



1 **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**  
2 **Governance Committee Meeting Minutes**  
3 DIA Residence Inn – Denver, CO  
4 August 11-12, 2009  
5

6 **Tuesday, August 11, 2009**  
7

8 **Executive Director’s Office (ED Office)**

9 Jerry Kenny – Executive Director  
10 Bridget Barron  
11 Chad Smith  
12 Beorn Courtney  
13 Jason Farnsworth  
14 Bruce Sackett  
15 Laura Belanger  
16 Steve Smith  
17

18 **Governance Committee (GC)**

19 Don Ament – State of Colorado, Chair  
20 Brian Barels – Nebraska Public Power District  
21 Alan Berryman – Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District  
22 Ron Bishop – Central Platte Natural Resources District  
23 Norm DeMott – Upper Platte River Water Users  
24 John Kolanz – Greeley Water and Sewer Department  
25 Don Kraus – Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District  
26 Mike Purcell – State of Wyoming  
27 John Lawson – Bureau of Reclamation  
28 Kent Miller – Twin Platte Natural Resources District  
29 Kirk Nelson – Nebraska Game and Parks Commission  
30 Dennis Strauch – Pathfinder Irrigation District  
31 Ted Kowalski – State of Colorado  
32 Deb Freeman – SP WRAP/Colorado Water Users  
33 George Williams – Upper North Platte River Water Users  
34 Michael Thabault – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
35 June DeWeese – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
36 John Heaston – The Nature Conservancy  
37

38 **Participants**

39 Mark Czaplewski – Central Platte Natural Resources District  
40 Brock Merrill – Bureau of Reclamation  
41 Larry Schulz – Consultant to ED Office  
42 Don Anderson – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
43 Greg Wingfield – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
44 Jeff Bandy – AECOM



- 45 Eric Dove – Olsson
- 46 Tim Martin – Riverside Technologies
- 47 Pat Goltl – Nebraska DNR
- 48 Frank Kwapnioski – NPPD
- 49 Diane Hoppe – MWH

50

51 **Welcome & Administrative**

52 Ament called the meeting to order and the group proceeded with introductions. Kraus presented  
53 Purcell with a token of appreciation for his previous service as GC Chair. **June 2-3, 2009**  
54 **minutes approved.**

55

56 **Program Committee Updates**

57 *Land Advisory Committee (LAC)*

58 Czaplewski provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC met on July 15 and July  
59 27 to discuss Program land management activities and planning, specifically developing complex  
60 Land Management Plans. The next LAC meeting is September 15 in Kearney.

61

62 *Water Advisory Committee (WAC)*

63 Kwapnioski provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC met on July 21 and  
64 focused discussion on depletions plans updates. Wyoming presented their depletion plan  
65 information and also an amendment to the plan – the WAC recommends GC approval. Colorado  
66 presented their depletion plan information and also an amendment to the plan – the WAC  
67 recommends GC approval. The ED Office discussed progress on updating the Water Action  
68 Plan (WAP) and weed management at the choke point at North Platte. There will be a  
69 presentation at the GC meeting in October on the April flow routing test. The next WAC  
70 meeting will be September 15.

71

72 *Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Adaptive Management Working Group (AMWG),*  
73 *Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC), and Peer Review Update*

74 Smith provided an update on the latest activities. The next TAC meeting is September 29 in  
75 Kearney and will focus on early results from the lower Platte stage change study. The AMWG  
76 held a workshop on July 7-8 in Kearney and made significant progress on habitat and  
77 experimental design. A small-group habitat design discussion will be held on August 27 in  
78 Kearney. The 2009 ISAC report is being drafted and a draft is expected by the end of August.  
79 The full ISAC will attend the Platte River Symposium and take part in a panel discussion on  
80 October 15; there may be another ISAC meeting held in conjunction with the Symposium and  
81 the GC meeting at that time. Comments have been received from peer reviewers (except one)  
82 for all four monitoring protocols being peer reviewed and those comments are being assessed  
83 and summarized for further discussion with the TAC.

