
157 Dewberry for the past several years. There was discussion of whether the EDO should continue  
158 to provide streamflow forecasts on the PRRIP website; the general consensus was to continue the  
159 forecast work for another year. It was also suggested that a dialogue be facilitated with those on  
160 the WAC (and others) to discuss forecasting tools people use, additional forecast-related  
161 information that may be helpful to include on the PRRIP website, and ways in which streamflow  
162 forecasting might better serve the Program's goals.

163  
164 **Additional Business:** *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*  
165 The draft meeting schedule for 2019 was reviewed. Shafer commented on a proposed Wyoming  
166 plan to modify Glendo Reservoir operations and requested a report on the proposal from Clerkin  
167 at the next WAC meeting. Steinke said that would be of interest to CNPPID as well as NPPD.

## 168 **Action Items**

### 169 **General WAC**

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- 175      ED Office
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