



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

2025 Q3 Governance Committee (GC) Meeting – Kearney, NE

GC Meeting – Monday, September 22, 2025 to Tuesday, September 23, 2025

ISAC Meeting – Tuesday, September 23, 2025 to Thursday, September 25, 2025

Crowne Plaza Kearney – 707 Talmadge St, Kearney, NE 68845

Jason Mead, State of Wyoming – 2025 GC Chair

Jason Farnsworth, PRRIP Executive Director (ED) – Moderator

PRRIP Governance Committee (GC) Meeting Attendees Monday, September 22, 2025		
Name	Affiliation	Member or Alternate
Department of the Interior		
Brock Merrill	Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)	Member
Tara Kinsey	USBR	Alternate
Drue DeBerry	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (virtual)	Member
Mark Porath	USFWS	Alternate
Matt Rabbe	USFWS	Alternate
State of Wyoming		
Jason Mead	Wyoming Water Development Office (WWDO) – 2025 GC Chair	Member
Abigail Boudewyns	State of Wyoming	Alternate
State of Colorado		
Amy Ostdiek	Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)	Member
Emily Zmak	CWCB	Alternate
Kara Scheel	CWCB	Alternate
State of Nebraska		
Matt Manning	Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, & Environment (DWEE)	Member
Jesse Bradley	DWEE	Alternate
Upper Platte Water Users		
Owen Williams	Upper Platte Water Users	Alternate
Bob Mehling	Goshen Irrigation District	Alternate
Colorado Water Users		
Kyle Whitaker	Northern Water	Member
Jason Marks	Denver Water	Alternate
Rich Belt	SPWRAP (virtual)	Alternate
Downstream Water Users		
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
Lyndon Vogt	Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD)	Alternate
John Thorburn	Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD)	Alternate
Environmental Entities		
Rich Walters	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Member
Brice Krohn	The Crane Trust (virtual)	Member
Melissa Mosier	Audubon Nebraska	Member
Executive Director’s Office (EDO)		
Jason Farnsworth, BCES	Executive Director	
Chadwin Smith, Ph.D.	Science Policy Coordinator	



Tim Tunnell, M.S.	Land Plan Coordinator
Seth Turner, P.E.	Water Plan Coordinator (virtual)
Malinda Henry, Ph.D.	Science Plan Coordinator
Justin Brei, P.E.	Water Resources & Engineering Manager
Patrick Farrell	Statistical Ecologist
Quinn Lewis	River Scientist
Libby Casavant	Water Resources Engineer
Alicia Uribe	Executive Office Manager
Other Participants	
Andy Nicewicz	CO Attorney General’s Office
Caitlin Kingsley	Nebraska DWEE
Mike Drain	CNPPID (virtual)
Cory Steinke	CNPPID
Dave Zorn	CNPPID
Jim Jenniges	NPPD
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
Melissa Marinovich	NGPC
Shuhai Zeng	Nebraska DWEE
Amanda Hegg	Rowe Sanctuary
Abe Kanz	Crane Trust
Jeremy Manley	State of Wyoming

2025 Q3 GC Meeting – Day #1

1. Welcome & Administrative:

- Roll call completed with both in-person and virtual participants.
- Agenda approved with addition – Nebraska and Colorado want to discuss Perkins County Canal.
- Bradley – interstate litigation; NE committed to PRRIP through Extension, will continue to be a partner; NE and WY and NE, CO, and KS in litigation at the time the Cooperative Agreement was signed.
- Ostdiek – won’t say a whole lot about the litigation since it is active; waiting to learn if court will accept the case, will know more around October 15; will be assessing any potential future impacts to the PRRIP.
- **GC MOTION: Approve 2025 Q2 GC Meeting Minutes** (Williams moved, Walters seconded).
MOTION CARRIED.

