



**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP or PROGRAM)  
Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 – 1:00 PM to 5:30 PM

**Note: All times Mountain.**

**Meeting Location:**

Warwick Denver Hotel  
1776 Grant Street  
Denver, CO 80203  
(303) 861-2000

**Governance Committee (GC)**

**State of Wyoming**

Harry LaBonde – Member (2019 GC Chair)  
Brandon Gebhart – Alternate

**State of Colorado**

Don Ament – Member  
JoJo La – Alternate

**State of Nebraska**

Jeff Fassett – Member

**Upper Platte Water Users**

Dennis Strauch – Member  
Owen Williams – Alternate

**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 (by phone)  
Bridget Barron  
Scott Griebeling  
Bruce Sackett  
Tom Smrdel  
Seth Turner  
Kevin Werbylo

**Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)**

Brock Merrill – Alternate

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

Steve Small – Member  
Matt Rabbe – Alternate (by phone)

**Environmental Entities**

Bill Taddicken – Member  
Brice Krohn – Member (by phone)  
Rich Walters – Member (by phone)

**Colorado Water Users**

Alan Berryman – Member  
Deb Freeman – Alternate  
Kyle Whitaker – Alternate  
Jason Marks – Alternate

**Audience Members**

Mike Drain – CNPPID  
John Shadle – NPPD (by phone)  
Loring Crowley – HDR  
Jay Smith – State of Wyoming  
Jeff Cowley – State of Wyoming



**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 03, 2019**

**Welcome & Administrative**

LaBonde called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM Mountain Time and the group proceeded with introductions. Farnsworth said the EDO would like to add a few minutes at the end of the day to discuss the AMP.

**GC DECISION** – *Ament moved and Fassett seconded to approve the September 10-11, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes and the November 12, 2019 GC Special Session minutes. Minutes approved.*

**Program Committee Updates**

*Land Advisory Committee (LAC)*

Czaplewski provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC met on October 29 and discussed the 2020 land budget items; the Dippel Tract land management plan; recommendations on Tracts 1905 and 1910; Czaplewski was elected LAC chair for 2020, Dave Zorn as Vice Chair.

*Water Advisory Committee (WAC)*

Turner provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC met on October 22 and discussed several items: 2019 WAP update; 2020 Water Plan budget and work plan items; flow summary update. The next WAC meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2020.

*Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)*

Merrill provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC met on October 21 to review and approve the spring 2019 whooping crane monitoring report; discuss acquisition of additional OCSW habitat; the Dippel Tract land management plan; and the draft 2020 budget and work plan. No TAC meetings are scheduled yet for 2020.

*Finance Committee (FC)*

La provided an update on the latest FC activities. The FC met on November 4 to primarily discuss the draft 2020 budget and work plan. The FC will meet next in early 2020 to discuss contracts and contract amendments.

**Program Outreach Update**

***PRESENTATIONS***

- Chad Smith presented on the Program via video to a class of master’s students at Western Colorado College taught by Felipe Chavez-Ramirez on Monday, September 16, 2019.
- Jason Farnsworth presented an update on the Program at the Nebraska Natural Resources Districts Annual Conference on September 24, 2019 in Kearney, Nebraska.
- Jason Farnsworth presented a Program update to the Board of Directors of Nebraska Community Foundation on November 15, 2019 in York, Nebraska.
- Jason Farnsworth presented a Program update at the Nebraska State Irrigation Association/Nebraska Water Resources Association joint conference in Kearney, Nebraska on November 26, 2019. The focus of the conference was *Flooding in Nebraska: Before, During & After*.

***EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS***

- The Program exhibited at Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island on September 10, 11, and 12, 2019 in the Natural Resources Districts building. We made 1,500 contacts over the course of the three days.



- 48 • The Program exhibited at the Nebraska Natural Resources Districts Annual Conference on September  
49 23 and 24, 2019 in Kearney, Nebraska. We made 175 contacts at the conference.
- 50 • The Program exhibited at the South Platte Forum in Westminster, Colorado on October 23 & 24, 2019  
51 and sponsored a break at the conference. We made 154 contacts at the conference.
- 52 • The Program exhibited at the Boo!-Seum at the Kearney Children’s Museum on October 24, 2019.  
53 Attendance was over 500 children and adults. The Program gave children attending the event candy,  
54 environmental coloring books, and kits to make their own bird feeder.

#### 55 56 *UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS*

- 57 • Scott Griebing and Patrick Farrell will be presenting at Audubon’s Crane Festival in Kearney,  
58 Nebraska on March 21, 2020.
- 59 • The Program will be exhibiting at the annual meeting of the Four States Irrigation Council in Fort  
60 Collins, Colorado on January 8-10, 2020.
- 61 • The Program will be exhibiting at Colorado Water Congress in Denver, Colorado on January 29 – 31,  
62 2019.

