

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

PRRIP Executive Director's Office Conference Center – Kearney, NE

September 8-9, 2015

**Meeting Attendees****Governance Committee (GC) Table****State of Wyoming**

Harry LaBonde – Member

**State of Colorado**

Don Ament – Member

Suzanne Sellers – Alternate

**State of Nebraska**

Jim Schneider – Member (Chair)

Jeff Fassett

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

Eliza Hines – Member

**Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)**

Chris Beardsley – Member

Brock Merrill

**Environmental Entities**

Marian Langan – Member

Rich Walters – Member

Bill Taddicken – Member

Duane Hovorka – Member

**Upper Platte Water Users**

Dennis Strauch – Member

**Colorado Water Users**

Alan Berryman – Member

Deb Freeman

**Downstream Water Users**

Brian Barels – Member

Don Kraus – Member

Mark Czaplewski – Member

Kent Miller – Member

**Executive Director's Office (EDO) Staff**

Jerry Kenny, Executive Director (ED)

Dave Baasch

Bridget Barron

Jason Farnsworth

Patrick Farrell

Bruce Sackett

Chad Smith

**Audience Members**

Philip Stuckert – State of Wyoming

Chris Reed – UNO

Matt Rabbe – Service

Cory Steinke – CNPPID

Mike Drain – CNPPID

Jim Jenniges – NPPD

Lyndon Vogt – CPNRD

Mike Forsberg – Platte Basin Timelapse

Mike Farrell – Platte Basin Timelapse

Ron Kallhoff – NET

Jeff Runge – Service

Tom McDougal – RJH



45 **Tuesday, September 8, 2015**

46 **Welcome & Administrative**

47 Schneider called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Central Time and the group proceeded with introductions.

48 *LaBonde moved to approve the June 2015 GC minutes; Berryman seconded. Minutes approved.*

49 **Program Committee Updates**

50 *Land Advisory Committee (LAC)*

51 Czaplewski provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC met on August 12. The main agenda item was discussion about Land Work Plans. The LAC worked through complex and tract-by-tract plans. The next LAC meeting is November 3 in Kearney.

52 *Water Advisory Committee (WAC)*

53 Steinke provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC last met on August 11. J-2 reservoir, Phelps Canal recharge, CPNRD water leasing, NPPD water leasing, CNPPID water leasing, COHYST, 2015 high flows (58 days; 16,200 cfs at Grand Island), North Platte choke point, and excess flow determination methods were all topics of discussion. The next WAC meeting is October 20 in Ogallala.

54 *Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)*

55 Sellers provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC last met jointly with the Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC) on July 14-15, 2016. Since the last GC meeting, the TAC reviewed the grassland monitoring protocol, the draft 2014 State of the Platte Report, and the forage fish synthesis document peer review scope of work and recommended panel members. The TAC meets jointly with the ISAC at the AMP Reporting Session in Denver, CO on October 13-14, 2015 and will also meet soon face-to-face or via conference call to discuss the draft FY 2016 Program budget. Smith added that the results of that meeting are reflected in the ISAC's August 2015 report to the GC which is incorporated into the 2014 State of the Platte Report and which will be discussed later today during the GC meeting.

56 *Finance Committee (FC)*

57 LaBonde provided an update on the latest FC activities. The FC met on August 25 and took two actions – a contract extension for the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture work on habitat availability analyses and a bid package for DeBoer wetland restoration. The FC discussed the CNPPID water leasing agreement on the GC agenda for today and an update on the J2 reservoir project. The next FC meeting is October 22.