**Advisory Committee Updates:**

- LAC – No meeting since last GC, grazing plans for GC approval.
- WAC – Hydrology, leasing recharge, CNPPID irrigator least, germination suppression release.
- TAC – Tern/plover monitoring and cameras; fall 2024 WC monitoring report; Service presentation on WC Recovery Plan update; WC site selection and stopover/flyover analyses; germination suppressions flow; No Sediment Augmentation Plan monitoring.
- FC – No FC since GC, approved in-channel disking RFQ via email vote early in August.

3. Executive Director’s Report:

- PRRIP website contractor closing in on a prototype for the redesigned PRRIP website; should be functional by December GC meeting; each user will be able to identify what notifications you want based on level and type of PRRIP involvement.
- Federal single audit in July, audit was clean. NCF finances clean, use of PRRIP Procurement Policy clean.
- PRRIP budget development for FY26 will begin immediately after this GC meeting. Will focus on land restoration and management, Science Plan activities will focus on wrapping up analyses and evaluating second-tier Big Questions.
- QR code for 2023-2024 PRRIP Biennial Report, will also update link on website.
- Budget update – anticipate ending year around \$7M in expenditures – no land acquisition this year, got about half of WY Pathfinder Municipal Lease because of dry conditions; expenses in line with budget except PS-1 (pallid sturgeon), project overall not out of budget just a catch-up year for previous years of lower expenses for this project.
- Merrill – FY25 funding obligated, \$2.8M for 2025, not sure what FY26 funding will be; looking like a shutdown may happen starting October 1, if we do enter a shutdown we will have to switch to state funding for PRRIP invoices until the shutdown ends and then the federal funding will catch up; Farnsworth will convene funding partners if shutdown happens to get OK to switch to state funding.

4. PRRIP Water Plan:

- Elwood Outlet (Turner and MacDougall virtual) –
 - Whitaker – how much excess flow or score in recent years? Turner – 2021-2025 excess flow substantially diminished over the previous 6 years; would this project be a gain for the PRRIP? Farnsworth – not buying new water, just routing it more effectively when you have a deficit which bumps up your score (controls timing coming out); Mead – what is the general range of Plum Creek flow; Turner – 10-12 cfs baseflow.
 - Mead – any concern with burying pipe due to shallow groundwater depths? Macdougall – yes it’s a concern, no formal geotechnical data yet; we would design around potential “floating the pipe” problems; how is PRRIP share vs. District’s share determined; MacDougall – had a concept, Central asked for changes, the cost difference is due to those changes; an example is use of a small valve, single radial gate; how does cost per acre foot



compare to other PRRIP water portfolio water? Farnsworth – not asking for any decisions today, just wanted to have discussion about whether this is inline with cost perspectives before going further down this road; GC pays for controllable water in Lake McConaughy for about \$110/a-f, probably \$40-\$60/a-f more for this water (over the \$54/a-f that is baked in); this would be adding infrastructure to bump up the score and would give us the cheapest water we have.

- Whitaker – what would GoldSim model be used for? Turner – LRE Water uses it to evaluate water projects, it integrates my Excel spreadsheet model; what is our lease term on this water; Turner – contract with Central extends through end of Extension, was initially a transfer of J2 funds, can be extended through 2042; when could we expect this to come online? Turner – best case a couple years, depends on how we address some key uncertainties including Central’s operation changes; Macdougall – 6-7 months finish up design, 8 months to a year for construction; operational in 2029 (which includes dealing with Plum Creek).
- Liebig – transit time, conveyance losses, Scoring Subcommittee? Turner – not discussed at Scoring Subcommittee; transit time is a few days; Plum Creek is a gaining stream below Elwood.
- Ostdiek – need more time and more information; will provide some info on our outstanding questions; Farnsworth – we will work up well-organized information on costs and score to go with that, benefits, scoping to get to final design and construction, etc.
- Turner – presentation on CNPPID irrigator lease; Mead – is this most expensive water? Turner – yes; Mosier – if extending agreement, can irrigators still make decisions annually based on price and other factors? Turner – yes, just attempting to establish a baseline of longevity between the PRRIP and Central, per acre pricing can still be modified each year.
- Merrill – what is appetite of the GC to continue this project given the cost for what we are getting? Is cost sustainable?
- *Porath – First of all, I just want to say thank you for everybody having a thoughtful discussion about this and making sure we take the time to deliberate appropriately, you know, obviously from the Service perspective, the idea of the Program is to add water. But I understand that it's a really tough decision and all of you that have a lot invested in all this work and substance and appreciate you taking the time to deliberate it and have a bit more involved. But that is something that we're cognizant of is we're trying to take the stand that we're trying to add water to the Program in the best way possible that benefits the resources. So, thank you all for that, appreciate it.*
- **GC MOTION: Extend program for one more year** (Walters moved, no second); **MOTION FAILED.**
- **GC MOTION: Table this item until tomorrow for further discussion** (Merrill moved, Ostdiek seconded); **MOTION CARRIED.**

