



PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP -or- Program)

Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting – Cheyenne, WY (+ virtual)

Day #1 – Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Governance Committee (GC)

State of Wyoming

Harry LaBonde – Member
Brandon Gebhart – Alternate

State of Colorado

Don Ament – Member (2021 GC Chair)

State of Nebraska

Tom Riley – Member

Upper Platte Water Users

Dennis Strauch – Member
Bob Mehling – Alternate

Downstream Water Users

Devin Brundage – Member
Kent Miller – Member
Lyndon Vogt – Member
Joe Citta – Member (virtual)

Executive Director’s Office (EDO)

Jason Farnsworth – ED
Bridget Barron
Justin Brei
Patrick Farrell
Julia Grabowski (virtual)
Malinda Henry
Mallory Jaymes (virtual)
Kaley Keldsen (virtual)
Kari Mohlman (virtual)
George Oamek (virtual)
Alicia Uribe (virtual)
Chad Smith (virtual)
Tom Smrdel
Tim Tunnell (virtual)
Seth Turner (virtual)

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

Brock Merrill – Member (2021 GC Vice Chair)
Brian Hollis – Alternate

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)

Steve Smith – Member (virtual)
Mark Porath – Alternate (virtual)
Matt Rabbe – Alternate (virtual)

Environmental Entities

Brice Krohn – Member (virtual)
Bill Taddicken – Member
Rich Walters – Member
Melissa Mosier – Alternate

Colorado Water Users

Alan Berryman – Member
Deb Freeman – Alternate
Jason Marks – Alternate (virtual)
Kevin Urie – Alternate (virtual)

Other Participants

Cory Steinke & Mike Drain – CNPPID (virtual)
Jim Jenniges, Jeff Shafer, & Michael Krondak –
NPPD (virtual)
Brian Caruso, Tom Econopouly & Jeff Runge –
Service (virtual)
Lauren Ris & Erik Skeie – State of Colorado
(virtual)
Michelle Koch – NGPC (virtual)
Mirko Kruse – Trout Raley (CO Water Users;
virtual)
Jennifer Hoeting – ISAC (virtual)
Dave Marmorek – ISAC (virtual)
Adrian Farmer – ISAC (virtual)
David Galat – ISAC (virtual)
Ned Andrews – ISAC (virtual)



#1	WELCOME & ADMINISTRATIVE	Agenda Item Objective: Greetings, roll call, review agenda.
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47 **Introductions** – Chair Ament called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM Mountain Time. The in-person and
 48 virtual groups proceeded with introductions.

49
 50 **Agenda** – No modifications offered.

51
 52 **Minutes** – The GC approved the following minutes:

53 **GC Motion:** Riley moved and LaBonde seconded to approve the September 2021 GC Quarterly Meeting
 54 minutes. **Minutes approved.**

55
 56 **GC Motion:** LaBonde moved and Riley seconded to approve the November 2021 GC Virtual Special
 57 Session minutes. **Minutes approved.**

#2	COMMITTEE UPDATES	Agenda Item Objective: General update on recent work of PRRIP Advisory Committees.
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59 **Land Advisory Committee (LAC)** – Mosier provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC last
 60 met on October 27. Agenda items included Advisory Committee updates, FY22 Land Plan budget and
 61 work plan, upcoming tour of Program properties, management of Fox, DeBoer, and Liehs tracts related
 62 to palustrine wetlands (informal recommendation to GC to be discussed today), elected Dave Zorn as
 63 2022 Chair and Mosier and Vice Chair. Next meeting is February 23, 2022.

64
 65 **Water Advisory Committee (WAC)** – Steinke provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC
 66 last met on October 26, most items will be discussed by the GC at this meeting (recapture wells, choke
 67 point, water projects accounting, WAP budget).

68
 69 **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** – Merrill provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC
 70 last met on October 13 and discussed broadscale recharge at Cottonwood Ranch, palustrine wetland
 71 issues (TAC recommendation to GC), update to tern/plover monitoring protocol, predator management
 72 at OCSW sites, remote sensing for geomorphology, Extension Science Plan, pallid sturgeon research
 73 projects, wet meadow hydrology, other species of concern, and the FY22 budget and work plan.

