



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

**Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting – Loveland, CO**

Embassy Suites Hotel Conference Center & Spa

Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Brock Merrill, Bureau of Reclamation – 2022 GC Chair

Jason Farnsworth, PRRIP Executive Director (ED) – Moderator

**Governance Committee (GC)**

**State of Wyoming**

Brandon Gebhart – Member

**State of Colorado**

Amy Ostdiek – Member

Emily Zmak – Alternate

Kara Scheel – Alternate

**State of Nebraska**

Tom Riley – Member

**Upper Platte Water Users**

Dennis Strauch – Member

Owen Williams – Member (virtual)

**Downstream Water Users**

Kent Miller – Member

Lyndon Vogt – Member

John Shadle – Member

Devin Brundage – Member

**Executive Director’s Office (EDO)**

Jason Farnsworth – ED

Justin Brei

Libby Casavant

Sarah Fancher

Patrick Farrell (virtual)

Malinda Henry

Mallory Jaymes (virtual)

Kaley Keldsen (virtual)

Chad Smith

Tim Tunnell

Seth Turner (virtual)

Alicia Uribe

Helen Davis

Malia Volke (virtual)

Ed Weschler (virtual)

**Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)**

Brock Merrill – Member (2022 GC Chair)

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

Steve Small – Member

Mark Porath – Alternate

Matt Rabbe – Alternate

**Environmental Entities**

Brice Krohn – Member

Rich Walters – Member

Bill Taddicken – Member (virtual)

Melissa Mosier – Alternate

**Colorado Water Users**

Kyle Whitaker – Member

Deb Freeman – Alternate

**Other Participants**

Cory Steinke, Dave Zorn, Mike Drain – CNPPID (virtual)

Jeff Runge – Service (virtual)

Jeff Shafer – NPPD (Virtual)

Jesse Bradley – State of Nebraska

Ned Andrews – ISAC (virtual)

Jason Marks – Denver Water (virtual)

Andy Nicewicz – CO AG Office (virtual)

Luke O’Brien – Trout Raley

Harry LaBonde – Member of public

Tom Smrdel – Member of public



<b>#1 WELCOME &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Greetings, roll call, review agenda.
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46 **Introduction** – Chair Merrill called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM Mountain Time. The in-person and  
 47 virtual groups proceeded with introductions.

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 49 **Agenda** – No modifications offered.

50  
 51 **Minutes** – **GC MOTION:**

- 52 • Riley moved and Ostdiek seconded to approve the September 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes  
 53 and the November 2022 GC Virtual Special Session 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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54 **Land Advisory Committee (LAC)** – Zorn provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC last met  
 55 on October 19. Main items were the Myer Estate Land Management Plan and land related FY23 PRRIP  
 56 budget/work plan items. The next LAC meeting will be February 23, 2023.

57  
 58 **Water Advisory Committee (WAC)** – Turner provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC  
 59 last met and discussed water related FY23 budget/work plans items, sediment augmentation, and other  
 60 items. The next WAC meeting is February 7, 2023.

61  
 62 **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** – Merrill provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC  
 63 last met in October. Main items were the Meyer Estate Land Management Plan, germination  
 64 suppression flows, sediment augmentation, plover and tern monitoring and predator management,  
 65 whooping crane riverine roost site selection analysis, violet planting update, and the science related  
 66 FY23 PRRIP budget/work plan items. The next TAC meeting is January 18, 2023.

67  
 68 **Finance Committee (FC)** – No updates (has not met since last GC meeting).  
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<b>#3 OUTREACH UPDATE</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> General update on PRRIP outreach activities.
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70 **PRESENTATIONS**

- 71 • UNL graduate students Christopher Pullano and Jenna Ruoss presented, *“Pallid Sturgeon Biology in*  
 72 *the Platte River and its Tributaries”* on September 14, 2022, in Lincoln, Nebraska. The presentation is  
 73 part of the Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Annual Coordinating Committee  
 74 Meeting.
- 75 • Patrick Farrell presented on behalf of the Program at the Geological Society of America annual  
 76 conference on October 11, 2022, in Denver, Colorado. His presentation was titled, *“Predicting the*  
 77 *ability of river flow to maintain suitable channel conditions for whooping cranes.”*
- 78 • Seth Turner presented on the Program at the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference in Avon,  
 79 Colorado on October 12, 2022. His presentation was titled, *The Platte River Recovery*  
 80 *Implementation Program: Using Existing Infrastructure to Restore River Flows for Threatened and*  
 81 *Endangered Species.”*
- 82 • The Platte River Basin Conference & 3<sup>rd</sup> Playa Research Symposium Braided Paths: Science, Policy,  
 83 and Culture was held in Kearney, Nebraska from October 24-27, 2022. The symposium was  
 84 supported by the UNL Nebraska Water Center. The Program participated in the following events:



