



**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 Griebing

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



1 **Welcome & Administrative**

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

3
4 **North Platte Choke Point Test Flow**

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

21
22 **GC Decision** – The GC concurred with delaying the choke point test flow for a year.

23
24 Rabbe discussed the EA and the status of potential EA releases the remainder of this year. The Service
25 believes it will need to release some water, likely at the end of summer or in the fall, to avoid debits to the
26 EA for not using water and then being re-set to 100,000 acre-feet. The Service is continuing to wrestle with
27 this issue. Steinke said he has a gut feeling that the Service may see “free” flows of a similar magnitude to
28 the test flows because of the snowpack and the forecast for wet weather. The re-set, if any, would be small
29 and there will be a lot of water moving through the system anyway because there is so much water that is
30 going to have to move downstream. Farnsworth said we may do some internal planning to capture any
31 possible results of natural flow events moving through the choke point and other parts of the system that
32 may occur as a result of the expected high spring inflows.

33
34 **Future Meetings & Closing Business**

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

40
41 Fassett wondered if anyone had comments about the spring migration. Rabbe said it looks to be a slightly
42 later start to the migration than in past years because of weather-related issues, but what he has gathered is
43 that the birds we have seen have been staying in Nebraska with the snow line still being in southern South
44 Dakota. No whooping crane sightings so far in the Dakotas but there have been observations on the Platte
45 in several places. Baasch said the current Platte count is eight (8) birds so far. Barron said Rowe and the
46 Crane Trust have been impacted by road closures due to flooding and mud. They have had numerous blind
47 reservations canceled and it will impact them financially.

48
49 Ament said he appreciated everyone calling in today and making time to discuss this issue.



50 Upcoming 2019 GC meetings:

- 51 ○ GC Quarterly Meeting – **June 11-12, 2019** @ Cheyenne, WY (WY Water Development
- 52 Commission offices)
- 53 ○ GC Quarterly Meeting – **September 10-11, 2019** @ Kearney, NE (EDO Conference Center)
- 54 ○ 2019 AMP Reporting Session – **October 8-10, 2019** @ Omaha, NE (Hilton Garden Inn Omaha
- 55 Downtown)
- 56 ○ GC Special Session (FY20 Budget/Work Plan) – **November 12, 2019** (conference call/webinar
- 57 only)
- 58 ○ GC Quarterly Meeting – **December 3-4, 2019** @ Denver, CO
- 59

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

61 **Time.**

62

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

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