PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission – Lake McConaughy Visitors Center, NE

November 17, 2009

Attendance

Cory Steinke – WAC Chair, CNPPID
Jerry Kenny – Executive Director, Headwaters Corp
Beorn Courtney – ED Office/Headwaters Corp
Laura Belanger – ED Office/Headwaters Corp
Jason Farnsworth – ED Office/Headwaters Corp
Steve Smith – ED Office/Headwaters Corp
Frank Kwapisnosi –NPPD
Dennis Strauch – Upper Platte Water Users/Pathfinder Irrigation District
Jennifer Schellpeper – Nebraska DNR
Jon Altenhofen – Colorado Water Users/Northern Colorado WCD
Greg Wingfield – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mahonri Williams – Bureau of Reclamation
Mike Besson – Wyoming Water Development Office
Mike Drain – CNPPID
Rich Holloway – Tri-Bain NRD
Pat Goltl – Nebraska DNR
Duane Hovorka – National Wildlife Federation
Brock Merrill – Bureau of Reclamation
Jeff Runge – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Matt Rabbe – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
David Ford – CNPPID
Ann Bleed – CDR Associates
Eric Dove – Olsson Associates
Don Beesley – Olsson Associates
Deb Ohlinger – Olsson Associates
Joan Darling – Olsson Associates
Michael Yost – Olsson Associates
Bill Hahn – Hahn Water Resources
John Engel - HDR
George Oamek – Honey Creek Resources

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Welcome and Administrative

Introductions were made. There were no agenda modifications. Beorn Courtney thanked Frank Kwapnioski, who is retiring and resigned as chair, for all his work as chair of the committee. Cory Steinke was nominated and approved as the new chair. Jeff Runge will be the FWS WAC member replacing Don Anderson. The WAC membership list was sent around for the group to update. The September WAC Minutes were approved without modifications.

CNPPID Reregulating Reservoir Feasibility

Jason told the group that the project was to evaluate the use and potential modification of Elwood and a new J-2 Return area reservoir. Olsson Associates was selected to conduct both studies. The schedule was very aggressive due to the importance of a reservoir for short duration high flows (SDHF). Also pre-irrigation season field work is critical to the next project phase and we don’t want to miss the 2010 field work season. Olsson reviewed alternatives, modeling, assumptions and results. The yields in the report for target flows assume that excess flows are used to reduce shortages to target flows and that EA water or excess flows are used to fill reservoirs prior to SDHF. J-2 alternative 2 (Areas A and B) scored well in many areas so rose to the top. Olsson recommended either eliminating Elwood or incorporating it with very little money spent on it. The WAC will further evaluate the results to decide exactly what reservoirs will be moved forward to full feasibility. Regarding permitting issues, Jerry said he will have a conversation with the COE about permitting in the near future. He confirmed with the WAC, that if the report is cleaned up, they are in support of taking this presentation to the GC in December.

Olsson will provide final study results to Laura who will develop a short project summary for the GC meeting and for the WAC to be circulated next week. WAC members will provide comments for the presentation to Laura by the end of the week which she will compile and provide to Olsson for the GC meeting. Olsson will revise their presentation for the GC to be around 45 minutes, including time for questions. The message for the GC will be that the WAC is in general support of the J-2 alternatives. For the next version of the report, an Executive Summary with recommendations and maps will be developed by Olsson, with alternatives clearly identified on them. If WAC members have comments on the current report version they should provide them to Laura by the end of this week. Discussion regarding the timing of next steps regarding the report resulted in the decision that the ED Office will work with Olsson to develop a reorganized and more final version of the report which will be provided to the WAC in the next month or so. The WAC will then have several weeks to review and provide comments. Edits will be made in response to WAC comments prior to providing the report to the GC for the March meeting. Approval for the Reregulating Reservoir report will be done electronically.

Nebraska Ground Water Recharge Feasibility

Steve reported on the Nebraska (NE) Ground Water (GW) recharge pre-feasibility study. Bill Hahn is doing this work with a workgroup of WAC members. They are looking at Gothenburg and Dawson County, as well as the Phelps County Canal which is an addition from the
Reconnaissance-Level WAP. They are selecting sites and estimating yields and return flow timing. The study will be complete by the end of the year. The next step will be a thorough feasibility study with demonstration projects likely at one or two sites. **They’ll get an RFP for the feasibility study to the GC for their March 2010 meeting.** Demonstration projects would probably start in the spring or summer of 2010.