- 85 ○ Jason Farnsworth presented “Honest Broker Approach” and participated on the “Future of
- 86 the Platte” panel.
- 87 ○ Patrick Farrell and Mallory Jaymes presented on “Whooping crane selection of the central
- 88 *Platte River Valley: roost site characteristics and factors related to stopover decisions.*”
- 89 ○ Kristen Cognac presented on “Quantifying hydrologic constraints on a wet meadow
- 90 *restoration along the central Platte River.*”
- 91 ○ Mark Pegg presented “*Pallid sturgeon biology in the Platte River and its tributaries.*”
- 92 ● Malinda Henry presented “PRRIP: Using science and adaptive management to manage land and
- 93 *water to benefit target species*” on behalf of the Program as a guest lecturer for a Freshwater
- 94 Management Continuing Education course at the University of Nebraska at Kearney on November
- 95 21, 2022.

**EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS**

- 98 ● The Program exhibited at Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island on September 13, 14, and 15, 2022 in
- 99 the Natural Resources Districts building. 1,989 contacts were made.
- 100 ● Then the program had an exhibit at Nebraska Natural Resources Districts Annual Conference on
- 101 September 25 through 27, 2022 in Kearney, Nebraska. 176 contacts were made.

**UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS**

- 104 ● The Program is sponsoring the South Platte Forum on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in Lafayette, Colorado
- 105 ● Exhibit at Four States Irrigation and Colorado Water Congress in January 2023.

**MEDIA COVERAGE/OTHER**

- 108 ● Jason Farnsworth was interviewed by local television as part of the Platte River Basin Conference.

<b>#4</b>	<b>PRRIP FY22 BUDGET</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> General update on current status of FY22 budget.
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110 Farnsworth updated the GC on the status of the FY22 PRRIP budget.

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112 Whitaker asked about the status of billing related to PS-1 pallid research. Henry and Farnsworth said SIU  
113 equipment costs were paid in 2022 so the \$0 line item is a bookkeeping issue that has now been  
114 resolved.

<b>#5</b>	<b>PRRIP FY23 BUDGET</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Discuss/approve FY23 Budget, Work Plan, and EDO Contract; discuss Procurement Policy reporting for the coming year and time-sensitive GC-action items.
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116  
117 Farnsworth summarized the two changes to the FY23 budget since the GC November Special Session.  
118 Both items are in the Water Plan. The Chokepoint line-item (WPCP-1) budget was increased to  
119 accommodate potential property acquisition and engineering work. The water monitoring line-item  
120 (WPWM-1) was updated to include additional weather station maintenance costs.

121  
122 Freeman asked about the chokepoint line item and whether the proposed technical study will be  
123 informed by the upcoming VESPR study. Farnsworth said he is hoping the VESPR group and their  
124 consultants will present the results to the Program early in 2023 and then work with them to make sure  
125 the proposed technical study builds on the pieces of the VESPR study that are relevant to the Program.  
126 Freeman asked about the PS-1 line item. The GC approved the pallid sturgeon Framing Document in



127 June 2021, then in March 2022 increased the budget to acquire lower Platte River LiDAR. The discussion  
128 in the spring was that the 2D modeling was going to be done in-house. But the FY23 budget shows that  
129 work is being done by a consultant. Farnsworth said the EDO was planning to do the 2D modeling in-  
130 house but received feedback from the Service and others that it would be beneficial to have that work  
131 done by an outside consultant. So, \$250,000 was added to the FY23 budget for this line item to  
132 accommodate that work.

133

134 Farnsworth summarized the 4<sup>th</sup> amendment for the EDO contract. Merrill summarized discussions at the  
135 Signatory Meeting about the need to develop a new multi-year contract for Headwaters.

136

137 **GC MOTION:** Riley moved and Gebhart seconded to approve the PRRIP FY23 Budget, Work Plan, and  
138 EDO Contract 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Motion passed.

139

140 Henry summarized the Cooperative Service Agreement for PRRIP predator trapping. Walters asked when  
141 there would be a summary analysis conducted of predator trapping. Henry said that annual plover and  
142 tern reports give annual summaries, with a multi-year analysis after the 2023 season. Walters asked if  
143 that is tied back to fledge ratios. Henry said yes, and also would look at the number of predators  
144 captured by traps and registered on cameras as the middle link in that chain. Riley asked if this is a fixed  
145 price contract. Henry and Farnsworth said it is time and materials.

146

147 **GC MOTION:** Riley moved and Ostdiek seconded to approve the Predator Trapping Cooperative Service  
148 Agreement. Agreement approved.

149

150 Jaymes summarized the 2023 RFB for Whooping Crane Monitoring and the 2023 contract form. Riley  
151 asked whether the EDO has updated the insurance requirements in the contracts. Farnsworth said we  
152 work to keep those current.

