



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

**March 2022 Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting – Kearney, NE (+ virtual)**

Day #1 – Tuesday, March 8, 2022

**Governance Committee (GC)**

**State of Wyoming**

Harry LaBonde – Member  
Brandon Gebhart – Alternate (virtual)

**State of Colorado**

Don Ament – Member

**State of Nebraska**

Jesse Bradley – Alternate  
Jennifer Schellpeper – Alternate

**Upper Platte Water Users**

Dennis Strauch – Member  
Bob Mehling – Alternate (virtual)  
Owen Williams – Alternate

**Downstream Water Users**

Dave Zorn – Alternate  
John Shadle – Alternate  
Lyndon Vogt – Member

**Executive Director’s Office (EDO)**

Jason Farnsworth – ED  
Bridget Barron  
Justin Brei  
Kristen Cognac (virtual)  
Patrick Farrell  
Julia Grabowski (virtual)  
Malinda Henry  
Sarah Hinshaw (virtual)  
Mallory Jaymes  
Kaley Keldsen  
Kari Mohlman  
Chad Smith  
Alicia Uribe  
Tim Tunnell  
Seth Turner  
Malia Volke (virtual)  
Jon Wentz  
Ed Weschler

**Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)**

Brock Merrill – Member (2022 GC Chair)  
Brian Hollis – Alternate (virtual)

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

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

**Environmental Entities**

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

**Colorado Water Users**

Alan Berryman – Member  
Deb Freeman – Alternate  
Jason Marks – Alternate  
Kevin Urie – Alternate

**Other Participants**

Cory Steinke & Mike Drain – CNPPID  
Jim Jenniges & Jeff Shafer – NPPD  
Michael Krondak – NPPD (virtual)  
Brian Caruso – Service (virtual)  
Jeff Runge – Service  
Michelle Koch – NGPC (virtual)  
Andy Caven – Trust (virtual)  
Jennifer Hoeting – ISAC (virtual)  
Dave Marmorek – ISAC (virtual)  
David Galat – ISAC (virtual)  
Adrian Farmer – ISAC (virtual)  
Lauren Ris, Amy Ostdiek, & Emily Zmak – CWCB



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

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 50 **Agenda** – No modifications offered.

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

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

<b>#2 COMMITTEE UPDATES</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> General update on recent work of PRRIP Advisory Committees.
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56 **Land Advisory Committee (LAC)** – Zorn provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC last met  
 57 on February 23. The LAC discussed Program property issues that will be discussed during GC Executive  
 58 Session tomorrow.

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 60 **Water Advisory Committee (WAC)** – Steinke provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC  
 61 last met on February 1. Topics included the Perkins Count Canal; WAP projects; wet meadows; recapture  
 62 network.

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 64 **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** – Merrill provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC  
 65 last met on January 12. Topics included grassland monitoring protocol; 2021 PP/LT monitoring and fall  
 66 2021 WC monitoring; discussed the Extension Science Plan; non-target, non-listed species of concern;  
 67 the pallid sturgeon research projects.

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 69 **Finance Committee (FC)** – Farnsworth said the FC last met on January 26. Two action items: elected Tom  
 70 Riley (Nebraska) as the 2022 Chair; approved an RFP for prescribed fire services for spring 2022.

<b>#3 OUTREACH UPDATE</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> General update on PRRIP outreach activities.
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72 **PRESENTATIONS**

- 73 • Jason Farnsworth presented to the Board of the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) at their  
 74 annual Board Retreat on March 4, 2022, at the Crane Trust in Alda, Nebraska. He presented a  
 75 Program update and discussed the partnership between the Program and NCF.

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 77 **EXHIBITS**

- 78 • The Program exhibited at the annual meeting of the Four States Irrigation Council in Fort Collins,  
 79 Colorado on January 12-13, 2022. We made 60 contacts.
- 80 • The Program exhibited at Colorado Water Congress in Aurora, Colorado on January 26 – 28, 2022.  
 81 We made 50 contacts.