**Appendix A-5 Target Flows**
The WAC passed a motion to approve a memo for the GC recommending that Appendix E in the Program Document be revised to be consistent with A-5 in the Program Document. This issue had previously been discussed in detail with the WAC which had asked to review the recommendation memo prior to it being provided to the GC.

**Flow Routing Report**
Cory asked the group if they had any comments on the report and noted that event outcomes had previously been discussed with the group. No comments were provided. **If WAC members have comments, they need to provide them to Laura by the end of the week. She will then get a revised draft to the GC prior to their December meeting.**

**Water Action Plan Update**
Beorn discussed the WAP Update. Beorn reminded the group that Program Milestone 4 is to achieve $130,000 – $150,000 af/yr by 2019, including $80,000 af/yr from the three initial water projects. WAP projects must provide $50,000 – $70,000 af/yr. There is an interim goal of $25,000 af/yr by 2014. The Program document also requires a WAP update by end of year three of the Program which is 2009. We updated costs and yields, identified new issues and added an implementation schedule. Beorn also noted that the original WAP did not look at projects’ ability to augment a SDHF. Generally project costs are higher than estimated in the Reconnaissance-Level WAP. She also reviewed excess flow calculations and current methodology being used in feasibility studies. We’ve been focused on the CNPPID reregulating reservoir due to its ability to help meet SDHF requirements. As we move forward and as other projects advance, it’s going to be very important to integrate the different projects in analysis of supply.

Beorn reviewed the WAP Project Sequencing Schedule and discussed project tiers. All Tier 1 projects are currently being advanced. Information is being collected on Tier 2 projects which will help them advance. Tier 3 projects are currently not being advanced but work will be done on them in the future. This is a working document with many unknowns. Tier 1 projects are estimated in the update to yield from around 57,000 to 63,000 af/yr, though this doesn’t account for NE and project partners taking a portion. How much they will be interested in is currently unknown.

George Oamek helped update project costs. Beorn reviewed project costs and noted that we will be above the Water Plan Budget of $90 million assuming the current schedule and all the projects are implemented. She concluded that WAP projects will likely produce the yields
needed and that the Water Plan budget likely will suffice with certain combinations of projects and not with others. She also noted that much of the information in this WAP Update will continue to be updated as new information is learned. Jerry stated that this document is very important as we determine where we go from here and emphasized that this is a living document which will be constantly updated.

In response to discussion about the way projects will be scored on the 1947 – 1994 hydrology period, Beorn explained that feasibility studies will also evaluate the recent drier hydrology to provide information that may affect operations. To provide more information on how the scoring period compares to more recent hydrology, the ED Office will generate flow duration curves looking at Excess Flows for recent periods as compared to the 1947 – 1994 period.

Colorado (CO) GW Management will not be completed by 2014 so this needs to be changed in the update. Table 2 needs some editing regarding when projects will be completed. The ED Office will redo yield estimates to route water from Pathfinder and Glendo to Lake Mac in September. The range of losses will then be applied.

Jon raised a question about Programs costs for NCCW. It appears that the Program must pay for all the cost for the project but only gets the NCCW, not all the conservation savings. CNPPID is getting benefits from these projects. Mike Drain will forward sections of their FERC license which discuss NCCW to Jon. Mike noted that though costs are high, the yield is known and available. Mike said that CNPPID might be open to negotiating for something different but noted that their FERC license is the starting point. The ED Office will clarify in the WAP update how NCCW costs are different from other projects because of how they are calculated.

Regarding the reregulating reservoir project, the ED Office will average results for the dry, average and wet years and present this as the average value in the WAP update.

The ED Office will provide the GC with an executive summary and presentation. The WAP update will be revised after the GC presentation. WAC members should get comments to Beorn this week if possible for the GC presentation. Another draft will be provided to the WAC for comments and approval at the February WAC meeting.

Available Flow Analysis
Jennifer gave the group an update on work DNR had been doing with HDR regarding unappropriated water. They are developing a daily Excel-based planning tool so any applicant coming into DNR could use the tool to evaluated unappropriated water. They are taking a very conservative approach entering water rights data per the appropriated rather than historical diversions and use.
2010 Water Plan Budget

Jerry reviewed water project draft work plans and budgets, which were provided to the WAC prior to the meeting. The total water budget is about $3,450,000 out of a total Program budget of about $17,000,000. *If anyone has comments or edits, get them to Jerry. Jerry will add additional details regarding project specifics to the work plan.* The budget will be provided to the Finance Committee next Tuesday.

Additional Business

The following dates were set for 2010 WAC meetings: February 16th, May 11th, Aug 17th, October 12th, and November 9th.

The ED Office will send these dates to the WAC.

The meeting was adjourned.