58 **Program Outreach Update**

59 **PRESENTATIONS**

- 80 • Sira Sartori presented to staff members of the City of Thornton, Colorado on July 8, 2015. She provided an overview of the Program and the City's ties to the Program through South Platte Water Related Activities Program (SPWRAP).
- 81 • Jerry Kenny presented on the proposed J-2 Reservoir to the Nebraska Water Balance Alliance bus tour on August 3, 2015. Participants on the tour heard from farmers in the area who are using technology to improve water management on their farms.
- 82 • Chad Smith was part of a panel discussion at the National Academy of Science's *Effective Approaches for Monitoring and Assessing Gulf of Mexico Restoration Activities Workshop* in New Orleans, Louisiana August 24-26, 2015. The panel was titled *Moving from restoration monitoring data to learning* and Chad's presentation focused on *Lessons from the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program*.

**UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS**

- The Program is exhibiting at Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island on September 15, 16, and 17, 2015 in the Natural Resources Districts building. Husker Harvest Days is recognized as the World's Largest Totally Irrigated Working Farm Show™ and features the most extensive state-of-the-art information and technology available for today's agricultural producers.
- Jason Farnsworth and Bruce Sackett will be meeting with Platte Basin Natural Resource Districts at the Natural Resources Districts annual conference at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney, Nebraska on September 27 through the 29, 2015.
- The Program is one of the sponsors of a lecture by Bill McKibben on October 6, 2015 in Lincoln, Nebraska. The lecture is part of the 2015-2016 E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues, a cooperative project of the Cooper Foundation, The Lied Center for Performing Arts and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Bill McKibben is an author and environmentalist. His lecture will provide an update on how the movement to slow global warming is progressing around the world. He will also highlight ways Nebraskans can become involved in advocating and campaigning on global environmental issues.
- The Program will be exhibiting at the South Platte Forum on October 28 & 29, 2015 in Longmont, Colorado. The Program is also a break sponsor of the event.
- The Program will have a significant presence at the American Water Resources Association Annual Conference on Water Resources in Denver, Colorado November 16-19, 2015. Abstracts for eight individual presentations and one panel discussion have been submitted to the committee. Topics range from a general overview of the Program to the Water Plan and the Adaptive Management Plan. The submitted panel discussion will discuss successes and challenges of the Program and will include many members of the Governance Committee.

**MEDIA/OTHER**

- Publication of "Over The Fence", a newsletter to communicate with neighbors of Program lands.
- The Kearney Hub had a number of articles on CNPPID and the J-2 project in the month of July.

Barron discussed the new "Over the Fence" newsletter being distributed by the Program to PRRIP land tract neighbors. Barron also distributed PRRIP note pads and electronic cleaning cloths to GC members.

**PRRIP Land Atlas**

Sackett distributed hard copies of the PRRIP Land Atlas and discussed the contents. Farnsworth said there would be a link to a PDF version of the atlas on the PRRIP web site that will be regularly updated.

**PRRIP FY15 Budget Update**

Kenny discussed the status of the FY15 PRRIP budget and associated expenditures and contracts. Smith discussed the 2015-2019 whooping crane monitoring contract. Smith said that reporting dates would be built into the contract as per previous whooping crane monitoring contracts to ensure proper reporting and analysis are completed in accordance with the timing specified in previous contracts.

*Barels moved to approve the 2015-2019 whooping crane monitoring contract as amended, Langan seconded. Contract approved.*

**Platte Basin Timelapse (PBT) Project**

Mike Farrell and Mike Forsberg discussed the latest status of the PBT project. Forsberg introduced Val Cuppens who is working with the PBT to develop educational products from the PBT data. Cuppens gave a presentation on some of the tern and plover items (such as lesson plans) that she is developing to utilize PBT photos, videos, and stories. Forsberg said the next educational package will focus on the central Platte



141 River and hopefully will have that completed by the end of the year. LaBonde asked what age group is  
142 being targeted with the educational products. Cuppens said it is STEM curriculum and is focused on late  
143 elementary school and middle school students. This information will be part of a keynote presentation at a  
144 large gathering of Nebraska teachers later this year.