74
 75 **Finance Committee (FC)** – Farnsworth noted there has not been an FC meeting since the last GC
 76 meeting, Colorado does not have a rep (Jojo La moved on and was FC Chair) so FC-related items are on
 77 the GC meeting agenda today and tomorrow.

#3	OUTREACH UPDATE	Agenda Item Objective: General update on PRRIP outreach activities.
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79 **PRESENTATIONS**

- 80 • Kaley Keldsen presented at the virtual Nebraska Natural Legacy Conference on October 18, 2021.
 81 Her presentation was titled, “Monitoring Interior Least Tern and Piping Plover Nests with Trail &
 82 Cellular Video Cameras at Off-channel Nesting sites Along the Central Platte River in Nebraska”.
- 83 • Jason Farnsworth presented a Program update to the Central Platte Natural Resources District
 84 Board in Grand Island, Nebraska on October 28, 2021.
- 85 • Jason Farnsworth presented on the Program Governance structure to the South Platte Water
 86 Related Activities Program (SPWRAP) virtual conference on November 8, 2021.



- 87 • Jason Farnsworth participated in a leadership panel discussion held by the Nebraska Water Leaders
88 Academy in Kearney, Nebraska on November 19, 2021.

89 **EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS**

- 91 • The Program exhibited at Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island on September 14, 15, and 16, 2021 in
92 the Natural Resources Districts building. We made 1054 contacts.
- 93 • The Program exhibited at the Nebraska Natural Resources Districts Annual Conference on
94 September 26 through 28, 2021 in Kearney, Nebraska. We made 90 contacts.
- 95 • The Program exhibited at the Nebraska Water Resources Association/Nebraska State Irrigation
96 Association joint conference in Kearney, Nebraska on November 22nd & 23rd, 2021. We made 76
97 contacts.
- 98 • The Program sponsored a break at the South Platte Forum on December 9th, 2021 in Westminster,
99 Colorado.

100 **UPCOMING EXHIBITS**

- 101 • The Program will be exhibiting at the Four States annual conference in Fort Collins, Colorado on
102 January 12th and 13th, 2022.
- 103 • The Program will be exhibiting at Colorado Water Congress in Aurora, Colorado on January 26th
104 through 28th in Aurora, Colorado.

105 **MEDIA/OTHER**

- 106 • In early November, the Omaha World Herald and Kearney Hub newspapers published articles on the
107 record number of whooping cranes stopping over in central Nebraska. Staff from The Crane Trust
108 and Rowe Sanctuary were interviewed for the articles.

#4	PRRIP FY21 BUDGET	Agenda Item Objective: General update on current status of FY21 budget.
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109 Farnsworth delivered an updated presentation to the GC on the status of the FY21 budget,
110 expenditures, and budget-related action items for the GC today.

#5	PRRIP FY22 Budget	Agenda Item Objective: Discuss/approve FY22 budget, work plan, and EDO contract.
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111 Farnsworth introduced the FY22 PRRIP budget and work plan and the associated FY22 EDO contract for
112 GC discussion and approval. Farnsworth updated the GC on the small budget item related to violet
113 plantings for Regal fritillaries (only would be expended with GC approval) and budget line item PS-1
114 (pallid sturgeon) including costs for a flight to collect additional LiDAR data in the lower Platte River.
115 Riley asked when the EDO anticipated they might seek approval from the GC for acquiring the LiDAR
116 data in the lower Platte River. Farnsworth said he would address that with the GC after budget approval
117 today. Freeman asked how the choke point money in the budget connects with resolving that issue.
118 Farnsworth said he anticipates an extended discussion with the GC on this issue at the March 2022
119 meeting. Any expenditures next year would be taken up looking at administrative, legal, and
120 institutional feasibility of options, a more detailed feasibility analysis would be in 2023 and that budget
121 would be reflected accordingly at that time. Freeman asked if we would be having more discussion on
122 the pallid sturgeon yet today. Farnsworth said yes.

