



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

Tuesday, March 10th, 2020 – 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Wednesday, March 11th, 2020 – 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Note: All times Central.

Meeting Location:
PRRIP EDO Conference Center
4111 4th Avenue, Suite 6
Kearney, NE 68845
(308) 237-5728

Governance Committee (GC)

State of Wyoming

Harry LaBonde – Member (2020 GC Vice Chair)
Brandon Gebhart – Alternate (by phone)

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

Brock Merrill – Alternate

State of Colorado

Don Ament – Member
JoJo La – Alternate

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)

Steve Small – Member (2020 GC Chair)
Matt Rabbe – Alternate

State of Nebraska

Jesse Bradley – Member
Jennifer Schellpeper – Alternate

Environmental Entities

Rich Walters – Member
Brice Krohn – Member

Upper Platte Water Users

Dennis Strauch – Member
Owen Williams – Alternate
Bob Mehling – Alternate

Colorado Water Users

Alan Berryman – Member
Deb Freeman – Alternate
Kyle Whitaker – Alternate
Jason Marks – Alternate (by phone)

Downstream Water Users

Mark Czaplowski – Member
Devin Brundage – Member
Joe Citta – Member
Kent Miller – Member

Audience Members

Mike Drain and Dave Zorn – CNPPID
John Shadle and Jeff Shafer – NPPD
Jessie Winter - NDNR
Matt Pillard – HDR
Jake Miriovsky – JEO
Renata Rimsaite – UNL
Rachel Saunders – Jacobs Engineering
Lyndon Vogt and Brandi Flyr – CPNRD
John Thorburn – Tri-Basin NRD
David Galat – ISAC
Dave Marmorek – ISAC (by phone)
Philip Halteman – Compass
John Moor, Jake Mirovsky, and ? - JEO
Jeff Runge, Tom Econopouly, and Brian Caruso
- Service

Executive Director’s Office (EDO)

Jason Farnsworth, ED
Bridget Barron Chad Smith
Justin Brei Tom Smrdel
Patrick Farrell Tim Tunnell
Scott Griebbling Seth Turner
Mallory Jaymes Kevin Werbylo
Kaley Keldsen
Kari Mohlman
George Oamek
Bruce Sackett

**TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2020****Welcome & Administrative**

Chair Steve Small called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM Central Time and the group proceeded with introductions. Czaplewski said the Downstream Water Users would like to talk about a potential change to their Charter.

GC DECISION – Czaplewski moved and LaBonde seconded to approve the December 03, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes and the February 18, 2020 GC Special Session minutes. Minutes approved.

Program Committee Updates*Land Advisory Committee (LAC)*

Czaplewski provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC has not met since the last GC meeting, the next meeting is April 14 in Kearney.

Water Advisory Committee (WAC)

Steinke provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC had a conference call on February 4, Steinke was elected Chair. Project updates are now in a memo from the EDO for discussion at WAC meetings. Also discussed broad-scale recharge, Lakeside project, recapture wells, WAP project scoring, EA AOP, choke point test flow plan, sediment augmentation project update, and reviewed the WAC charter. The next WAC meeting is May 5.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Merrill provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC met on February 4 and approved the fall 2019 whooping crane monitoring report and the 2019 tern/plover monitoring report. Discussed the 2019 State of the Platte report and had a good discussion about the predator research project.

Finance Committee (FC)

La provided an update on the latest FC activities. The FC met on February 5 and elected Chris Beardsley as Chair. The FC approved the ISAC contracts, the website and database contract amendment, and the 2020 predator trapping agreement.

Program Outreach Update*PRESENTATIONS*

- Kevin Werbylo presented on the Broad Scale Recharge project to the Nebraska Weed Control Superintendents on December 12, 2019 as part of the annual Nebraska Association of County Officials conference in Kearney, Nebraska.
- Jason Farnsworth presented on the Program to the Kearney Sertoma Club on February 3, 2020 in Kearney, Nebraska.
- Mark Czaplewski presented on the Program at the Central Platte NRD annual water program update on February 12, 2020 in Lexington, Nebraska.

EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS

- The Program exhibited at the annual meeting of the Four States Irrigation Council in Fort Collins, Colorado on January 8-10, 2020. We made 84 contacts.
- The Program exhibited at Colorado Water Congress in Denver, Colorado on January 29 – 31, 2020. We made 225 contacts.



- 48 • The Program exhibited at the Joint Venture Rainwater Basin Information Seminar in Grand Island,
49 Nebraska on February 6, 2020. We made 142 contacts.
50

51 *UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS*

- 52 • Bruce Sackett and Patrick Farrell will be presenting on the Program to a youth group from Big Red
53 Agricultural Growers (BRAG) on March 16, 2020 in Kearney, Nebraska. BRAG educates youth ages
54 12-15 about ag-related issues and encourages them to speak up for agriculture.
55 • Scott Griebing will be presenting at Audubon’s Crane Festival in Kearney, Nebraska on March 21,
56 2020. His presentation is titled, “*Are Cranes Hydrologists*” *Platte River flows and crane habitat*”.
57 • The Executive Directors Office will present a panel discussion on the Program for the Nebraska Water
58 Leaders Class on March 26, 2020 in Kearney, Nebraska.
59 • Patrick Farrell will be part of the Conservation Nebraska Speaker Series on April 14, 2020 at the
60 Kearney Public Library in Kearney, Nebraska. His presentation will focus on how the Program has
61 positively impacted the central Platte River for endangered species.
62 • Scott Griebing and Jojo La will be presenting on the Program to the CSU student chapter of the
63 Environmental Water Resources Institute on April 21, 2020 in Fort Collins, Colorado.
64 • The river model, purchased in part by the Program, will be utilized by Scott Griebing as interactive
65 education at the Children’s Water Festival in Greeley, Colorado on April 22, 2020.
66 • The Program will be exhibiting at the Audubon Crane Festival in Kearney, Nebraska on March 21,
67 2020.
68

69 *MEDIA/OTHER*

- 70 • There were numerous press releases/articles published in December 2019/January 2020 regarding the
71 Program extension for an additional 13 years.
72

73 Barron presented Czaplewski with an award in recognition of his many years of service to the Program.
74 Sackett presented Czaplewski with an award in recognition of his many years of service to the LAC as Vice
75 Chair and Chair since 2008.
76

77 **PRRIP FY20 Budget Update**

78 Farnsworth discussed the status of the FY20 budget, expenditures, and forecast for the remainder of 2020
79 and also presented a retrospective of Program funding and expenditures during the First Increment, 2007-
80 2019.
81

82 **State of Nebraska New Depletions Plan**

83 Bradley discussed a report showing that Nebraska is now in compliance with the Nebraska New Depletions
84 Plan and has achieved that milestone and also discussed the status of Nebraska’s Robust Review. LaBonde
85 asked where someone could look to find pre-2006 depletions. Bradley said NDNR tracks the overall level
86 of use in the districts and compare that to the 1997 use. La asked if Table 6 reflects the future recharge
87 network. Bradley said other than the management activities described on Page 10, none of the projects like
88 the recharge network are carried forward so as those are added that will make the water balances better.
89 Runge asked about N-CORPE and putting water into the Republican or Platte based on need. This report
90 seems to show a steady pumping of water into the Platte. Bradley said generally N-CORPE is replacing
91 depletions in time and location, but in a month like January there were no target flow shortages. Farnsworth
92 said in the next biannual report we will say 9 out of 10 milestones have been achieved.