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 83 **UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS**

- 84 • Jason Farnsworth will be conducting site visits for South Platte Water Related Activities Program  
 85 (SPWRAP) and Nebraska Department of Natural Resources staff on March 8, 2022, and March 21,  
 86 2022. The site visits are on Program land and provide information about land management activities  
 87 of the Program.



88 **MEDIA/OTHER**

- 89 • The Kearney Hub and the Omaha World-Herald published several articles about the proposed Perkins County Canal that mentioned the Program.
- 90
- 91 • The Program is hosting individuals and groups from Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska in Program blinds for the annual crane migration.
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<b>#4</b>	<b>PRRIP BUDGET</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> General update on current status of FY21 budget.
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94 Farnsworth provided a review of the FY21 PRRIP budget and updated the GC on the status of the FY22 PRRIP budget. Farnsworth previewed budget action items to be discussed by the GC during this Quarterly Meeting.

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<b>#5</b>	<b>PRRIP SCIENCE ACTIVITIES &amp; TARGET SPECIES</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Discuss Science Plan implementation activities.
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98 Jaymes updated the GC on recent changes to the fall 2021 whooping crane (WC) monitoring report.

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100 **GC Motion:** *LaBonde moved and Ament seconded to approve the 2021 WC Monitoring Report.* **Report approved.**

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103 Mohlman updated the GC on recent changes to the 2021 piping plover/least tern monitoring report. Shadle asked about the primary PP avian predators. Mohlman said owls.

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106 **GC Motion:** *Shadle moved and Berryman seconded to approve the 2021 Piping Plover/Least Tern Monitoring Report.* **Report approved.**

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109 Farnsworth discussed the purpose and need for LiDAR data acquisition in the lower Platte River related to the pallid sturgeon research projects. Freeman asked if the cost for the LiDAR works include the cost of the 2-D hydrodynamic model? Farnsworth said no, but the EDO anticipates developing that model in-house. Freeman asked if we will end up with a set of target flows for pallid sturgeon? Farnsworth said it might be possible to have flow curves and general relationships, but not specific target flows. Bradley asked if the EDO would look at taking water out below the instream flow threshold. Farnsworth said no, only diversions during times of excess to target flows that could in some scenario impact lower Platte River flows in some way. Galat ask how accurate will a 2-D model be over a wide range of flows based on a single LiDAR flight at one flow vs 2-3 LiDAR flights over a wider range of flows? What is cost vs benefit to 2-D model accuracy of single vs multiple LiDAR flights for Step 2 Water Management Study? Farnsworth said we will pushing our luck to get one really good LiDAR acquisition at low flows, any higher flow makes the lower Platte significantly more turbid and it becomes difficult to collect and analyze useful LiDAR data. Shadle asked about a particular location and flow for LiDAR triggers. Farnsworth said probably something like less than 3,000 cfs at Louisville, but nothing definite yet and we will be working with the LiDAR contractor and the UNL pallid sturgeon team to investigate this further. Strauch asked how much better the data will be if we acquire the LiDAR? Farnsworth said without LiDAR, we may be OK, but with it we have much better odds of getting what we need to develop useful information for the Program on this issue.

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128 **GC Motion:** *Strauch moved and Walters seconded to approve the Quantum Spatial contract amendment.* **Contract amendment approved.**