123 **GC Motion:** *LaBonde moved and Merrill seconded to approve the PRRIP FY22 budget and work plan.*
124 **FY22 budget and work plan approved.**



130 **EDO contract: Riley moved and Taddicken seconded to approve the FY22 EDO contract. FY22 EDO**
131 **contract approved.**

132
133 Farnsworth summarized the need for acquiring additional LiDAR data in the lower Platte River related to
134 the Pallid Sturgeon Framing Agreement and the two research projects that are now beginning. Gebhart
135 asked if the estimated price would be good for a five-year window. Farnsworth said probably close,
136 prices for data acquisition have been stable but the cost could be influenced by rising fuel prices. Brei
137 said after the end of 2022 we will need to re-compete the remote sensing contract so depending who
138 wins that contract the price could change. Ament asked about the ideal flow conditions. Brei said we will
139 ask the current contractor (Quantum Spatial) for help identifying that, but we will be looking for low
140 flow and low turbidity. Low depths and low velocities are generally the kind of conditions we need. Does
141 the channel form change enough that the results might not be applicable at the end of the Extension?
142 Farnsworth said the distributions of habitat (available/used) are generally pretty stable across
143 conditions and across time, but that is something we have to watch. Freeman asked if it is an option to
144 stay within the original scope and move to the Phase 2 water management study to see if the pieces
145 hold together or is the recommendation that we need to do this to do the Phase 2 water management
146 study. Farnsworth said the concern is if we add too much noise to the dataset and reduce confidence in
147 findings, we might be in a situation like we are now where certain parties lack confidence in results and
148 conclusions and the Program can't make any forward movement on the PS issue.

149
150 Riley asked how you handle the temporal mismatch created by one-time LiDAR data being a surrogate
151 for river topography that will change every day. Henry said habitat data will be collected where fish are
152 caught, the LiDAR data will be used to help identify the distribution of such habitat types (generalize
153 hydraulic data back to distributions and habitat types by reach) to get out of temporal effects. Freeman
154 asked if this will result in flow recommendations for above the Elkhorn River. Farnsworth said we likely
155 would get operational rules to avoid impacts, and also the Service wants to quantify benefits to pallid
156 sturgeon so this could end up being a tool that might be part of that. Farnsworth said he does not
157 foresee actual flow recommendations for the lower Platte, beyond operational rules for avoiding
158 impacts. Riley asked if we are using existing gaging stations to help set rating curves. Farnsworth said we
159 have all that data if we end up doing the LiDAR acquisition we would probably develop an SRH-2D model
160 and use those to calibrate back. Drain said the purpose of the LiDAR data is to not get a point-specific
161 piece of information to match with point-specific data on fish. Instead, this is to look at connectivity,
162 how this might be influenced by flow regimes, etc. Farnsworth said yes. Drain said one decision could be
163 to wait but you then might have to wait to acquire data, but if we do this now we can be ready when
164 appropriate conditions occur. Smith said the goal here was to collect appropriate information to fill data
165 gaps before heading into a Second Increment. Farnsworth said the EDO can work with our current
166 contractor to design a set of optimal conditions for the LiDAR flight. EDO will come back to the GC in
167 March to provide more information and acquisition criteria.

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#6	PRRIP SCIENCE ACTIVITIES	Agenda Item Objective: Discuss recent AMP implementation activities.
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169 Jaymes delivered an update presentation to the GC on fall 2021 whooping crane (WC) monitoring.
170 Farnsworth said people at the GC meeting were asking “why” so many WC were observed this fall.
171 Jaymes said some speculation relates to cranes bunching up in Saskatchewan then moving based on
172 north or south winds. Taddicken asked if there was data about river use versus off-river habitat use.
173 Jaymes said we don't collect that data but most sightings were on the river, Taddicken said that is what
174 they observed at Rowe Sanctuary as well.



175 Jaymes introduced the 2022 WC monitoring RFB to secure flight crew services for spring and fall
 176 migratory monitoring. Farnsworth said this is generally something we would handle at the FC but have
 177 this in front the GC today. Riley asked if liability numbers have been updated recently, the coverage
 178 limits in the RFB seem low. Farnsworth said last year they were industry standard numbers but we
 179 should double-check. The Program carries a big umbrella policy over that. Farnsworth said he would
 180 check with the insurance agent again to make sure the coverage numbers are accurate.