93 **State of the Platte & ISAC**

94 Smith provided a short summary of the 2019 State of the Platte including highlighting the Big Question
95 summary table and the general conclusions related to the status of the AMP management objectives during
96 the First Increment. Galat asked the GC why the management objectives are staying the same during the
97 Extension and don't seem changeable. Rabbe said one reason is that this is an Extension and not a true
98 Second Increment. Based on timing, a decision was made to complete the appropriate NEPA steps in time
99 and that meant keeping things "business as usual" – since there are still higher-order milestones to meet
100 related to water, that meant keeping objectives, commitments, process, etc. in place in the same way to
101 move more quickly through the NEPA process and get the Extension authorized, funded, and started. Galat
102 said this is one of the best adaptive management (AM) programs the ISAC has ever seen and it is kind of a
103 "downer" not to reflect on things like the language of objectives and their measurability as you go forward
104 given how well this Program has done with all other aspects of AM.

105
106 Freeman said we are living within the sideboards provided by our environmental commitments. For
107 example, the issue of the additional 10,000 acre-feet of water is one of the items that relates to defined
108 commitments and contributions for set increments. Freeman said she disagrees with the perception that this
109 limits opportunities. Instead, we have definition on our toolbox but we have freedom to use this toolbox
110 within these limits. Galat said one of the foremost objects of AM is to have objectives you can measure and
111 it will get harder and harder to show progress toward objectives that cannot be measured or that use layers
112 like "proxy measures".

113
114 La asked about whether the proposed rulemaking to delist the interior least tern will have impacts on what
115 this Program does in relation to terns. Rabbe and Runge said a final determination will be made likely
116 around October of this year. Post-delisting monitoring will have to occur but we need to determine roll-out
117 wise how we treat monitoring and management actions related to co-location of a delisted species (tern)
118 and a listed species (plover). Galat said there have been discussions about delisting the plover as well. What
119 happens in this Program if that occurs? Runge said it would have to be delisted because it is threatened (as
120 opposed to endangered). Small said there are three populations of plovers. Galat asked if delisting would
121 have to be a package for all three subpopulations. Small said it could be broken out. La said the Program
122 should consider some sequencing of planning when considering how the Program responds to the delisting
123 of a PRRIP target species.

124 **PRRIP Extension AMP & Target Flows**

125 Smith discussed the status of the Extension AMP. Halteman discussed the results of recent interviews
126 with the GC regarding target flows.

127
128
129 GD discussion points:

- 130
- 131 • Freeman – said the target flows include some values related to other species, but the perspective from
132 the original negotiations are that we agreed to use them for the target species. We did not agree at the
133 time that we were looking for flows inclusive of the broader ecosystem values. The summary of the
134 set of interviews assumes there was buy-in on the broader system approach and there was not. We
135 would like to offer some edits for Halteman to consider in the interview summary to ensure this issue
136 is portrayed accurately.
 - 137 • Drain – say that the people that created target flows are the ones that thought it was explicit they would
138 address the whole system.
 - 139 • Farnsworth – did anyone talk about the role of target flows in administration? Halteman said yes, that
140 is related to clarity of water availability.



