



1 **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**
2 **Land Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**
3 **Executive Director's Office – Kearney, NE**
4 **July 15, 2009**

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7 **Attendees**

- 8 Scott Woodman, Chair, Landowner
9 Mark Czaplewski, Vice Chair, Central Platte Natural Resources District
10 Jerry Kenny, Executive Director
11 Bruce Sackett - ED Office
12 Justin Brei - ED Office
13 Jason Farnsworth - ED Office
14 Tim Tunnell - ED Office
15 June DeWeese - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
16 Kirk Schroeder - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
17 Ted LaGrange - Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
18 Matt Steffl - Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
19 Harry LaBonde - State of Wyoming
20 Mark Peyton - Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District
21 Joe Frank - State of Colorado, Lower South Platte Water Conservancy District (by phone)
22 David Raffety - Tri-Basin Natural Resources District
23 John Thorburn - Tri-Basin Natural Resources District
24 John Heaston - The Nature Conservancy
25 Brock Merrill - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (by phone)

26
27 **Welcome and Administrative**

28 Chairman Scott Woodman called the meeting to order at 9:00 am Central Time and the group
29 proceeded with introductions.

30
31 Woodman asked for agenda modifications and none were provided.

32
33 **Mark Czaplewski made a motion to approve the minutes from both the May 20, 2009 LAC**
34 **meeting and the May 29, 2009 LAC conference call, without revision. The motion was**
35 **seconded by Mark Peyton and approved.**

36
37 **GC Meeting Update**

38 Mark Czaplewski gave an update on GC activities since the LAC last met. The GC met on June
39 2-3 in Cheyenne, WY.

40
41 At the June 2-3 meeting, the GC acted in accordance with LAC recommendations and voted to
42 cease pursuit of tracts 0808, 0902, 0904, 0913, and 0914. Property owners for those tracts will
43 be notified of the decision.



44 Czaplewski reported that the GC approved moving tracts 0903, 0910, and 0915 to the appraisal
45 and negotiation phase of the process, and they approved the final terms of purchase for tracts
46 0849 and 0850.

47
48 The GC also authorized the Platte River Recovery Implementation Foundation, the Program's
49 land interest holding entity, to grant power of attorney to Tim Tunnel and Bruce Sackett in the
50 Program ED office for the purpose of conducting Program business with the Farm Service
51 Agency.

52
53 The next meeting of the Governance Committee will be held August 11-12, 2009 in Denver, CO.

54
55 **Update on Land Management**

56 Tim Tunnell informed the LAC of the need for participants to develop management plans for the
57 latest tracts to come under Program ownership. Properties for which the plans must be
58 developed include 0842, 0847, 0803, 0850, and 0804. The plans should be finalized and ready
59 for approval prior to the October GC meeting, making it necessary that the drafts be ready at the
60 September LAC meeting.

61
62 Sackett said the intention was to develop plans for complexes as opposed to individual tracts, and
63 asked for comments. Schroeder said it makes the most sense to manage as big a block of land as
64 possible. Czaplewski said it makes good sense, but that properties not owned by the Program
65 may not always be able to be incorporated, as Program needs may contradict grant requirements
66 or long-term management goals on non-Program lands. Schroeder said that those potential
67 conflicts should be investigated so, at a minimum, the Program can "manage around" those
68 goals. Kenny asked Czaplewski how the GC may approach the situation where Program money
69 would be spent on non-Program lands. Czaplewski said he was unsure, but the process and
70 intent should be clear and transparent. LaBonde said the GC would likely need some kind of
71 agreement in place, and to see the benefits of the project outlined. Farnsworth gave an example
72 of a potential AMP experiment that crosses Program and non-Program lands, and how the
73 experiment would lose value if confined to Program lands. LaGrange said that the Program must
74 be careful not to use this as a means to relieve landowners of their own management
75 responsibilities.

76
77 Sackett asked those that plan to participate in plan development get started thinking about certain
78 aspects of the management plans such as: vegetation management (i.e. grazing, fire), if/how to
79 allow hunting, crop rotations on agricultural parcels, etc.

80
81 June DeWeese said the ED office must incorporate time in the schedule for the consultation with
82 USFWS.

83
84 Tunnell said he would provide potential meeting dates for management plan subgroups within
85 the next week.

86
87



88 **Other Committee Coordination Information**

89 Farnsworth gave an update on some recent adaptive management workgroup workshops. He
90 discussed the intent to separate the testing of bird response to habitat from the testing of methods
91 for habitat creation and maintenance. He briefly discussed the AMP requirement to test bird
92 response and examine benefit/cost for flooding corn fields as an alternative to wet meadows.
93 Farnsworth said there are no immediate management plans for wet meadows pending further
94 discussion in the TAC/AMWG.

95
96 Farnsworth informed the LAC of the selection of a consultant to begin feasibility investigations
97 for potential reservoir sites and operations at Elwood and J-2 Return Reservoir. These
98 investigations will provide preliminary reports of cost vs. benefit, among other things, and will
99 inform decisions on the necessity of more detailed analysis at any of the sites.

100
101 Farnsworth said the geomorphology/in-channel vegetation monitoring consultant crews have
102 begun their work monitoring Program anchor points in the river channel. The consultants began
103 at the upstream end of the reach near Lexington, and will proceed downstream to Chapman over
104 the next two months.

105
106 Kenny briefly discussed a Water Plan alternative that involves increasing water use efficiency, as
107 opposed to fully retiring irrigated acres. The Program may work with irrigation manufacturers,
108 NRCS conservation officers, and other experts on the subject to investigate how the Program can
109 offer assistance, and receive benefit in the form of reduced water use, through increased
110 efficiencies in irrigation or water delivery.

111
112 **Public Comment/Closing Business**

113 Chairman Woodman asked for public comments. John Thorburn informed the LAC of
114 comments made by Kirk Nelson (NGPC Assistant Director) and other members of the public at a
115 recent State Riparian Vegetation Task Force meeting. The comments revolved around their
116 perception that the Program should do more in the management of invasive species in the Platte
117 River; that providing matching funds for other projects was insufficient. Kenny said the
118 directive from the Governance Committee was that the Program not be solely responsible for
119 invasive species control in the central Platte. He said the Program is providing \$80,000 this year
120 to remove vegetation from the river at the North Platte chokepoint, work which will be
121 performed this fall. Kenny is currently working with Rich Walters and the Platte Valley Weed
122 Management Area and West Central Weed Management Area. The goal is to make available
123 \$500,000 in matching funds for removal of in-channel vegetation in 2010. Since the intent is to
124 improve water conveyance, the funds do not come from the land budget and can be used beyond
125 the Lexington to Chapman associated habitat reach. Kenny said the 2010 budget is not finalized,
126 but advisory committees have initially expressed interest in the program.

127
128 **The next meeting of the LAC will be held in Kearney, Nebraska at the Executive Director's**
129 **Office on Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. CDT.**

130



131 Sackett said the GC has requested that the ad hoc land exchange committee meet again to further
132 define a policy for Program land exchanges. Sackett will coordinate with those members to
133 assemble before the September 15 LAC meeting.
134

135 **Executive Session**

136 **Harry LaBonde moved to go into executive session with LAC members, alternates, and**
137 **technical staff to review details of land offerings. The motion was seconded by Mark**
138 **Czaplewski. The motion carried and the committee entered executive session at 10:30 a.m.**
139

140 **Ted LaGrange moved to come out of executive session. Harry LaBonde seconded and the**
141 **motion carried. The committee came out of executive session at 11:14 p.m.**
142

143 The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Woodman at 11:15 a.m.