181

182 **GC Motion:** Riley moved and Mehling seconded to approve the WC monitoring RFB. **RFB approved.**

183

184 Henry provided a short update to the GC on the status of the pallid sturgeon research projects. Startup
 185 meetings are scheduled for December 16th with UNL and for January 5th with SIU.

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#7	INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ISAC)	Agenda Item Objective: Update from the ISAC.
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187 Smith introduced the ISAC and the context of this session. Henry delivered an update presentation to
 188 the GC on the Extension Science Plan. Hoeting delivered an updated presentation to the GC on behalf of
 189 the ISAC. GC discussion:

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191 Drain – GC wants to have hypotheses if we are going to collect data. Is a lack of hypotheses an indicator
 192 that there are some things in the draft Science Plan that we really aren’t going to focus on? Plover
 193 predation is an example to consider. Discussions on the AMWG suggested that for that one, we are just
 194 “going to do what we are going to do”. If we don’t have hypotheses for this, maybe we consider pulling
 195 it from the Science Plan entirely?

196

197 Labonde – saw discussion in slides about impacts of water management on pallid sturgeon. Going back
 198 to original Stage Change Study, I thought the consultant said we could not detect central Platte flow
 199 management in the lower Platte so he wondered why there is discussion about flow and pallids.
 200 Farnsworth said right now in the Science Plan we have learning objectives for pallid sturgeon, not
 201 specific hypotheses. We do not anticipate any hypotheses that relate to Program flow management. The
 202 ISAC is likely talking about something like a trade-offs analysis for water use in the Second Increment,
 203 which ties to the Pallid Sturgeon Agreement Framing Document. LaBonde said Big Questions going
 204 forward should keep that in mind. Miller said he was confused about the pallid sturgeon items and what
 205 is anticipated to be done with pallids and the lower Platte in regard to the Science Plan.

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#8	OTHER SPECIES OF CONCERN	Agenda Item Objective: Initial GC feedback and discussion on other species of concern.
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207 Henry delivered an update presentation to the GC on the process of working through other species of
 208 concern with the GC-appointed work group. Freeman asked about how much effort the subcommittee is
 209 going to have to get into and is concerned about the level of detail. Farnsworth and Henry said they can
 210 work with the subcommittee to get this down to a one-pager of species that might be under
 211 consideration and provide a short synopsis of why each species was included on the list based upon
 212 prioritization criteria. That can be brought to the GC in March for further discussion to get direction
 213 from the GC on next steps before investing time in developing work plans and budgets.



#9	PALUSTRINE WETLANDS	Agenda Item Objective: Initial GC feedback and discussion on palustrine wetlands.
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214 Tunnell and Jaymes discussed the issue of palustrine wetlands. Merrill said the TAC recommendation
215 was to keep the Fox tract and bank the other two properties, selling them to pay for on-channel or
216 within complex habitat where available, but to do so with conservation easements. The LAC
217 recommendation was to keep all three properties, managing them as WC habitat by filling them during
218 migration (including development of a plan for providing water to DeBoer, but do not implement). The
219 GC concurred with the LAC recommendation.

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GC MEETING DAY #1 END	5:32 PM Mountain Time
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222 **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP -or- Program)**

223 **Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting – Cheyenne, WY (+ virtual)**

224 Day #2 – Wednesday, December 8, 2021

225

226 **Governance Committee (GC)**

227 **State of Wyoming**

228 Harry LaBonde – Member
229 Brandon Gebhart – Alternate

230

231 **State of Colorado**

232 Don Ament – Member (2021 GC Chair)

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236 **State of Nebraska**

237 Tom Riley – Member

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242 **Upper Platte Water Users**

243 Dennis Strauch – Member
244 Bob Mehling – Alternate

245

246

247

248 **Downstream Water Users**

249 Devin Brundage – Member
250 Kent Miller – Member
251 Lyndon Vogt – Member
252 Joe Citta – Member (virtual)

253

254

255

256

257 **Executive Director’s Office (EDO)**

258 Jason Farnsworth – ED

259 Bridget Barron

260 Justin Brei

261 Patrick Farrell

262 Julia Grabowski (virtual)

263 Malinda Henry

264 Mallory Jaymes (virtual)

265 Kaley Keldsen (virtual)

266 Kari Mohlman (virtual)

267 George Oamek (virtual)

Ed Weschler

Alicia Uribe (virtual)