153

154 **GC MOTION:** Gebhart moved and Riley seconded to approve the Whooping Crane Monitoring RFB. RFB  
155 and contract form approved.

156

157 Brei summarized the 2023 Contract Amendment for DJ Case for PRRIP website and database services.

158

159 **GC MOTION:** Ostdiek moved and Riley seconded to approve the PRRIP Website & Database Contract  
160 Amendment. Contract Amendment approved.

161

162 Tunnell summarized the RFP and contract form for Prescribed Fire Management Services. Freeman  
163 asked about liability for fire. The documents seem to hold the contractor responsible only if the  
164 contractor fails to follow the plan. Farnsworth said there have been extended discussions about how  
165 these contracts are structured in other places. Freeman said it appears that there is some liability on the  
166 part of the Program if the fire causes problems. Riley asked who approves the Fire Plan. Tunnell said the  
167 local fire chief and Tunnell. Farnsworth said he will take this back to legal counsel and insurance counsel  
168 to make sure this language is correct. Merrill said once that is done, the EDO should bring this back to  
169 the GC for an electronic vote.

170

171 **GC DECISION:** Appointed the following Proposal Selection Panel – Brice Krohn (The Crane Trust), Dave  
172 Carr (Central Platte NRD).



173 Riley asked if the EDO wants to add a line item that would pay the contractor some minimum amount if  
174 we don't use their services for prescribed fire. Farnsworth said the EDO could add something like 5% of  
175 the budget line item as guaranteed payment.

176  
177 Tunnell summarized the Chemical Application Services RFB and contract form. Rabbe asked if this  
178 contract will cover the MCA island and be treated. Tunnell said yes in the bare ground services. Rabbe  
179 asked if we have thought about whether we need to clear residual vegetation since spraying has not  
180 happened recently. Rabbe also said on Page 8 we should list clearing bare ground including the MCA  
181 island at the Chapman Complex. Tunnell said it is listed but not noted as an MCA island, we will add that  
182 to the RFB. Small asked what happens if somebody does not bid on areas that we want treated. Tunnell  
183 said we are going to have to work through that if it happens. Having one contractor bid on all the work  
184 did not work well for the Program the last time. Farnsworth said if it doesn't work we can re-work  
185 another way to do it and see if a better solution arises. Gebhart asked how the EDO is going to compare  
186 bids. Tunnell said the big table is for checking which areas the contractor is interested in, and the next  
187 page shows the hourly rates for chemicals and equipment.

188  
189 **GC MOTION:** Riley moved and Ostdiek seconded to approve the Chemical Application Services RFB as  
190 edited by the GC (adding the MCA island notation). Edited RFB approved.

191  
192 The GC Appointed the following Bid Review Panel – Matt Rabbe (Service), Brock Merrill (Reclamation).

#6	PRRIP SCIENCE PLAN	Agenda Item Objective: Discussion recent Science Plan implementation activities.
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194 Jaymes provided an update to the GC on the results of the fall whooping crane monitoring season.

195  
196 Henry provided an update to the GC on the status of violent plantings on PRRIP properties.

197  
198 **MEETING BREAK – 3:34 PM Mountain Time**

#7	PRRIP SCIENCE/POLICY	Agenda Item Objective: Discuss integration of PRRIP science and outside science and improvements to science implementation and reviews processes.
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200  
201 Smith discussed:

- 202 • Framework for integrating non-Program science – embrace other science, even by Program
- 203 participants; widen our look at uncertainty; more robust info to GC; ISAC will help when we need
- 204 help understanding Program implications and integrating.
- 205 • More active TAC – ask to help set agenda for Science Plan Reporting Session and all TAC meetings;
- 206 provide comments on all products and processes.
- 207 • ISAC – by summer 2024, 50% new membership from beginning of Extension; remaining three
- 208 members cycle off in 2024 and 2025, all new members (from beginning of Extension) by 2025; one
- 209 term and out unless re-appointed by GC; all Program participants invited to meet with ISAC at all
- 210 times (for example, no EDO-only meeting time).
- 211 • Peer review – will be conducting two PRRIP peer reviews in 2023; need Selection Panel appointed to
- 212 help develop scope and recommend peer reviewers.

213 Ostdiek said when thinking about science from outside the Program, we need to be mindful of what the  
214 Program is and make sure we keep things oriented to Program priorities. Whitaker asked what it means  
215 for the EDO if more items are going to be conducted by outside contractors. Farnsworth indicated that



216 the EDO is staffed to handle basic species and habitat monitoring and phragmites research. Intent will  
217 be to have additional engineering and research work conducted by outside contractors under EDO  
218 supervision.  
219

<b>#8</b>	<b>WATER ACTION PLAN (WAP)</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Update on recent WAP implementation activities.
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220 Turner updated the GC on the status of implementation of the WAP and some operations updates:

- 221 • Little water diverted into our recharge projects.
- 222 • Recapture network construction – recent pressure tests.