84

85

86 *Finance Committee (FC)*

87 Purcell provided an update on the last two FC meetings. The FC held a conference call on July  
88 20 and approved the RFP for the Cottonwood Ranch Bridge. The CPNRD Elm Creek



89 Agreement was discussed and re-drafted. The FC held a conference call on July 27 to review the  
90 contracts for the sediment augmentation and reservoir feasibility projects.

91

### 92 **Program Outreach Update**

93 *Several recent presentations:*

- 94 • Schellpeper presented to the Nebraska Water Law conference on June 19
- 95 • Kenny presented to The Nature Conservancy board on June 20.
- 96 • The Program had a booth at the AWRA adaptive management specialty conference in Utah  
97 in late June. Smith and Kenny presented at the conference as well.
- 98 • The Program sponsored a break at the National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration in Los  
99 Angeles in July. Smith led an AM workshop, and Smith and Jim Jenniges presented as part  
100 of an AM panel discussion.
- 101 • Kenny presented at the Kearney Arch on July 28 as part of the Four States Irrigation Tour.
- 102 • Tim Tunnell presented to The Nature Conservancy Working River tour on August 7, 2009.  
103 The group met at the Bartels property and Tunnell presented on Program land management.

104

105 *Upcoming presentations:*

- 106 • Farnsworth will be presenting on the 2008 high flow event and the Program to the Tri-Basin  
107 NRD board at their September meeting.
- 108 • Smith will present to a UNO ecosystem restoration class on October 8.
- 109 • Program is sponsor of Platte River Symposium on October 15, including moderating and  
110 participating in a panel discussion. ISAC will be part of panel discussion as well.

111

112 *Exhibits/Sponsorships:*

- 113 • Program is sponsoring a refreshment break at the Nebraska Grazing Conference on August  
114 11-12, 2009 in Kearney.
- 115 • Program is sponsoring the North American Weed Management Association Conference and  
116 Trade Show on September 21-24, 2009 in Kearney.
- 117 • Program will have a booth at Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island on September 15-17;  
118 Program will be exhibiting in the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts tent.
- 119 • Nebraska Nature and Visitor Center will have grand opening on September 26; Program is a  
120 sponsoring partner for the Center.

121

122 *Press Coverage:*

- 123 • Kenny and Lawson were interviewed about the Program for a USBR Podcast scheduled to  
124 run the week of August 11, 2009. The Podcasts are intended to inform the public about  
125 land/water issues that the Bureau is working on.
- 126 • Program is featured in an article in the August/September 2009 NEBRASKAland magazine.  
127 The title of the article is “A Platte River Purchase” and it covers land acquisition and habitat  
128 restoration efforts.
- 129 • Czaplewski, Jenniges, and Peyton featured in “Rural Nebraskan” monitoring terns and  
130 plovers on the Niobrara River.

131

132



133 **FY09 Budget Items Updates**

134 *Program Financial Status Report and Budget Spreadsheet*

135 Kenny discussed the status of the Program budget and provided an update on budget items.

136

137 *CPNRD/PRRIP Elm Creek Reservoir Agreement*

138 Kenny discussed the Elm Creek Reservoir Agreement, which was formerly a MOU but is now in  
139 a simpler agreement form. Through discussions with the Central Platte NRD (CPNRD), the  
140 Program requested some additional investigations related to the project that are of interest to the  
141 Program. This agreement says the Program will reimburse CPNRD costs incurred for these  
142 additional investigations, including increased capacity for inflow, larger reservoir size, and a  
143 more expanded de-watering system. The Program and CPNRD will discuss what might happen  
144 further once these additional investigations are complete. The agreement also includes  
145 provisions regarding the need for close coordination with NPPD about the Dawson County  
146 Canal. Kenny worked with Bishop on the form of the agreement to ensure it was amendable to  
147 the CPNRD Board. Kraus asked Barels if the coordination with NPPD is acceptable. Barels said  
148 there would be an agreement for the next phase related to water supply and if it can be delivered  
149 through the Dawson County Canal, among other questions. Barels said there is no standing  
150 agreement between the CPNRD and NPPD on the reservoir because it is still under investigation.  
151 Ament asked about the timeline. Bishop said the reservoir topography is slowing things down  
152 now, but it should be made available soon. Actual work by the consultant should not last longer  
153 than three months once the topography is available.