- 141 • Drain – four categories; the broader ecosystem group is the one that encompasses the original creation
142 and usage beyond the Program. The other groups are related to the Program.
- 143 • La – what were the big disagreements? Halteman – biggest disagreements were around which of these
144 four categories were most important; what is the relative importance of these categories?
- 145 • Small – were there any answers that were really outside the box that did not fit these categories?
146 Halteman – nothing major, mostly this raised issues of core identify of the Program and how to go
147 forward.
- 148 • Drain – a lot of us have been beat up by target flows for years; we didn’t agree they were necessary at
149 the time and wanted a commitment to take a look at them; but now some of us are worried about what
150 reviewing them would mean; maybe we should consider whether there are really more than one set of
151 “target flows” and think about what that means for reviewing them.
- 152 • La – did the Second Increment come up during the interviews? Halteman – yes, mostly in the context
153 of where we are going with a potential review of target flows.
- 154 • Halteman – fascinating to listen to those who were around in the beginning to talk about the level of
155 uncertainty and anxiety to set up the Program but you believed in the process and you jumped in and
156 did it and now have 13 years of great success; it feels like the Program is back in the same place and
157 maybe you can jump into the process again; Freeman – we were able to garner the support for the
158 Program back in the day by characterizing it as an insurance policy with known contributions; in return
159 we got a reasonably negotiated period of certainty; the reason for the increments because of the
160 characterization of the commitments and costing those out over manageable chunks of time.
- 161 • Ament – much easier back in the day to put something like this together other than not having enough
162 water; now we are in a different situation; Program is effective but the monetary piece of it is not as
163 easy, much more difficult politics.
- 164 • La – one thing to remember is that we are not in charge of the jeopardy opinion and ESA coverage and
165 setting the flows.
- 166 • Freeman – it seems like at the time of setting the Program up there was acknowledgment that there
167 might be changes to the target flows; what level of flexibility do we have?
- 168 • Is something broken that needs to be fixed?
- 169 • What are each GC members views on how we evaluate target flows?
- 170 • Need to first know what the certainty is.
- 171 • Halteman – you have 13 years of certainty now, right? Ament – tough to say because we are in a very
172 different budget world now; what is it going to cost?
- 173 • Don’t want to devolve into something that is less certain than what we have now.
- 174 • LaBonde – shortage is 417,000 a/f, only have 130,000-150,000 a/f as First Increment and Extension;
175 benefit of looking at target flows is a way to see if we can get below 417,000 a/f; worthwhile to go
176 forward focused on endangered species recovery and not ecosystem restoration; get an opinion from
177 the GC group as to what criteria are important to consider; then can formulate a plan going forward.
- 178 • What are the specific risks are you trying to mitigate? Lay out what are the risks and concerns.
- 179 • Citta – need to know how much water we need to manage the purpose of this Program; is 120,000 a/f
180 adequate or do we need more?
- 181 • Farnsworth – keep hearing how much water do we need? Need to know the Program’s obligation in
182 relationship to target flows; they were not developed for the Program; maybe need to pare down to
183 what the Program’s obligation is, that might lower the risk that people are concerned about.
- 184 • Should the GC pass a resolution on this setting the guidelines?

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186 **GC Meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM.**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020**

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Small called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM Central Time and the group proceeded with introductions.

PRRIP Financial Database

Farnsworth discussed the current process of managing Program financial details and seeking help to improve the database and procedures used to track Program finances. The EDO accountant, Pat Doyle, will be retiring soon so now is the time to review possibilities for moving forward. The current Program database and website contractor, DJ Case, is well-positioned to update the financial management database, move it online, and help manage it for the Program as a web-based database.

GC DECISION – *Miller moved and Merrill seconded to approve the DJ Case contract amendment.*
Contract amendment approved.

PRRIP Finance Committee (FC)

Farnsworth discussed the FC charter and now that the Program is in the Extension the need to review the organizational structure and operation of the various Program Advisory Committees. Farnsworth recommended that the Program entities identify an FC member and alternate as described in the FC Charter and bring those names to the next FC meeting.

Downstream Water Users Charter

Czaplewski discussed the Downstream Water Users Charter and the updates made to the Charter by the GC in June 2012. He offered a few additional proposed changes to the Charter for GC consideration.

GC DECISION – *Czaplewski moved and LaBonde seconded to approve the proposed changes to the Downstream Water Users Charter.* Motion approved.

Smith discussed how to update and store revisions to the Program Document. Freeman and Citta suggested a change log in the back of the document and using updated revision dates to keep track of this over time. Farnsworth said the EDO would work to collect all changes made to the Program document over time, including changes made today to the Downstream Water Users Charter, and make the revised document easily available for reference going forward.

PRRIP Water Action Plan (WAP) Update

Turner and Werbylo provided an update on the WAP. Werbylo provided a summary of the Recapture Well Network. Thorburn said he looks forward to working with the Program on the Recapture Well Network. Farnsworth said the EDO is working with the Tri-Basin NRD on a Water Service Agreement similar to the Cottonwood Ranch pipeline agreement.

PRRIP Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) Update

Farnsworth announced that Headwaters has hired a new Science Lead for the EDO named Dr. Malinda Henry. She will start at the EDO in Kearney in April. Ament said it would be good if staff members in the EDO could spend time in front of the GC so that the GC could get to know the team. Farnsworth agreed.