#### 63 64 *MEDIA/OTHER*

- 65 • On October 23, 2019 the US Fish & Wildlife Service issued a press release on a proposal to delist the  
66 interior least tern due to recovery. Comments on the proposal are due by December 23, 2019 at  
67 <http://www.regulations.gov>.

#### 68 69 **PRRIP FY19 Budget Update**

70 Farnsworth discussed the status of the FY19 budget, expenditures, and forecast for the remainder of 2019.

#### 71 72 **PRRIP FY20 Budget and Work Plan**

73 Farnsworth discussed the latest draft of the FY2020 PRRIP budget and work plan. He discussed changes  
74 to the budget and work plan since discussing an earlier draft of both documents with the GC on November  
75 12, 2019.

76  
77 ***GC DECISION – Merrill moved and Ament seconded to approve the FY2020 PRRIP Budget and Work  
78 Plan. FY2020 PRRIP Budget and Work Plan approved.***

79  
80 ***GC DECISION – Fassett moved and Taddicken seconded to approve the FY2020 PRRIP EDO Contract  
81 First Amendment. FY2020 PRRIP EDO Contract First Amendment approved.***

#### 82 83 **PRRIP First Increment Extension**

84 LaBonde stated on November 12 the GC approved the Extension proposal for a 13-year extension of the  
85 First Increment and then the Signatories started working on getting Governor and Secretary signatures on  
86 that proposal. Signatory updates:

- 87  
88 • Nebraska – Fassett said the agreement has been signed by Governor Ricketts.
- 89 • Colorado – La said the agreement has been signed by Governor Polis.
- 90 • Wyoming – LaBonde met with Governor Gordon but he deferred his signature until his “personal  
91 attorney” who advises strictly the Governor has a chance to review the documents. Gov. Gordon  
92 seemed positive & supportive, his signature is expected. La asked if LaBonde got a sense of timing.  
93 LaBonde said no.



- 94 • Ament asked if there is a liaison between Senator Barrasso’s office and Gov. Gordon’s office.  
95 LaBonde said the two offices have been in contact but he was not aware of either office encouraging  
96 the other office to move things forward.
- 97 • Reclamation – Merrill said they are still working through process to get the Secretary’s signature.  
98 There is a black-out period where the Secretary doesn’t make any decisions at the end of the year but  
99 Merrill doesn’t know when the period starts and ends or how long it lasts
- 100 • LaBonde said the second piece is getting Congressional authorization and the President’s signature on  
101 the legislation authorizing the Extension. That bill is now up for consideration by the full Senate but  
102 there is a hold on legislation due to an unrelated matter. Ament and Fassett suggested there should be  
103 one more press release about the purpose and need for the Extension and the large amount of local  
104 and state support for authorization of the Extension. Merrill said Reclamation has authority to  
105 implement the Program through September 2020 under the current legislation.

### 106 107 **Environmental Account (EA) Annual Operating Plan (AOP)**

108 Econopouly discussed the draft 2020 EA AOP. Drain said that Central and NPPD try to work together to  
109 avoid issues related to effective capacity and reset. Water that is re-set is still sent down the river. All target  
110 flows would likely be met if Lake McConaughy reaches effective capacity. LaBonde said this is an issue  
111 for Pathfinder as well.

### 112 113 **Tiered Consultation Templates**

114 Econopouly discussed the Service’s draft Biological Assessment (BA) templates for the states that are part  
115 of the Tiered Consultation process. Freeman said each one is tailored to the respective state’s depletions  
116 plan. Czaplewski asked if there should be some mention of the status change of the interior least tern in this  
117 set of documents (possibly a footnote). LaBonde said a better approach may be to wait until there is a final  
118 legal determination that the tern is officially de-listed. Freeman said the distinction is that the Program  
119 document includes these documents as part of the package and it was anticipated they would be updated  
120 over time, which would require GC review and approval.

121  
122 **GC DECISION** – *Ament moved and Merrill seconded to approve the BA templates for Colorado,*  
123 *Wyoming, and Nebraska. BA templates approved.*

### 124 125 **Water Action Plan (WAP) Update**

126 Turner provided an update on the WAP. Werbylo provided an update on the Lakeside slurry wall project  
127 and the Cottonwood Ranch broad-scale recharge (BSR) project.

### 128 129 **J2 Agreement**

130 Farnsworth discussed the J2 agreement amendment and the redline version that contains changes from  
131 Central and the State of Nebraska. The term of the original agreement expired at the end of 2019 and all  
132 cash would be distributed back to original contributors, this agreement allows more time (three years) to  
133 disburse the money to allow for easier accounting.

134  
135 **GC DECISION** – *Taddicken moved and Berryman seconded to approve the J2 Agreement Amendment.*  
136 *Brundage, Czaplewski, and Miller abstained. Amendment approved.*

### 137 138 **Cottonwood Ranch Sponsorship Agreement**

139 Farnsworth discussed the Cottonwood Ranch sponsorship agreement. The original lease ends in 2019, this  
140 agreement extends that agreement and includes some minor language changes to sync up with the



141 Broadscale Recharge agreement. No money involved with this lease. Freeman pointed out a typo on Page  
142 8. Farnsworth agreed to fix that typo.