154

155 Purcell moved approval of the agreement; Miller seconded. **Agreement approved.**

156

157 *WP-6: Feasibility Studies*

158 Farnsworth provided an update on the project. Olsson is off and running and has held three  
159 meeting so far. Alternatives and operation scenarios have been discussed, and a meeting this  
160 morning focused on ranking criteria and how to weigh these criteria. This project remains on an  
161 aggressive schedule and a report is scheduled for the end of the year.

162

163 *PD-13: Sediment Augmentation Conceptual & Construction Design*

164 Purcell discussed changes made to the contract through the FC regarding budget amounts and  
165 contract oversight. Smith said those changes were accepted by the selected consultant (The  
166 Flatwater Group) and that plans are underway for a kick-off meeting for the project.

167

168 *LP-2: FSM/MCM Actions on Cottonwood Ranch*

169 Farnsworth discussed potential actions on Cottonwood Ranch related to chipping tree piles and  
170 smoothing down an island in the main channel. The existing tree piles are generally burned and  
171 buried, but Bruce Sackett and Tunnell have been looking for a contractor to chip the trees  
172 because they are located in a potential off-channel nesting habitat site. A contractor in Grand  
173 Island can chip and grind the trees for a reasonable price. The bid package will be circulated to  
174 the FC prior to the next scheduled FC meeting.

175

176

177

178 *General Items*

179 Kowalski said the appropriations bill passed the House and Senate with a FY10 budget amount  
180 of \$12.707 million. Lawson said that is the case. Barelts asked about the 2009 work plan.  
181 Kenny said there would be a 2010 work plan and budget that would include all information like  
182 2008, and would likely summarize work done in 2009 as well.

183

184 **Program Database Management System**

185 Tim Martin from Riverside Technologies and Daren from 3t Systems provided a presentation on  
186 their work developing a Program Database Management System (DBMS). Farnsworth reviewed  
187 what we had worked out with the previous DBMS contractor, which looked more like System C.  
188 The recommended system, System B, now includes GIS data. Kraus asked what current  
189 Program budget is for this. Farnsworth said about \$1.3 million for the First Increment (@  
190 \$100,000/year); Kenny said the 2009 budget is \$200,000, but that there were initial development  
191 funds returned from the previous effort in excess of this budget that add to the authorized funds  
192 still available. DeWeese asked if this would be a new web site or would build on existing web  
193 site. Kenny said this would replace the existing web site and immensely expand the capabilities.  
194 DeWeese asked if all data and information would be available. Kenny said all data would be  
195 available – public information, administrative information, land items, data from scientific  
196 monitoring/research, etc. Each type of data could have different levels of security/accessibility  
197 to protect confidential information and sensitive information on endangered species locations, for  
198 example. Berryman asked about the \$100,000 annual cost, if it is stable, and if it is the same for  
199 all three systems proposed. Martin said that has not been finally determined, but System A  
200 would be about \$135,000/year and System C would be about \$70,000/year. Also, inflation rates  
201 for items like licenses and software upgrades are not known. Berryman said it might be worth  
202 checking into whether the Program could utilize Department of Interior ESRI licenses to help  
203 save costs.

204

205 Kraus asked where the hardware would reside. If 3tSystems would host, it would be in  
206 downtown Denver or Ft. Collins. Daren said everything would be through web site access.  
207 Purcell asked how difficult it would be to change the housing locations. Daren said it would  
208 include moving costs for hardware, but would be more expensive for virtual systems because  
209 they are harder to move. Martin said their recommendation is to house it with 3t Systems the  
210 first year, but the contract would include specific language to allow transfer of the data and  
211 hardware if necessary. Kraus asked if there is just one virtual server, what about the differences  
212 between one server versus two. Daren said it is largely memory capacity and processing  
213 capability. Strauch asked how data is backed up and kept secure. Daren said everything is  
214 backed up with another company so there are always two copies of everything. Purcell said he  
215 does not have sticker shock over needing something like an extra \$200,000 to get a system up  
216 and running. Thabault asked if Riverside looked at other large ecosystem restoration programs  
217 as examples of data management. Daren said the Everglades system is one of the best, but most  
218 other examples fall short of what the Platte needs.