145  
146 **2014 State of the Platte Report**  
147 Smith discussed the final 2014 State of the Platte Report and the conclusive assessments on two of the Big  
148 Questions. The following is a summary of GC discussion:

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- 150 • The GC supported moving ahead with Structured Decision Making (SDM) as a tool to help get to the  
151 “adjust” phase of adaptive management related to Big Question #1 and bringing on Compass Resource  
152 Management (Compass) as an EDO Special Advisor to assist with facilitation of the SDM process.
- 153 • Hines noted concerns from the Service regarding wording issues in Big Question #9, particularly related  
154 to the definitions of phrases like “flow management actions” (does that mean EA releases, retimed  
155 flows, etc.) and the “lower Platte River”.
- 156 • Barels said the GC would benefit from a Service presentation at the December 2015 GC meeting  
157 regarding these issues. He also said he had recently been a part of an expert elicitation process related  
158 to pallid sturgeon on the Missouri River and that issues related to the lower Platte River were not top-  
159 ranked issues.
- 160 • Hines said the Service will develop a document detailing what they need to know to help provide  
161 direction to the GC on this issue.
- 162 • Freeman asked if there was room to further hone in on the question at hand so it could be addressed  
163 without seeming to encompass all issues related to pallid sturgeon and the Program.
- 164 • Schneider said it needed to be made clear that the Program has not yet come to the conclusion that we  
165 are not benefitting pallid sturgeon. That question has not yet been addressed.

166  
167 The discussion concluded with agreement for the Service to talk more with the EDO about the issue, the  
168 Service will develop a document detailing their concerns about the pallid sturgeon issue and their ideas for  
169 next steps, and that the issue would be on the December 2015 GC agenda for further discussion.

170  
171 **PRRIP Peer Review**  
172 Smith discussed the Scope of Work and recommended peer review panel members for the Forage Fish  
173 Synthesis Document peer review. Smith noted that the TAC only had one week to review the Scope of  
174 Work and the recommended peer review panelists and wanted to make sure that the GC knew of the timing  
175 issue. Delaying action on this item until the December GG meeting would not be a problem if anyone had  
176 heartburn about the quick turnaround review time on this item.

177  
178 *LaBonde moved to approve the Scope of Work and appoint (Gray, Hoagstrom, Schweitzer) to the peer*  
179 *review panel; Strauch seconded. Scope of Work approved and peer review panelists appointed.*

180  
181 **CNPPID Irrigator Water Leasing Agreement**  
182 Kenny discussed the proposed water leasing agreement with CNPPID. It would most likely result in pivot  
183 corners going to dryland. During full allocation years, the Program is the only market in town for this kind  
184 of leasing opportunity. There is a limit of 2,000 acres that was discussed at the FC meeting. The FC asked  
185 Kraus to go back to his Board and request dropping the acreage limit from 3,000 to 2,000 acres. Kraus  
186 agreed and that change was made to the agreement. Nine inches per acre would accrue to storage in the EA  
187 under this agreement. Kenny said this will be a very good learning opportunity in terms of the price and the  
188 amount of interest generated. Kraus noted there was some concern about administration fees discussed at



189 the FC and what CNPPID has come back with is a flat fee. Schneider asked how the tracts will be  
190 determined. Kraus said it will be done by lottery. Hovorka asked if it will get added to the Environmental  
191 Account (EA) at Lake McConaughy. Kraus said yes there will be a credit added to the EA. Kraus said the  
192 sign-up period will be extended to around the first of November. Kenny said any water derived from this  
193 agreement would not go into the EA until October 1, 2016 and no money would be paid to CNPPID until  
194 water goes into the account. Hines asked if this is a one-year pilot project. Kraus said yes and the amount  
195 of acquired water would be known before the irrigation season begins in 2016.