143

144 **GC DECISION** – *Williams moved and Ament seconded to approve the Cottonwood Ranch Sponsorship*  
145 *Agreement. Czaplewski, Miller, and Citta abstained. Agreement approved.*

146

#### 147 **2020 Dippel Land Management Plan**

148 Farnsworth discussed the 2020 Dippel tract land management plan.

149

150 **GC DECISION** – *Czaplewski moved and Berryman seconded to approve the 2020 Dippel Tract land*  
151 *management plan. Land management plan approved.*

152

#### 153 **PRRIP Land Management**

154 Farnsworth discussed the RFPs for 2020 prescribed fire and chemical application activities. Taddicken  
155 asked if the chemical application activities were outside the phragmites spraying project. Farnsworth said  
156 yes.

157

158 **GC DECISION** – *Ament moved and Fassett seconded to approve the 2020 Prescribed Fired RFP and the*  
159 *2020 Chemical Application RFP. RFPs approved.*

160

#### 161 **Public Comment**

162 None offered.

163

#### 164 **Executive Session**

165 *Merrill moved and Strauch seconded to enter Executive Session. **GC entered Executive Session at 3:19***  
166 **PM Mountain Time.**

167

168 **GC exited Executive Session at 3:55 PM Mountain Time.**

169

#### 170 **PRRIP Executive Session Motions**

171 **GC DECISION** – *Merrill moved and Williams seconded to cease further pursuit of Tract 1905. Motion*  
172 *approved.*

173

174 **GC DECISION** – *Czaplewski moved and Fassett seconded to authorize negotiations for the acquisition of*  
175 *Tract 1910 as non-complex sand and water habitat; the GC recognizes this tract is immediately outside the*  
176 *Associated Habitat Reach (AHR) but will be included as Program land. Motion approved.*

177

#### 178 **Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) Update**

179 Smith discussed the upcoming interviews of GC members and alternates by Philip Halteman of Compass  
180 regarding target flows, as well as soliciting feedback from GC members regarding any ways the EDO can  
181 improve its performance for the GC and the Program. Freeman asked if the target flow questions would be  
182 distributed before the interviews. Smith said yes. Ament asked who developed the question set. Smith said  
183 Halteman developed an initial set and then Smith and Farnsworth edited the questions and provided  
184 additional questions for the list.



185 **Future Meetings & Closing Business**

186 **GC DECISION** – *Fassett moved and Merrill seconded to appoint Small 2020 GC Chair and appoint*  
187 *LaBonde 2020 GC Vice Chair. Motion approved.*

188  
189 Proposed 2020 GC meetings:

- 190 • GC Quarterly Meeting – **March 10-11, 2020** @ Kearney, NE
- 191 • GC Quarterly Meeting – **June 09-10, 2020** @ Cheyenne, WY
- 192 • GC Quarterly Meeting – **September 15-16, 2020** @ Kearney, NE
- 193 • 2020 AMP Reporting Session – **October 2020** @ Omaha, NE (specific dates TBD)
- 194 • GC Special Session (FY21 Budget/Work Plan) – **November 10, 2020** (conference call/webinar only)
- 195 • GC Quarterly Meeting – **December 01-02, 2020** @ Denver, CO

196

197 **GC DECISION** – *2020 meeting schedule approved.*

198

199 **Meeting adjourned at 4:10 PM Mountain Time.**

200

201 **Summary of Action Items/Decisions from December 03, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting**

- 202 1) Approved the September 10-11, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes.
- 203 2) Approved the November 12, 2019 GC Special Session minutes.
- 204 3) Approved the FY2020 PRRIP Budget and Work Plan.
- 205 4) Approved the FY2020 PRRIP EDO Contract First Amendment.
- 206 5) Approved the BA Templates for Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska.
- 207 6) Approved the J2 Agreement amendment.
- 208 7) Approved the Cottonwood Ranch Sponsorship Agreement.
- 209 8) Approved the Dippel Tract 2020 land management plan.
- 210 9) Approved the 2020 prescribed fire RFP.
- 211 10) Approved the 2020 chemical application RFP.
- 212 11) Approved motion to cease further pursuit of Tract 1905.
- 213 12) Approved following motion – acquire Tract 1910 as non-complex sand and water habitat; the GC  
214 recognizes this tract is immediately outside the Associated Habitat Reach (AHR) but will be included  
215 as Program land.
- 216 13) Appointed Steve Small 2020 GC Chair and Harry LaBonde 2020 GC Vice Chair.
- 217 14) Approved the following 2020 meeting schedule:
  - 218 • GC Quarterly Meeting – **March 10-11, 2020** @ Kearney, NE
  - 219 • GC Quarterly Meeting – **June 09-10, 2020** @ Cheyenne, WY
  - 220 • GC Quarterly Meeting – **September 15-16, 2020** @ Kearney, NE
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223 only)
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