219

220 Kenny said he is a fan of System B – System C is not adequate, and not a fan of owning  
221 hardware under System A or the need to be able to remotely alter maps. System B is a nice



222 middle-of-the road approach that gets us functionality and keeps us working with professionals  
223 in this field. Farnsworth concurred. Kraus asked how long it would take to get this up and  
224 running. Farnsworth said we could get the team working on a final design document over the  
225 next couple of months. Heaston asked if we could get a working demo. Martin said they could  
226 provide a trial demo of the components. Kraus asked if the GC could still see all the land tracts  
227 like they are presented at GC meetings. Farnsworth said that is the case. Barels asked if there  
228 were people from the Proposal Selection Panel that would be involved in next steps. Martin said  
229 certain people from that team are contacted periodically for specific issues. Lawson said BOR  
230 firewalls do not allow BOR staff to use current Program file sharing sites. He asked if Riverside  
231 had talked to any BOR IT staff yet. Farnsworth said the new system would be compliant with  
232 Federal security standards.

233

234 Ament asked for a staff recommendation for which system to pursue further. Farnsworth  
235 recommended pursuing System B to hammer down implementation costs, schedule, and all parts  
236 and then bring it back to the GC for final approval; Kenny endorsed that staff recommendation.

237 **GC approved.**

238

### 239 **Depletions Plans Updates**

240 Kenny provided an update on the status of depletions plans related to discussions at the last  
241 WAC meeting. The amendments to the depletions plans before the GC today were brought  
242 before the WAC in July and were sent on to the GC for approval. Kraus said there had been  
243 discussions by the Downstream Water Users in Nebraska about those amendments and some  
244 confusion about the document Colorado prepared regarding its proposed amendment. Because  
245 of that, Kraus had discussed with Kowalski the possibility of deferring this amendment until the  
246 October meeting. Kowalski said there is language in the federal depletions plan for the states to  
247 work with the federal agencies to help offset post-1997 federal depletions within that state.  
248 Colorado has been working diligently on the South Platte Plan on a MOU with the federal  
249 agencies; that is all but ready to go. The North Platte Plan has been more difficult; federal  
250 depletions are still under review. There are not a lot of new water depletions occurring in this  
251 portion of the basin. The only new piscatorial, wildlife, and environmental uses are federal in  
252 nature, which is the basis for seeking this amendment to the Colorado plan. This does not  
253 increase the 1997 baseline of consumptive uses.

254

255 Colorado has been in discussions with Kraus and Jennifer Schellpeper about concerns in  
256 Nebraska regarding this change. Kowalski wants to know more about where the Nebraska  
257 concerns are coming from. Ament said Kowalski was very effective in negotiations to this point  
258 in Colorado, and having to go back again on this issue in the North Platte basin would be very  
259 difficult. Kraus said one possibility might be to come to an understanding rather than change the  
260 agreement, but that he would have to talk more with Schellpeper about her concerns. Purcell  
261 said he does not think this is a decree issue; it seems to be just taking from one baseline and  
262 moving it to another baseline. Nelson said the main point is to give Nebraska a little more time  
263 to review this before taking action if it does not put Colorado in a tight spot. Kowalski said the  
264 North Platte Water Users are not supportive of any additional changes to the language, so if more  
265 time and understanding will get everyone more comfortable with the language contained in the



266 amendment he is willing to consider that. But, he needs to better understand Nebraska's  
267 concerns very quickly so this can be addressed at the October GC meeting. Barel's asked if this  
268 would have to go through the Colorado transfer process. Kowalski said the federal agencies  
269 would have to apply for a new use. Strauch asked if this would be reported on a five-year basis.  
270 Kowalski said that is the case. DeWeese asked if this is postponed until October if it will create  
271 a problem. Kowalski said if the changes can ultimately be accepted and approved in October  
272 that should still work. Ament said he did not think that delaying to try and develop new  
273 language would work for the North Platte Water Users. Kraus said it may be that they can  
274 resolve concerns without new language. Purcell said developing a sample report might help  
275 solve concerns.