**5. PRRIP Land Plan:**

- Tunnell discussed history of Grassland Working Group – guidance documents, grazing plans for Cottonwood Ranch and Shoemaker Island (Binfield); will likely tackle a couple more complexes next year.
- **GC MOTION: Approve Cottonwood Ranch and Shoemaker Island Grazing Plans** (Merrill moved, Ostdiek seconded); **MOTION CARRIED.**

10. Public Comment:

- No public comments recorded.

11. Executive Session:

- **GC MOTION: Enter Executive Session** (Williams moved, Mehling seconded); **MOTION CARRIED.**
- **GC MOTION: Exit Executive Session** (Williams moved, Mehling seconded); **MOTION CARRIED.**

12. Day #1 Review & Wrap-Up:

- Adjourn at 5:05 PM.

2025 Q3 GC Meeting – Day #2

- Introductions and attendees.

PRRIP Outreach:

- Presentation from Tovar Cerulli, DJ Case.
- Marks – are we in Option A now? Farnsworth – basically yes, main issue is to make sure we are spending our money and time wisely; what is the most important thing looking forward for the Program; if it's moving toward the Second Increment, is that the job of the GC entities, or should the Program/ED be doing that?
- Mead – should stick to operational approach with EDO; rest of us as Signatories have different policy perspectives and constituencies that we need to tailor discussions to, that is best done within our own Signatory states/entities; Ostdiek, Manning, Merrill concur; Rabbe – generally agree, Farnsworth agreed as well and says that is what we are focused on; Mosier – need to think through how to proceed with intentionality on the part of all PRRIP parties.

PRRIP Science Plan:

- Henry – need guidance on how to proceed with predator trapping at tern/plover nesting sites; Farnsworth – can do a sole source for this contract, have a uniquely qualified contractor that we could write up justification for and bring it to the GC for review and approval with the FY26 budget and work plan in 2026; Mead – does USDA/APHIS not have the employees right now to do the work? Henry – correct, they have not filled a position to cover this area of the state;



current trapper was in line with USDA/APHIS contract, both will likely go up about 10% this year in terms of comparative budget; Mead – seems obvious we should look into a 3-year sole source; GC agreed; Farnsworth – we will work this up and bring it back to the GC in December.

- Ideus – fall 2024 WC monitoring report presentation;
- **GC Motion – Approve fall 2024 WC monitoring report** (Mehling moved, Krohn seconded); **MOTION CARRIED.**
- **GC Motion – Approve system-scale geomorph and veg monitoring report** (Mosier moved, Ostdiek seconded); **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Lewis – presentation on No Sediment Augmentation Monitoring Report.
- Turner – presentation on germination suppression flow release.

State of PRRIP Science

- Presentations from EDO staff on status of assessing Extension Big Questions (EBQ).

CNPPID Irrigator Lease

- **GC MOTION: Extend CNPPID Irrigator Lease for one more year and move up sign-up timeframe** (Walters moved, Porath seconded).
- Reclamation votes no, **MOTION FAILED.**

Meeting adjourned – 11:22 AM Central Time.