



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
Erik 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 Flyn - 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 Griebbling
Seth Turner
Kevin Werbylo

Contractors



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

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

50
51 **WAP Projects and Other Brief Water Updates**

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

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

60
61 ***Lakeside Gravel Pit:*** *Kevin Werbylo, EDO*

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

71
72 ***CPNRD Water Leasing:*** *Brandi Flyr, CPNRD*

73 Flyr reviewed the agreement reached last year with CNPPID and Nebraska DNR to transfer
74 14,251 AF from the three CPNRD canals to the Lake McConaughy EA as a pilot project, rather
75 than returning that water directly to the river at the canal headgates. Another pilot project is in
76 the works for 2019, with similar acreage enrollment and volume transfer anticipated.

77
78 ***NPPD Water Leasing:*** *Jeff Shafer, NPPD*

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

85
86 Taddicken asked about potential issues with delivering all of this water from the Lake
87 McConaughy EA to the habitat reach, given capacity issues at the choke point. Griebeling said
88 this should not be an issue in terms of overall volume. Econopouly confirmed that USFWS can
89 plan accordingly to get the desired water to locations downstream. Griebeling added that there is



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

92

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

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

98

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

102

103 For the CNPPID irrigator lease, 2,948 acres were enrolled for the next season, just under the
104 3,000-acre cap in the new contract. This project results in a credit of 9” per acre into the Lake
105 McConaughy EA for the Program.

106

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

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

109

110 AMP Update

111 Griebeling presented an overview of several questions that will be pursued in the AMP update: (1)
112 evaluate target flows and hydrologic conditions? (2) can we meet species objectives with
113 120,000 AF? and (3) how do we best manage our water? Species objectives were reviewed
114 along with potential options for a limited- or broad-scope approach to evaluation of target flows
115 and hydrologic conditions. Griebeling also discussed model development and other analyses that
116 the EDO is working on, including suitability curves (species needs), a 2D hydraulic model
117 (channel conditions), an operations model (flow routing), and water availability (EA water
118 accounting), all of which are inter-dependent. Griebeling recommended that committee members
119 review several documents pertaining to adaptive management, target flows, and hydrologic
120 conditions that were posted on the Program website. There was additional discussion of related
121 issues that the EDO intends to discuss at the March GC.

122

123 Accounting

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

129

130 Project Scoring

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



133 The EDO then plans to begin work on score analyses for the CNPPID irrigator lease and expects
134 to reconvene the Scoring Subcommittee in mid- to late-April. Later in the year, the EDO plans
135 to score the CPNRD and NPPD groundwater recharge projects.
136

137 Fact Sheets

138 The draft Tamarack I fact sheet is available for the committee to review. The EDO will update
139 other existing fact sheets with new numbers from the analyses associated with the accounting
140 memo. Additional fact sheets may be developed later in the year for WAP projects such as
141 Cottonwood Ranch broad-scale recharge.
142

143 Additional Business: *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*

144 The next WAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 7. Annual depletions plan updates will
145 be presented. Shafer asked about a Wyoming Glendo Reservoir study; Clerkin plans to present
146 on that at the May WAC meeting.
147

148 Econopouly requested that the spring EAC-RCC meeting be scheduled for early March. The
149 USFWS is not planning a February 15-March 15 EA release but will make releases for whooping
150 cranes (starting around March 23) and in late spring for the choke point test.
151

152 Action Items

153 General WAC

- 154 • Review reading materials related to target flows and the AMP update (3 documents,
155 posted on website).
- 156 • Submit depletions plan documents to EDO prior to May WAC meeting.
157

158 ED Office

- 159 • Upload Griebing's AMP update slides, and meeting schedule to Program website.
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