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<b>#6</b>	<b>INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ISAC)</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Update from the ISAC.
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130 Smith introduced the ISAC and the context of this session. Marmorek delivered an update presentation  
 131 to the GC on behalf of the ISAC. GC discussion:  
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- 133 • Freeman asked about the plan for wet meadows research and information. Farnsworth said the EDO  
 134 is building on the work since 2012 collected wet meadow hydrology and associated weather data,  
 135 and Kristen Cognac in the EDO is building an analytical tool with the help of those data to be able to  
 136 speak to interactions between flow and wet meadows. The intention is to ensure there is useful  
 137 information regarding wet meadows that will be available and useful to the GC in the process of  
 138 negotiating the Second Increment and considering tradeoffs between the use of Program resources  
 139 (land, water, learning, money).  
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<b>#7</b>	<b>EXTENSION SCIENCE PLAN</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Approve Extension Science Plan.
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141 Henry presented the Extension Science Plan to the GC for review, discussion, and approval. Zorn asked  
 142 about Attachment #1 in the Science Plan and what is meant by the inclusion and mention of triggers  
 143 when looking back at the original Big Questions from First Increment. Extended GC discussion regarding  
 144 explanation of check-in plans for First Increment Big Questions, the focus of Extension Big Questions  
 145 related to whooping cranes and flow, and Extension Big Questions related to pallid sturgeon. Henry  
 146 provided context for Big Question reassessment triggers, how they were derived, and how the Program  
 147 may respond in terms of further investigation and adjusting management. Freeman suggested revising  
 148 Attachment #1 so the last column reflects check-in activities to keep tabs on First Increment Big  
 149 Questions rather than quantifiable signals for reassessment of learning. Extended GC discussion  
 150 regarding the focus of Extension Big Questions related to whooping cranes and flow and the Extension  
 151 Big Question related to pallid sturgeon. Farnsworth asked whether the issues with the Science Plan were  
 152 significant enough to warrant modification/halting of what the EDO is currently doing in terms of  
 153 implementation? The GC said no. Smith asked if the GC is talking more about a revision of the text at the  
 154 Science-Policy interface to better reflect the current GC discussion? The GC concurred. Farnsworth,  
 155 Henry, and Smith agreed to re-visit the Extension Big Questions and the language regarding First  
 156 Increment Big Question check-ins and consider possible edits for GC review through a virtual Special  
 157 Session prior to the June 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting.  
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<b>#8</b>	<b>ISAC MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Appoint new ISAC members.
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159 Smith delivered an update on the process of identifying new members for the ISAC. The ISAC Selection  
 160 Panel is likely to have ISAC candidates to recommend for GC appointment prior to the June GC Quarterly  
 161 Meeting.  
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<b>#9</b>	<b>OTHER SPECIES OF CONCERN</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> GC feedback and direction on other species of concern.
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163 \* This item was discussed by the GC on 03\_09\_22.  
 164 Henry discussed recent work by a small group to develop a “short list” of other species of concern for GC  
 165 consideration. Merrill asked the Service what the listing timeline might be for the regal fritillary and  
 166 monarch butterfly. Porath said they are both in review and they expect to have a listing decision by the  
 167 end of the year on the regal fritillary. Merrill asked if a consultation will occur if listed? Rabbe said that  
 168 depends on the listing status. Whittaker asked about management actions related to backwater  
 169 management and grassland management for the plains topminnow and Platte River caddisfly. Henry



170 said the work group did not go into detail on management actions for these species prior to bringing the  
171 list back to the GC, violet planting to support Regal larvae was researched and a plan presented to the  
172 TAC in July of 2021. Farnsworth said it largely would be being mindful of these species in a good faith  
173 effort while managing Program properties (grazing on grasslands, etc.). Farnsworth said the EDO  
174 together with the working group could come back to the GC with a written explanation of what it would  
175 mean to show good faith toward the four “new action” species – regal fritillary, monarch, plains  
176 topminnow, and Platte River caddisfly. Brundage asked about providing some kind of a risk analysis in  
177 terms of what it would mean for the Program if these species were listed. Vogt suggested the list remain  
178 as a good faith list with no formalization. Shadle and Rabbe agreed with Freeman that this should be a  
179 living list that is updated regularly depending on the species’ conditions and the direction of Program  
180 management on PRRIP properties. Williams asked about implications on Program management and  
181 Program lands. Farnsworth and Henry said it depends on the species, likely monitoring as a key action.  
182 Merrill said this is something he has brought up before and wondered about the GC appetite to try to  
183 get ahead of these issues before potential listing, consultation, and more stringent requirements.  
184 LaBonde said the Program should focus on achieving benefits for the target species and if that is in  
185 conflict with one of the “new action” species the result should be in favor of the target species. LaBonde  
186 said he would support the planting of violet plugs. Merrill asked if the GC was in favor of that approach,  
187 it does not require a vote of the GC because the cost (\$6,000) is below the procurement policy  
188 threshold. The GC concurred.

