



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

**2025 Q2 Governance Committee (GC) Meeting – Cheyenne, WY**

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Wyoming Water Development Commission – 6920 Yellowtail Road, Cheyenne, WY 82009

Jason Mead, State of Wyoming – 2025 GC Chair

Jason Farnsworth, PRRIP Executive Director (ED) – Moderator

PRRIP Governance Committee (GC) Meeting Attendees Tuesday, June 17, 2025		
Name	Affiliation	Member or Alternate
<b>Department of the Interior</b>		
Brock Merrill	Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)	Member
Tara Kinsey	USBR	Alternate
Drue DeBerry	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Member
Mark Porath	USFWS	Alternate
Matt Rabbe	USFWS	Alternate
<b>State of Wyoming</b>		
Jason Mead	Wyoming Water Development Office (WWDO) – 2025 GC Chair	Member
Abigail Boudewyns	State of Wyoming	Alternate
<b>State of Colorado</b>		
Amy Ostdiek	Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)	Member
Kara Scheel	CWCB	Alternate
<b>State of Nebraska</b>		
Matt Manning	Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	Alternate
Jennifer Schellpeper	DNR	Alternate
<b>Upper Platte Water Users</b>		
Owen Williams	Upper Platte Water Users	Alternate
Bob Mehling	Goshen Irrigation District	Alternate
<b>Colorado Water Users</b>		
Kyle Whitaker	Northern Water	Member
Jason Marks	Denver Water	Alternate
Rich Belt	SPWRAP	Alternate
<b>Downstream Water Users</b>		
Devin Brundage	Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District (CNPPID)	Member
Kyle Leibig	Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) (virtual)	Member
Kent Miller	Twin Platte Natural Resources District (TPNRD)	Member
Brandi Flyr	Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD)	Alternate
John Thorburn	Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD)	Alternate
<b>Environmental Entities</b>		
Rich Walters	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Member
Brice Krohn	The Crane Trust (virtual)	Member
<b>Executive Director’s Office (EDO)</b>		
Jason Farnsworth, BCES	Executive Director	
Chadwin Smith, Ph.D.	Science Policy Coordinator (virtual)	
Tim Tunnell, M.S.	Land Plan Coordinator (virtual)	
Seth Turner, P.E.	Water Plan Coordinator (virtual)	
Malinda Henry, Ph.D.	Science Plan Coordinator (virtual)	



Justin Brei, P.E.	Water Resources & Engineering Manager
Patrick Farrell	Statistical Ecologist (virtual)
Quinn Lewis	River Scientist (virtual)
Libby Casavant	Water Resources Engineer (virtual)
Ed Weschler	Junior Civil Engineer (virtual)
Alicia Uribe	Executive Office Manager (virtual)
<b>Other Participants</b>	
Andy Nicewicz	CO Attorney General’s Office
Caitlin Kingsley	Nebraska DNR (virtual)
Mike Drain	CNPPID (virtual)
Cory Steinke	CNPPID (virtual)
Dave Zorn	CNPPID
Jim Jenniges	NPPD (virtual)
Mike Archer	Nebraska Game & Parks Commission (NGPC)
Aaron Pearse	ISAC
Jennifer Hoeting	ISAC
Michal Tal	ISAC
Dave Marmorek	ISAC
Gary Lamberti	ISAC
Alan Kasprak	ISAC
Steven Labay	USFWS
Terence Stroh	USBR

**1. Welcome & Administrative:**

- Roll call completed with both in-person and virtual participants.
- Agenda approved without modification.
- **GC MOTION: 2025 Q1 GC Meeting Minutes approved** (Ostdiek moved, Brundage seconded).

**2. Advisory Committee Updates:**

- LAC – Approved Platte River Recreation Access recommendations, grassland updates, 650 acres prescribed fire burns.
- WAC – Hydrology leasing, Cottonwood maintenance, Elwood feasibility study, EA scoring/accounting discussion.
- TAC – Whooping crane monitoring, sediment augmentation, West/Ecotope policy discussion.
- FC – Outreach contractor terminated; tasks reassigned to DJ Case.

**3. Executive Director’s Report:**

- New personalized GC web portal in beta, release expected by September.
- 2025 expenditures at \$2.8M of \$12.7M budget, typical for time of year.
- Pallid sturgeon billing caught up; no contract overrun.
- \$42M in first increment carryover remains; \$140M under extension ceiling.



#### **4. Budget Overview:**

- FY25 federal appropriation pending; FY26 request submitted.
- Indexing dropped 0.6%; stable after 2021–22 spike.
- Program financially stable with carryover reserves.

#### **5. Science Plan Update:**

- Whooping Crane – 89 individuals observed, avg. 2-day stopovers; highest 13 days.
- Plovers – 48 nests, 11 hatched; skunks and owls identified as primary predators.
- Pallid Sturgeon – 53 detected; 1 spawning female exited system, likely spawned in Missouri.

#### **6. Independent Science (ISAC):**

- PRRIP practices align with 2024 DOI science integrity policy.
- New DOI policy under review.
- Public access to scientific data reaffirmed.
- Schellpeper asked about Scientific Data Storage and Release Policy. Does that move forward even if DOI policy has been revised? Farnsworth said yes, will go through the TAC for review first, but yes. EDO is working to keep data high quality, secure, and open to use. Mead said the GC should note that many practices in the memo are already in place or being improved upon. Marmorek asked about the ISAC’s recommendation to identify Scientific Integrity coordinators. He asked one way to think of this is, “Who would someone go to if they had a concern?” Mead said chair of GC would receive identified concern and then work the concern through the PRRIP process as appropriate.

#### **7. PRRIP Water Plan:**

- CPNRD Agreement – 14,300 AF for 2025; program benefits from water control.
- Discussion on water rights, canal rehab, post-2032 uncertainty.
- Both CPNRD and NPPD leasing agreements deferred pending further review, plan to discuss during 2025 Q3 GC Meeting (September).

#### **8. North Platte Chokepoint:**

- Ostdiek asked if we needed a motion at this time. Farnsworth, no motion necessary, just agreement that this document represents where we are at. Miller asked if this says we are done with the chokepoint? Farnsworth said, his understanding is that unless something novel comes up, the Program is done looking at the chokepoint. Rabbe said chokepoint was a priority set out for First Increment Extension. Service says Program obligation for First Increment and Extension has been met. Chokepoint may still be an issue to be negotiated for the Second Increment (up for grabs for a second increment). Walters said we are done pending any new, novel information the Program has not yet considered. If that happens, Program obligated to take a look. Policy Framing Document edited by the group and finalized, will be posted on the PRRIP website.



### 9. PRRIP Land Plan:

- Updates on Phragmites control, conservation land tracking.
- Platte River Recreation Access (PRRA) Subcommittee results presented.

### 10. Public Comment:

- No public comments recorded.

### 11. Executive Session:

- Marshall Flowage Easement discussed.
- **GC MOTION (out of Executive Session): Execute the flowage easement with Jeff Marshall at Cottonwood Ranch Property** (Merrill moved, Mehling seconded).

### 12. Meeting Review & Wrap-Up:

- Action items reviewed.
- Farnsworth asked for volunteers to help guide outreach development (information and education ) by DJ Case. Volunteers included The Crane Trust, Nebraska DNR, State of Colorado, State of Wyoming.
- Upcoming GC Meetings: Q3 in September (Kearney, NE), virtual 2026 budget meeting in November, Q4 in December (Berthoud, CO).