223  
224 Whitaker said it concerns him that the end of the J-2 Crediting Agreement aligns with the end of the  
225 Extension. This could have issues with the Program being able to get or afford this water beyond 2032.  
226 Merrill agreed this is a concern in terms of moving into a Second Increment. Freeman said we need to  
227 think about these contracts not putting us on the edge of a cliff. Farnsworth asked Brundage and Shadle  
228 whether there is MOU language we could come up with to address this issue. Brundage said this is  
229 something we could work on. Freeman said the idea is to memorialize some kind of option to continue  
230 this as a bridge into a Second Increment.

231  
232 Merrill said we need to take action on these two agreements, but the GC needs to deal with this issue at  
233 the policy level and give help to the EDO to frame language or an approach. Merrill asked the Signatories  
234 to participate in a small group to work on this issue.

235  
236 **GC MOTION:** *Whitaker moved and Strauch seconded to approve the Elwood Agreement and J-2 Crediting*  
237 *Agreement. Motion approved.* Downstream Water Users abstained.

<b>#9</b>	<b>PUBLIC COMMENT</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> Public comment period on PRRIP activities.
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239 Harry LaBonde asked about the status of pallid sturgeon capture and tagging. Henry said they have  
240 captured and tagged 17 new fish with a total of 35 captured and tagged between our project and  
241 Missouri River that entered the Platte River.

242  
243 Merrill presented LaBonde with an award recognizing his long-time service on the GC.  
244

<b>#10</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SESSION</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> GC member discussion of sensitive land, water, and policy items.
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245 **GC MOTION:** *Riley moved and Ostdiek seconded to enter Executive Session. GC entered Executive*  
246 *Session at 5:01 PM Mountain Time.*

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248 **GC MOTION:** *Riley moved and Gebhart seconded to exit Executive Session. GC exited 5:17 PM Executive*  
249 *Session at Mountain Time.*

<b>#14</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SESSION MOTIONS</b>	<b>Agenda Item Objective:</b> GC consideration of motions discussed during Executive Session.
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251 **GC MOTION:** *Walters moved and Ostdiek seconded to approve the EDO seeking acquisition of the Jensen*  
252 *Tract at North Platte. Motion approved.*



<b>#15</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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253 **GC MOTION:** Gebhart moved and Ostdiek seconded to nominate Tom Riley (State of Nebraska) as 2023  
 254 GC Chair and Steve Small (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) as 2023 GC Vice Chair. **Motion approved.**

255  
 256 *Upcoming GC meetings (in-person meetings depend on local and national public health conditions and*  
 257 *travel restrictions):*

- 258 • **2023 PRRIP Science Plan Reporting Session:**  
 259 February 14-16, 2023 @ Omaha, NE
- 260 • **March 2023 GC Quarterly Meeting:**  
 261 March 7-8, 2023 @ Kearney, NE
- 262 • **June 2023 GC Quarterly Meeting:**  
 263 June 13-14, 2023 @ Cheyenne, WY
- 264 • **September 2023 GC Quarterly Meeting:**  
 265 September 12-13, 2023 @ Kearney, NE
- 266 • **GC Virtual Special Session on FY2024 Budget & Work Plan:**  
 267 November 8, 2023  
 268 10:00 AM-12:00 PM Central Time via Teams
- 269 • **December 2023 GC Quarterly Meeting:**  
 270 December 5-6, 2023 @ Loveland, CO

<b>GC MEETING END</b>	5:30 PM Mountain Time
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 273 **Summary of Action Items/Decisions from December 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting**

- 274 1) Approved the September 2022 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes and the November 2022 GC Special  
 275 Session minutes.
- 276 2) Approved the FY23 PRRIP Budget, Work Plan, and EDO Contract.
- 277 3) Approved the multi-year Predator Trapping Cooperative Service Agreement with USDA/APHIS.
- 278 4) Approved the Whooping Crane RFB and contract form.
- 279 5) Approved the PRRIP Website and Database Contract Amendment.
- 280 6) Appointed the following Proposal Selection Panel for the Prescribed Fire RFP – Brice Krohn (The  
 281 Crane Trust), Dave Carr (Central Platte NRD); RFP to be approved electronically after editing.
- 282 7) Approved the Chemical Application Services RFB and contract form as edited by the GC. Appointed  
 283 Rabbe and Merrill to the Bid Review Panel.
- 284 8) Approved the Elwood Agreement.
- 285 9) Approved the J-2 Crediting Agreement.
- 286 10) Approved the acquisition of the Jensen Tract at the North Platte chokepoint.
- 287 11) Elected Tom Riley (State of Nebraska) 2023 GC Chair, Steve Small (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)  
 288 2023 GC Vice Chair.