Brei discussed the Remote Sensing RFP and the purposes of acquiring these data. Brei said the EDO is requesting approval of the RFP and appointment of a Proposal Selection Panel. Rabbe asked if the EDO anticipates any proposals that might end up requiring interviews. Brei said that is probably not likely, usually the technical expertise and experience of the offerors will speak through their proposals. Farnsworth said our experience at this point suggests that we will know whether potential contractors can do what we



236 need, especially if they have not worked on the Platte River before. LaBonde asked if bathymetric LiDAR
237 is now part of the base proposal. Brei said yes.

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239 **GC DECISION** – *LaBonde moved and Strauch seconded to approve the Remote Sensing RFP. RFP*
240 *approved.*

241
242 Jaymes provided a presentation on the results of fall 2019 whooping crane monitoring. Freeman asked why
243 it is harder to spot decoys than real whooping cranes. Farnsworth asked about the main benefit of continuing
244 to place decoys. Jaymes said at this point it has become a way to keep spotters in the plane alert to watching
245 for decoys which translates into staying alert to see real birds. Williams asked how you know that you are
246 missing more decoys than cranes. Jaymes and Farnsworth said in large part it is because especially during
247 the spring, there are so many people looking for cranes that they are all reported to the Service and we can
248 compare our detection to bird sighting reports.

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250 **GC DECISION** – *Ament moved and Schellpeper seconded to approve the fall 2019 whooping crane*
251 *monitoring report. Monitoring report approved.*

252
253 Mohlman provided a presentation on the results of 2019 tern/plover monitoring. Mohlman discussed recent
254 declines in plover fledge ratios and the relationship between nest success, weather, and predation. She
255 discussed the impact of turtle drawing terrestrial predators to nest sites and needing to investigate ways to
256 keep turtles away from nest sites to reduce the impact of terrestrial predators on tern/plover nests as a
257 secondary effect.

258
259 **GC DECISION** – *Ament moved and LaBonde seconded to approve the 2019 tern/plover monitoring report.*
260 *Monitoring report approved.*

261
262 Farrell discussed the plan for a pilot project to assess the practicality of methods and potential impacts of
263 additional predator management. LaBonde asked if the EDO has considered lethal trapping of predators.
264 Farrell said there is continual trapping at all sites during each nesting season but we are still having problems
265 with predation. Drain asked if you see a positive response, how do you tease out whether it was because
266 turtles have been excluded or whether it is because the fencing was a deterrent? Drain also asked about
267 stopping if there is a negative response on tern/plover nest success and we should not be too quick to stop
268 because it may take a few years for the positive effects to show up.

269
270 **PRRIP Land Plan Update**
271 Tunnell summarized the 2019 Land Work Report. Farnsworth gave the GC an update on the Platte River
272 Resilience Fund and its potential as an endowment to deal long-term with phragmites control on the Platte
273 River. The people organizing the fund are trying to develop an Oversight Committee to manage the fund
274 and its applications. The group wants to have a Program representative on the Oversight Committee and
275 Farnsworth is requesting the GC appoint a representative to the Oversight Committee (GC representative,
276 EDO staff, etc.).

277
278 **GC DECISION** – *Czaplewski moved and Ament seconded to appoint Farnsworth as the GC/Program*
279 *representative on the Platte River Resilience Fund Oversight Committee. Motion approved.*

280
281 **Public Comment**
282 None offered.