Chad Smith (virtual)

Tom Smrdel (virtual)

Tim Tunnell (virtual)

Seth Turner (virtual)

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

Brock Merrill – Member (2021 GC Vice Chair)
Brian Hollis – Alternate

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)

Steve Smith – Member (virtual)
Mark Porath – Alternate (virtual)
Matt Rabbe – Alternate (virtual)

Environmental Entities

Brice Krohn – Member (virtual)
Bill Taddicken – Member
Rich Walters – Member
Melissa Mosier – Alternate

Colorado Water Users

Alan Berryman – Member
Deb Freeman – Alternate
Jason Marks – Alternate (virtual)
Kevin Urie – Alternate

Other Participants

Cory Steinke & Mike Drain – CNPPID (virtual)
Jim Jenniges, Jeff Shafer, John Shadle, &
Michael Krondak – NPPD (virtual)
Brian Caruso, Tom Econopouly & Jeff Runge –
Service (virtual)
Lauren Ris, Erik Skeie, & Amy Ostdiek – State of
Colorado (virtual)
Michelle Koch – NGPC (virtual)
Mirko Kruse – Trout Raley (CO Water Users;
virtual)
Jennifer Hoeting – ISAC (virtual)
Dave Marmorek – ISAC (virtual)
Adrian Farmer – ISAC (virtual)
David Galat – ISAC (virtual)
Ned Andrews – ISAC (virtual)
Jesse Bradley – State of Nebraska (virtual)



#10	WELCOME & ADMINISTRATIVE	Agenda Item Objective: Greetings, roll call, review agenda.
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268 Chair Ament called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM Mountain Time. The group proceeded with
 269 introductions.

#11	PRRIP WEBSITE & DATABASE	Agenda Item Objective: Approve FY22 contract amendment for PRRIP website & database.
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271 Brei introduced the 2022 contract amendment for DJ Case.

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 273 **GC Motion:** Labonde moved and Riley seconded to approve the FY22 DJ Case contract amendment.
 274 **Contract amendment approved.**

#12	PRRIP PERMITTING	Agenda Item Objective: Discuss Approve items related to PRRIP permitting in FY22.
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276 Turner introduced the FY22 PRRIP permitting contract amendment and the RFP for selecting a new
 277 permitting contractor.

278
 279 **GC Motion:** Riley moved and LaBonde seconded to approve the PRRIP permitting FY22 contract
 280 amendment and the associated RFP. **Contract amendment and RFP approved.**

281
 282 The GC appointed the following **Selection Panel** for the PRRIP permitting RFP – Bill Brewer, Wyoming;
 283 Tom Riley, Nebraska; Brock Merrill, Reclamation; Matt Rabbe, Service; Seth Turner, EDO.

#13	WATER ACTION PLAN (WAP)	Agenda Item Objective: Update on recent WAP implementation activities.
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285 Turner delivered an updated presentation to the GC on the status of WAP activities, water accounting,
 286 the recapture network at Cottonwood Ranch, and the North Platte chokepoint. Freeman said it would
 287 be great to have a summary table of Program flow contributions in the WAP accounting memo. Turner
 288 agreed. Riley asked if the bypass option has floated to the critical path in terms of the Program turning
 289 its attention to that option. Turner said it is ultimately up to the GC but at this point other solutions do
 290 not seem to get the necessary capacity gains at the chokepoint. Riley asked what the Service’s viewpoint
 291 is of this issue. Small said it is one of the last big hurdles left and it is still very important to the Service to
 292 get to the 3,000 cfs capacity. He is still interested in hearing more about other solutions, does the
 293 Program have to go this alone, are there other partners, etc. But for the Service, the 3,000 cfs capacity is
 294 still important. Freeman said the Extension document talks about aggressively pursuing this and it seems
 295 the Service wants us to continue on that path. Taddicken said it would be helpful to get a review of all
 296 the possible solutions that have been considered over time. Brei said there is a document created for
 297 the chokepoint workgroup that can be shared. Farnsworth said the EDO will do a quick review in March
 298 2022. Small asked if Turner could make available to the GC sooner rather than later the summary memo
 299 provided to the chokepoint workgroup. Turner agreed. Small said Mark Porath would be available to be
 300 part of discussions leading up to the GC meeting next March. LaBonde said it would be worthwhile to
 301 refresh the group as to why 3,000 cfs is the capacity target, and also a reminder that the bypass option
 302 requires land acquisition which for the Program would mean willing sellers.

