



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

2025 Q4 Governance Committee (GC) Meeting – Berthoud, CO

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Northern Water – 220 Water Ave, Berthoud, CO 80513

Jason Mead, State of Wyoming – 2025 GC Chair

Jason Farnsworth, PRRIP Executive Director (ED) – Moderator

PRRIP Governance Committee (GC) Meeting Attendees Tuesday, December 8, 2025		
Name	Affiliation	Member or Alternate
Department of the Interior		
Brock Merrill	Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)	Member
Drue DeBerry	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (virtual)	Member
Mark Porath	USFWS (virtual)	Alternate
Matt Rabbe	USFWS (virtual)	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 (virtual)	Alternate
Kara Scheel	CWCB	Alternate
State of Nebraska		
Matt Manning	Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, & Environment (DWEE)	Member
Jennifer Schellpeper	DWEE (virtual)	Alternate
Upper Platte Water Users		
Dennis Strauch	Pathfinder Irrigation District	Member
Owen Williams	Upper Platte Water Users	Alternate
Colorado Water Users		
Kyle Whitaker	Northern Water	Member
Jason Marks	Denver Water	Alternate
Rich Belt	SPWRAP	Alternate
Downstream Water Users		
Devin Brundage	Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District (CNPPID) (virtual)	Member
Jeff Shafer	Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) (virtual)	Alternate
Kent Miller	Twin Platte Natural Resources District (TPNRD) (virtual)	Member
Lyndon Vogt	Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD)	Member
Environmental Entities		
Rich Walters	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Member
Brice Krohn	The Crane Trust	Member
Melissa Mosier	Audubon Nebraska (virtual)	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 (virtual)	
Seth Turner, P.E.	Water Plan Coordinator	



Malinda Henry, Ph.D.	Science Plan Coordinator
Justin Brei, P.E.	Water Resources & Engineering Manager
Patrick Farrell	Statistical Ecologist
Quinn Lewis	River Scientist (virtual)
Ed Weschler	Junior Civil Engineer
Ethan Ideus	Wildlife Biologist
Jon Wentz	Wildlife Biologist
Other Participants	
Andy Nicewicz	CO Attorney General’s Office
Justin Lavene	NE Attorney General’s Office
Barry Lawrence	State of Wyoming
Caitlin Kingsley	Nebraska DWEE
Mike Drain	CNPPID
Cory Steinke	CNPPID (virtual)
Dave Zorn	CNPPID (virtual)
Mike Archer	Nebraska Game & Parks Commission (NGPC)
Brandi Flyr	CPNRD (virtual)
Aaron Pearse	ISAC (virtual)
Jennifer Hoeting	ISAC (virtual)
Dave Marmorek	ISAC (virtual)
Gary Lamberti	ISAC (virtual)
Alan Kasprak	ISAC (virtual)
Steven Labay	USFWS (virtual)
Terence Stroh	USBR
Corey DeAngelis	CO DWR (virtual)
Mark Mitisek	(virtual)
Joe Frank	Lower South Platte Water Conservancy District
Jon Altenhofen	Northern Water

2025 Q4 GC Meeting

1. Welcome & Administrative:

- Mead called meeting to order at 2:00 PM Mountain Time.
- Roll call completed with both in-person and virtual participants.
- Agenda approved.
- **GC MOTION: Approve 2025 Q3 GC Meeting Minutes** (Williams moved, Walters seconded).
MOTION CARRIED.

Advisory Committee Updates:

- LAC – Short meeting, multi-year pre-emergent RFB on GC agenda today.
- WAC – Hydrology, leasing recharge, wet meadows, 2026 EA AOP, Water Plan budget and work plan for FY26, WAC priorities on GC agenda today.
- TAC – Oct 21-22; spring WC monitoring report, tern/plover monitoring and camera use at nest sites, WC roost site selection report, pallid sturgeon science and ISAC commentary, sediment



augmentation passive alternative study, wet meadow hydrology report, 2026 EA AOP, Science Plan budget and work plan for FY26.

- FC – No FC since Q3 GC Meeting.

3. Executive Director's Report:

- Farnworth summarized recent activities and the status of the FY25 budget.
- Spent state money during federal government shutdown, now spending only federal cash until caught back up with appropriate percentages.