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190 **GC Motion:** *Berryman moved and LaBonde seconded to approve the EDO moving forward with a \$6,000*  
191 *purchase of violet plugs for planting. Motion approved.*  
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<b>GC MEETING DAY #1 END</b>	5:32 PM Central Time
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194 **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP -or- Program)**

195 **March 2022 Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting – Kearney, NE (+ virtual)**

196 Day #2 – Wednesday, March 9, 2022

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198 **Governance Committee (GC)**

199 **State of Wyoming**

200 Harry LaBonde – Member  
201 Brandon Gebhart – Alternate (virtual)

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203 **State of Colorado**

204 Don Ament – Member

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208 **State of Nebraska**

209 Jennifer Schellpeper – Alternate

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212 **Upper Platte Water Users**

213 Dennis Strauch – Member  
214 Bob Mehling – Alternate (virtual)  
215 Owen Williams – Alternate

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218 **Downstream Water Users**

219 Devin Brundage – Member  
220 Lyndon Vogt – Member

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

225 Jason Farnsworth – ED

226 Bridget Barron

227 Justin Brei

228 Patrick Farrell

229 Malinda Henry

230 Mallory Jaymes

231 Kaley Keldsen (virtual)

232 Kari Mohlman

233 Chad Smith

234 Alicia Uribe

235 Tim Tunnell

236 Seth Turner

237 Ed Weschler

**Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)**

Brock Merrill – Member (2022 GC Chair)  
Brian Hollis – Alternate (virtual)

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

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

**Environmental Entities**

Rich Walters – Member  
Bill Taddicken – Member (virtual)

**Colorado Water Users**

Alan Berryman – Member  
Deb Freeman – Alternate  
Jason Marks – Alternate  
Kevin Urie – Alternate

**Other Participants**

Cory Steinke, Dave Zorn, & Mike Drain – CNPPID  
Jim Jenniges & Jeff Shafer – NPPD  
Michael Krondak – NPPD (virtual)  
Michelle Koch – NGPC (virtual)  
Jeff Runge – Service



<b>#10</b>	<b>WELCOME &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Greetings, roll call, review agenda.
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238 Chair Merrill called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM Central Time. The group proceeded with  
 239 introductions.  
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<b>#11</b>	<b>GRASSLAND MONITORING</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Approve grassland monitoring RFP.
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241 Tunnell summarized the purpose, need, and content of the Memo and RFP for Program grassland  
 242 vegetation monitoring. Rabbe asked if approving the RFP would be for monitoring through the rest of  
 243 the Extension. Tunnell said it would just be for 2022. Merrill said it would be hard to contract for this  
 244 under one RFP so it would be best to just issue an RFP each time monitoring is necessary. LaBonde said  
 245 it seems like Option #1 (discontinue monitoring) might work since Tunnell and other Program staff are  
 246 always on the properties and can keep an eye on any changes. Tunnell said he is on the properties often  
 247 but he does not approach that from the standpoint of vegetation diversity or other similar dynamics, the  
 248 Program has historically managed for structure. Rabbe said this went through the LAC and the TAC and  
 249 both felt Option #2 (monitoring every three years) was the best approach. Merrill asked if this could also  
 250 be considered providing benefits to other species of concern. Rabbe said yes but it is also for the benefit  
 251 of the target species. LaBonde asked if the Program has changed management as a result of previous  
 252 monitoring. Tunnell said no significant changes in management, but the EDO does watch trends in  
 253 grasslands and how it might interact with grazing, fire, and other management. LaBonde asked if the  
 254 \$67,000 is worth it in terms of informing management, or could we rely more on Tunnell and staff  
 255 making recommendations for management changes as they watch properties over time.  
 256

257 Henry asked if the GC wants documentation of how grasslands are changing over time. Merrill said it  
 258 was part of the intent of this effort to monitor transitions that might be occurring over time on Program  
 259 grassland properties. LaBonde asked the conservation entities and the Service if they do this monitoring  
 260 on their properties. Walters said yes, Rabbe said the Trust does this as well. Williams said he manages  
 261 grazing lands and monitoring is one of the most important things he does. Taddicken said Audubon does  
 262 this level of investigation every other year and that has been a big benefit to informing management.  
 263 Porath said grasslands are a Service priority, this year they are working with partners to try to reduce  
 264 conflicts between grassland management and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.  
 265