283 **Executive Session**

284 *Ament moved and Merrill seconded to enter Executive Session. GC entered Executive Session at 10:30*
285 **AM Central Time.**

286
287 *Miller moved and LaBonde seconded to exit Executive Session. GC exited Executive Session at 10:50 AM*
288 **Central Time.**

289
290 **PRRIP Executive Session Motions**

291 **GC DECISION** – *LaBonde moved and Czaplewski seconded to authorize the EDO to acquire Tract 1910*
292 *as off-channel sand and water habitat acres contingent upon an Executive Director (ED)-approved mining*
293 *agreement. The GC agrees:*

- 294 • *Tract 1910 counts as off-channel sand and water habitat acres toward the overall Program Land*
295 *Objective;*
296 • *Tract 1910 completes the 60 acres of off-channel sand and water habitat approved as part of the GC’s*
297 *tern/plover Structured Decision Making (SDM) process; and*
298 • *Tract 1910 does not count toward the Extension plus-up acres. Motion approved.*

299
300 Rabbe asked Sackett about the status of the 10 acres of on-channel sandbar habitat in the Moving Complex
301 Approach (MCA) approved as part of the tern/plover Structured Decision Making (SDM) process. Sackett
302 and Tunnell said design of those acres are being considered as part of the development of a management
303 plan for Program acres near Chapman, NE.

304
305 **Future Meetings & Closing Business**

306 2020 GC meetings:

- 307 • GC Quarterly Meeting – **June 09-10, 2020 @** Cheyenne, WY
308 • GC Quarterly Meeting – **September 15-16, 2020 @** Kearney, NE
309 • GC Special Session (FY21 Budget/Work Plan) – **November 10, 2020** (conference call/webinar only)
310 • GC Quarterly Meeting – **December 01-02, 2020 @** Denver, CO
311 • 2021 AMP Reporting Session – **February 2021 @** Omaha, NE (specific dates TBD)

312
313 Williams asked if the Service can give the GC a “report card” on how the target species are doing, where
314 the Program is at in terms of water and habitat relative to the target species, and how to move forward in
315 the Extension. Rabbe said the Service last did an update like this in a biannual report two years prior to the
316 negotiations for the Extension and development of the supplemental Biological Opinion for the Extension.
317 The Service believes the supplemental BO serves as the latest biannual report, now that the Extension has
318 started the Service will begin discussing how and when to develop its next biannual report. Williams asked
319 about the specifics provided in those biannual reports. Rabbe said it largely reports against the Program’s
320 Milestones and whether or not they have been achieved. There is some commentary provided regarding
321 Programs aspects that are proceeding well and those that may need some work. Williams said it would be
322 helpful to know if the 417,000 target flow shortage amount is still accurate, what the number might be now,
323 and what could be done in the Extension to make the ultimate number more palatable for the entities
324 involved in the Extension. Farnsworth said we are inching toward that conversation. Small said that
325 Halteman and the EDO will be developing questions on target flows for the next round of GC interviews.
326 Those questions will be sent out to the GC in the next couple of weeks to review and provide comments,
327 and to offer additional questions. Please take that opportunity to think about questions that ask that start to
328 move the GC into the kind of issues raised by Williams and raised during the discussion yesterday.

329
330 **Meeting adjourned at 11:05 AM Central Time.**



331 **Summary of Action Items/Decisions from March 10-11, 2020 GC Quarterly Meeting**

- 332 1) Approved the December 03, 2019 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes and the February 18, 2020 GC
333 Special Session minutes.
- 334 2) Approved the DJ Case contract amendment.
- 335 3) Approved proposed changes to the Downstream Water Users Charter.
- 336 4) Approved the Remote Sensing RFP.
- 337 5) Approved the fall 2019 whooping crane monitoring report.
- 338 6) Approved the 2019 tern/plover monitoring report.
- 339 7) Appointed Farnsworth as the GC/Program representative on the Platte River Resilience Fund Oversight
340 Committee.
- 341 8) Authorized the EDO to acquire Tract 1910 as off-channel sand and water habitat acres contingent upon
342 an Executive Director (ED)-approved mining agreement. The GC agrees:
- 343 • Tract 1910 counts as off-channel sand and water habitat acres toward the overall Program Land
344 Objective;
 - 345 • Tract 1910 completes the 60 acres of off-channel sand and water habitat approved as part of the
346 GC's tern/plover Structured Decision Making (SDM) process; and
 - 347 • Tract 1910 does not count toward the Extension plus-up acres.