4. PRRIP FY26 Budget:

- **GC MOTION: Approve FY26 PRRIP Budget and Work Plan** (Walters moved, Ostdiek seconded). **MOTION CARRIED.**
- **GC MOTION: Approve FY26 PRRIP EDO Contract Amendment** (Ostdiek moved, Strauch seconded). **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Smith summarized 2026 Procurement Table.
- **GC MOTION: Approve 2026 PRRIP Website and Database Contract Amendment** (Vogt moved, Strauch seconded). **MOTION CARRIED.**

5. PRRIP Science Plan:

- Summary of 2025 Spring WC Monitoring report; Mead asked about more use in the East than the West; Ideus – due to available habitat on the East side as opposed to the West, also higher channel widths in the East, also high use with Trust, TNC, and Rowe Sanctuary in East; Whitaker – differences between this year and the last couple of years; Ideus – can't speak to direct cause; Farrell – from a numbers standpoint, use has been variable; how many birds could you potentially have stop, maybe factors outside AHR (such as water availability), stable availability of suitable habitat; Farnsworth – example of year when cold south but warm on Platte so birds stacked up; Whitaker – why so many adults but not juveniles; Farrell – typically not that many young birds seen in annual population estimates, annual population estimate is hovering around 500 birds and only about 10% of those are juveniles; Rabbe – Farrell is correct, that tracks with population numbers and juveniles in that population.
- **GC MOTION: Approve 2025 Spring WC Monitoring Report** (Krohn moved, Ostdiek seconded). **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Fall 25 WC Monitoring update – season wrapped up, monitoring October 15 through November 27 (includes monitoring extension); all locations east of Minden, high concentrations on conservation properties.
- Summary of WC Roost Site Selection Report; Mead – question about human development near these sites; Farrell – have not looked at this directly but development is localized, not massive development in central Platte; Farnsworth – a cabin goes in every now and then, main takeaway is to stay away from bridges when considering buying property; Whitaker – what is a definition



of development; Farrell – mainly bridges and roads, looked at how much development within a mile of roost locations; Rabbe – converting gravel mines to housing developments is an issue in some areas.

- **GC MOTION: Approve WC Roost Site Selection Report** (Whitaker moved, Manning seconded). **MOTION CARRIED.**

6. PRRIP Independent Science:

- **GC MOTION: Approve 2026 ISAC Member Contract Amendments** (Manning moved, Strauch seconded). **MOTION CARRIED.**
- **ISAC Selection Panel:** Steve Labay (USFWS), Brock Merrill (USBR), Barry Lawrence (State of Wyoming), Melissa Mosier (Environmental Entities), Kara Scheel (State of Colorado).
- ISAC presentation; GC thanks for Dave Marmorek’s extended service to the PRRIP as a member of the ISAC (Chair/Co-Chair since 2009).

7. Environmental Account (EA) Annual Operating Plan (AOP):

- Labay summarized the Service’s 2026 EA AOP water use priorities (use of water in the Environmental Account in Lake McConaughy); prioritizing germination suppression release in 2026, may recommend flow release tweaks in out years focused on *Phragmites* suppression.

8. PRRIP Land Plan:

- Tunnell summarized planned herbicide spraying work.
- **GC MOTION: Approve Multi-Year Herbicide Application RFB** (Vogt moved, Merrill seconded). **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Meyer Estate – tenant interested in buying quonset, similar to what was done previously on Dyer Tract (move for \$1); son-in-law interested in 2-car garage (move for \$1) and barn.

9. PRRIP Water Plan:

- Turner summarized the PRRIP Water Milestone Summary; Marks – CNPPID lease would put us about 200 acre feet shy of the 120,000? Turner – yes, if everything scores as currently estimated; add Elwood outlet and we would be at around 124,000 ac/ft.
- NPPD WSA – Mead asked if we are looking at \$40-\$50 per ac/ft and much more for Elwood; Turner – Elwood is score cost, NPPD WSA is up front recharge cost; costs for diverted excesses are in the same ballpark; Andy N. – asked about Paragraph 9 and consequential damages, request that provision be modified; will suggest some language (“neither party held responsible for consequential damages”); Ostdiek – how are returns to the river measured? Turner – model output; Whitaker – so how is it calculated now? Turner – officially have no current means of accounting for NPPD recharge; project has estimated score, will be officially scored in 2026 along with a few other projects that have not yet been officially scored; Ostdiek – how is decision made in terms of timing of diversions; Turner – need to be excess flows + NPPD



discretion; limited to shoulder seasons between irrigation and winter freezing; Ostdiek – provision about the DWEE and temporary appropriations; Turner – NPPD and CNPPID have to get temporary permits to divert excess flows for groundwater recharge from DWEE every year.