266 **GC Motion:** *Taddicken moved and Vogt seconded to approve grassland monitoring Option #2 and issue*  
 267 *the grassland monitoring RFP. RFP approved.*  
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<b>#12</b>	<b>RECAPTURE WELL NETWORK</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Approve recapture well network contract amendment.
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269 *\* This item was discussed by the GC on 03\_08\_22.*

270 Turner summarized the purpose, need, and content of the recapture well network contract amendment  
 271 with Tri-Basin NRD.  
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273 **GC Motion:** *Ament moved and Bradley seconded to approve the recapture well network contract*  
 274 *amendment. Contract amendment approved.*  
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<b>#13</b>	<b>PRRIP LAND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Discuss 2021 Land Work Report.
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276 *\* This item was discussed by the GC on 03\_08\_22.*

277 Farnsworth summarized the 2021 PRRIP Land Work Report.



<b>#14</b>	<b>PUBLIC COMMENT</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Public comment period on PRRIP activities.
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278 None offered.

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<b>#15</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SESSION</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> GC member discussion of sensitive land, water, and policy items.
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280 **GC Motion:** Ament moved and LaBonde seconded to enter Executive Session. **GC entered Executive**  
281 **Session at 9:01 AM Central Time.**

282 **GC Motion:** Ament moved and Strauch seconded to exit Executive Session. **GC exited Executive Session**  
283 **at 9:30 AM Central Time.**

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<b>#16</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SESSION MOTIONS</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> GC consideration of motions discussed during Executive Session.
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285 **GC Motion:** LaBonde moved and Ament seconded to direct the EDO to seek appraisal of and pursue  
286 acquisition of Tract 2201 as complex acres counting toward the 1,500 plus-up acres for the Extension.

287 **Motion approved.**

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<b>#17</b>	<b>GC MEETING REVIEW &amp; WRAP-UP</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Discuss action items, meeting feedback, and upcoming meeting schedule.
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289 **Upcoming GC meetings** (in-person meetings depend on local and national public health conditions and  
290 travel restrictions):

- 291 • **June 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting** – June 7-8, 2022 @ *Cheyenne, WY*
- 292 • **September 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting** – September 13-14, 2022 @ *Kearney, NE* (in conjunction  
293 with Fall 2022 ISAC Meeting)
- 294 • **GC Virtual Special Session on FY2023 Budget/Work Plan** – November 9, 2022; 10:00 AM-12:00 PM  
295 Central Time *via Teams*
- 296 • **December 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting** – December 6-7, 2022 @ *Denver, CO*

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298 LaBonde said his involvement with the GC will end on June 30, 2022. He will be in Alaska for the June GC  
299 Quarterly Meeting so he wanted to say farewell to the group now and wished everyone good luck. He  
300 will likely attend future GC meetings. Gebhart thanked LaBonde on behalf of Wyoming for all his work  
301 over the years. The GC gave him a round of applause for his long service to the Program.

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<b>GC MEETING DAY #2 END</b>	<b>9:34 AM Central Time</b>
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303 **Summary of Action Items/Decisions from March 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting**

- 304 1) Approved the December 2021 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes.
- 305 2) Approved the Fall 2021 whooping crane monitoring report.
- 306 3) Approved the 2021 plover/tern monitoring report.
- 307 4) Approved the Quantum Spatial contract amendment for lower Platte River LiDAR.
- 308 5) Approved the expenditure of \$6,000 on violet plugs for planting on PRRIP properties.
- 309 6) Approved grassland monitoring Option #2 and issuing the grassland monitoring RFP.
- 310 7) Approved the recapture well network contract amendment.
- 311 8) Approved seeking appraisal of and pursuing acquisition of Tract 2201 as complex acres counting  
312 toward the 1,500 plus-up acres for the Extension.