196  
197 *Amendment moved to approve the water leasing agreement; Beardsley seconded. Kraus and the NRD  
198 representatives abstained. Water leasing agreement approved.*

199  
200 **J2 Regulating Reservoir Update**

201 Kraus provided an update on the status of the J-2 project and discussed the quarterly report included in the  
202 GC meeting packet. One additional property has been closed and two are now acquired. Hovorka asked  
203 how significant the questions are on the 404 permit. Kraus said it is a work in progress. There was a good  
204 meeting with the Corps in July. Drain said it is a bigger issue than anticipated particularly in regard with  
205 how to deal with Plum Creek. There will be more discussion about the project during the GC Executive  
206 Session tomorrow.

207  
208 **Public Comment**

209 Schneider asked for public comment. None offered.

210  
211 **Meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m. Central Time.**



212 **Wednesday, September 9, 2015**

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214 **Welcome and Administrative**

215 Schneider called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Central Time and the group proceeded with introductions.

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217 **Executive Session**

218 *Taddicken moved to enter Executive Session; LaBonde seconded. GC entered Executive Session at 8:05*

219 **a.m. Central Time.**

220

221 *LaBonde moved to end Executive Session; Beardsley seconded. GC ended Executive Session at 9:57 a.m.*

222 **Central Time.**

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224 **PRRIP Executive Session Motions**

225 During Executive Session, the GC provided the following guidance on the J-2 Regulating Reservoirs

226 project:

227

- 228 • The Program now has a better sense of the revised cost of the J-2 project and that cost is much higher
- 229 than originally anticipated. The original cost estimate was \$63M. The current construction cost
- 230 estimate is now \$170M. Neither of these figures included the cost of land acquisition.
- 231 • The GC authorized the EDO to work with CNPPID and the Nebraska DNR to investigate how to
- 232 continue pursuing the J-2 project given the available Program budget.
- 233 • There will be a status update on the J-2 project at the December 2015 GC meeting in Denver, CO.
- 234 • In parallel with continued work on the J-2 project, the Program is evaluating and implementing several
- 235 other Water Action Plan projects to ensure the Program meets its First Increment water management
- 236 objective.

237

238 **Future Meetings & Closing Business**

239 Upcoming 2015 GC meetings:

- 240 • **GC Special Session** – Tuesday, November 17th, 2015 in Denver, CO to discuss the draft FY2016
- 241 PRRIP budget and work plan; 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Mountain time; Denver airport hotel TBD
- 242 • **GC Meeting** – December 1-2, 2015 @ Denver, CO; Warwick Denver Hotel; begin meeting at 1:00
- 243 p.m. Mountain Time on December 1, all day SDM session with GC on December 2

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245 Upcoming ISAC meetings:

- 246 • **2015 AMP Reporting Session** – October 13-15, 2015 @ Denver, CO @ Warwick Denver Hotel

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248 **Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. Mountain Time.**

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250 **Summary of Action Items/Decisions from September 2015 GC meeting**

- 251 1) Approved the June 2015 GC minutes.
- 252 2) Approved the 2015-2019 whooping crane monitoring contract, as amended.
- 253 3) Agreed to move forward with a Structured Decision Making process to help get to the “adjust” phase
- 254 of adaptive management on Big Question #1 and allow the EDO to bring on Compass as a Special
- 255 Advisor to assist with facilitation of the process.
- 256 4) Approved the Scope of Work and appointed the peer review panel (Brian Gray, Christopher
- 257 Hoagstrom, Sara Schweitzer) for peer review of the Forage Fish Synthesis Document.
- 258 5) Approved the CNPPID water leasing agreement.



259 6) During Executive Session, the GC provided the following guidance on the J-2 Regulating Reservoirs  
260 project:

261     ○ The Program now has a better sense of the revised cost of the J-2 project and that cost is  
262         much higher than originally anticipated. The original cost estimate was \$63M. The current  
263         construction cost estimate is now \$170M. Neither of these figures included the cost of land  
264         acquisition.

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266         how to continue pursuing the J-2 project given the available Program budget.

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268         CO.

269     ○ In parallel with continued work on the J-2 project, the Program is evaluating and  
270         implementing several other Water Action Plan projects to ensure the Program meets its First  
271         Increment water management objective.