- **GC MOTION: Conditionally approve NPPD Recharge Agreement with language changes suggested by Colorado AG Office** (Williams moved, Merrill seconded). **MOTION CARRIED.** Downstream Water Users abstained.
- Elwood Outlet – Mead asked if it is just hydrology that can change excess water; Turner – yes; Mead – ever a situation where District does not need reservoir? Drain – still making investments in inflow side because we will continue to need at least part of it for irrigation supply; Steinke – will fine tune the storage we need as we move along; Mead – 50 cfs vs. 100 cfs, any release constraints? Turner – no constraints (no timing limitations); Drain – difference in 50 vs. 100 will be driven by what the creek can handle, always plenty of capacity in the river; Manning – how much for next phase? Turner – budgeted \$350,000 in FY26; Whitaker – have you looked into the issue of multiple benefactors; Turner – right now conceived as a 100% Program project; Ostdiek – series of outstanding questions/issues about Central’s future plans, anything Central wants to share today about these; Steinke – it gets hard because we are trying to figure out future capacity and need, need to run it a bit to figure out these details; we can’t give it all away, but we don’t know that number right now (wait and see); Whitaker – what is the term of our lease agreement; Turner – 135,000 ac/ft through 2032, can extend annually until 2042 if we don’t get to full amount; Farnsworth – one way to do this would be to say the Program wouldn’t enter into this unless it was part of Second Increment water bundle; Mead – what is role of Nebraska in excess flows; Turner – 50/50 split with Nebraska for recharge in Elwood (and other facilities)
- **Manning moved to move ahead with additional Elwood Outlet Feasibility Study consulting work; no second; motion died.**
- WAC Priorities – Steinke summarized recent discussions at WAC about getting to 120,000 ac/ft, does GC want the WAC to pursue additional two water projects (Elwood outlet and NCCW)? Where does the GC want us to go, since we are not at 120,000 ac/ft and there isn’t new water out there to grab? So, the question is from the GC what should WAC priorities be? Farnsworth – no new projects on the horizon for the WAC to wrestle with; what I hear a lot is large catalog of water projects in First Increment; has been a huge change because the Program can’t really build anything due to land rights issues and lack of condemnation; WAC could think and talk about what could be done but need guidance from GC on whether and how to approach this; Walters – any thought of working with producers with efficiencies to try to scale up saving water and protecting it; Drain – that’s what NCCW is, likely won’t offer up more to the Program (save for drought protection for irrigators).
- Mead – need to do scoring.

10. Public Comment:

- No public comments recorded.



11. GC Meeting Review & Wrap-Up:

- Krohn moved and Mead seconded 2026 GC Chair and Vice Chair: USBR (Merrill) and CO (Ostdiek)

2026 GC Meeting Schedule:

1) **2026 Virtual Science Plan Reporting Session:**

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

11:00 AM-2:00 PM Central Time

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

9:00 AM-1:00 PM Central Time

2) **Q1 GC Meeting:**

March 10-11, 2026 @ Kearney, NE

3) **Q2 GC Meeting:**

June 9-10, 2026 @ Cheyenne, WY

4) **2026 ISAC Meeting:**

July 7-9, 2026 @ Kearney, NE (July 7: ISAC field trip day; July 8 – Open Session; July 9 – half-day Closed Session for ISAC and EDO only)

5) **Q3 GC Meeting:**

September 8-9, 2026 @ Kearney, NE

6) **GC Virtual Special Session – FY2027 Budget & Work Plan:**

Monday, November 9, 2026

10:00 AM-12:00 PM Central Time

7) **Q4 GC Meeting:**

December 1-2, 2026 @ Denver

Meeting adjourned – 5:44 PM Mountain Time.