276

277 **Kowalski recommends Colorado bring this issue back to the GC at the October meeting**  
278 **after additional discussions with Schellpeper and the downstream water users.**

279

280 Purcell discussed the amendment to the Wyoming depletions plan which reduces the acreage  
281 cap. This would remove acres that do not affect depletions and thus are not a part of the plan.

282

283 Berryman moved to approve the amendment; DeWeese seconded. **Amendment approved.**

284

### 285 **Water Action Plan Update**

286 Courtney provided a presentation updating the GC on the Water Action Plan. Purcell asked how  
287 projects will get credit for target flows versus Short Duration High Flows (SDHF); this is  
288 particularly applicable to the re-regulating reservoirs under investigation. Courtney said FWS  
289 indicated there is going to be some credit for target flows pertaining to the re-regulating  
290 reservoirs; this is something that remains under discussion. Anderson said it is an important  
291 question that the Service continues to wrestle with. The Service will think through scoring  
292 issues, including how to factor in management decisions for using water for SDHF versus target  
293 flow reductions. Kwapnioski said the focus is not just on high flow events but also on  
294 opportunities projects will have for target flow benefits.

295

296 Meeting adjourned until 8:30 a.m. Mountain time on Wednesday, August 12, 2009.

297

298

**Wednesday, August 12, 2009**

299

### 300 **Welcome and Introduction**

301 Ament called the meeting to order and the group proceeded with introductions.

302

### 303 **Public Comment**

304 Ament asked for public comment, none was offered.

305

### 306 **Executive Session**

307 The Governance Committee took a break and then re-convened in Executive Session. Purcell  
308 made a motion to enter executive session to discuss land offerings; Heaston seconded. **GC**  
309 **entered Executive Session at 8:36 a.m.**



310 Kraus made a motion to exit Executive Session; Bishop seconded. **GC exited Executive**  
311 **Session at 9:54 a.m.**

312

313 **Program Land Tracts**

314 The GC requested that Sackett show and discuss the conservation easement documents related to  
315 Tract 0805 when they are ready for review.

316

317 **Future Meetings & Closing Business**

318 Purcell requested that everyone continue to consider quarterly meetings for 2010. Bishop said  
319 the downstream water users raised concerns about this previously but are no longer concerned.

320 Purcell requested that the 2010 GC meeting schedule be March, June, September, and December.

321 Barels said the GC will also be open to additional meetings and/or conference calls if necessary

322 during the year. Kenny said meetings would be in the second Tuesday/Wednesday of meeting

323 months except for December, which would be the first Tuesday/Wednesday.

324

325 Kowalski moved to change GC meetings to a quarterly schedule; Purcell seconded. **GC**  
326 **approved.**

327

328 Upcoming GC meetings include:

329 • October 13-14, 2009 in Kearney, NE; followed by Platte River Symposium on October 15

330 • December 1-2, 2009 in Denver, CO

331 • March 9-10, 2010 in Kearney, NE

332 • June 2010 in Kearney

333 • September 2010 in Wyoming

334 • December 2010 in Colorado

335

336 **Meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.**

337

338 **Summary of Action Items/Decisions from August 2009 GC meeting**

339 1) GC approved minutes for June 2-3, 2009.

340 2) GC approved CPNRD/PRRIP Elm Creek Reservoir Agreement.

341 3) GC approved Program staff recommendation to pursue Database Management System B –  
342 includes refinement of details related to implementation costs and schedule and various parts  
343 of the system and bring those details back to the GC for final approval.

344 4) GC agreed to discuss the proposed Colorado depletions plan amendments at the October  
345 2009 GC meeting.

346 5) GC approved amendment to Wyoming Depletions Plan.

347 6) GC requested that details related to the potential conservation easement on Tract 0805 be  
348 provided to the GC for review before finalizing the easement.

349 7) GC approved moving to quarterly meetings starting in 2010 – March (Kearney), June  
350 (Kearney), September (Wyoming), and December (Colorado).