#14	PUBLIC COMMENT	Agenda Item Objective: Public comment period on PRRIP activities.
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304 Tom Econopouly announced that he is retiring at the beginning of January 2022 and will move on from
 305 working for the Service and on the Program. The GC thanked him for his good work and wished him



306 well. Small thanked Econopouly for his work and for helping him learn about the Platte River and the
307 Program. No other public comment offered.
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#15	EXECUTIVE SESSION	Agenda Item Objective: GC member discussion of sensitive land, water, and policy items.
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309 **GC Motion:** Merrill moved and LaBonde seconded to enter Executive Session. **GC entered Executive**
310 **Session at 8:51 AM Mountain Time.**

311
312 The GC exited Executive Session at 8:59 AM Mountain Time.
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#16	EXECUTIVE SESSION MOTIONS	Agenda Item Objective: GC consideration of motions discussed during Executive Session.
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314 None offered.
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#17	GC MEETING REVIEW & WRAP-UP	Agenda Item Objective: Discuss action items, meeting feedback, and upcoming meeting schedule.
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316 **Action Items & Meeting Feedback** – Farnsworth said that based upon feedback from this meeting the
317 plan for the March 2022 GC meeting would be to come back to the GC on Other Species of Concern,
318 more information on LiDAR of lower Platte and pallid research, and choke point options on the first day
319 of the meeting. The second day would be dedicated to working through the Extension Science Plan with
320 the GC. Technical details will have been discussed in more detail with technical folks during the February
321 Science Reporting Session.
322

323 **2022 GC Chair and Vice Chair** – Merrill (Reclamation) elected 2022 GC Chair and Riley (Nebraska)
324 elected 2022 GC Vice Chair.
325

326 **Upcoming GC meetings** (in-person meetings depend on local and national public health conditions and
327 travel restrictions):

- 328 • **2022 PRRIP Science Plan Reporting Session** – February 15-17, 2022 @ Omaha, NE
- 329 • **March 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting** – March 8-9, 2022 @ Kearney, NE
- 330 • **June 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting** – June 7-8, 2022 @ Cheyenne, WY
- 331 • **September 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting** – September 13-14, 2022 @ Kearney, NE (in conjunction
332 with Fall 2022 ISAC Meeting)
- 333 • **GC Virtual Special Session on FY2023 Budget/Work Plan** – November 9, 2022; 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
334 Central Time *via Teams*
- 335 • **December 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting** – December 6-7, 2022 @ Denver, CO
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GC MEETING DAY #2 END	9:07 AM Mountain Time
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338 **[Summary of Action Items/Decisions from December 2021 GC Quarterly Meeting](#)**

- 339 1) Approved the September 2021 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes.
- 340 2) Approved the November 2021 GC Virtual Special Session minutes.
- 341 3) Approved FY22 PRRIP budget and work plan.
- 342 4) Approved FY22 EDO contract.
- 343 5) Approved WC monitoring RFB.
- 344 6) Approved the FY22 DJ Case contract amendment.



- 345 7) Approved the FY22 HDR contract amendment.
- 346 8) Approved the PRRIP permitting RFP and appointed the following RFP Selection Panel – Bill Brewer,
- 347 Wyoming; Tom Riley, Nebraska; Brock Merrill, Reclamation; Matt Rabbe, Service; Seth Turner, EDO.
- 348 9) Elected Brock Merrill (Reclamation) as 2022 GC Chair and Tom Riley (Nebraska) as 2022 GC Vice
- 349 Chair.