PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission – Lake McConaughy Visitors Center, NE

September 15, 2009

Attendance
Frank Kwapnioski – WAC Chair, NPPD
Jerry Kenny – Executive Director, Headwaters Corp
Beorn Courtney – ED Office/Headwaters Corp
Laura Belanger – ED Office/Headwaters Corp
Cory Steinke – CNPPID
Dennis Strauch – Upper Platte Water Users/Pathfinder Irrigation District
Don Anderson – US Fish & Wildlife Service
Duane Hovorka – Environmental Groups/National Wildlife Federation
Duane Woodward – Downstream Water Users/Central Platte NRD
Jim Schneider – Nebraska DNR
Jennifer Schellpeper – Nebraska DNR (phone)
Jon Altenhofen – Colorado Water Users/Northern Colorado WCD
Kent Miller – Downstream Water Users/Twin Platte NRD
Mahonri Williams – Bureau of Reclamation (phone)
Matt Hoobler – Wyoming SEO (phone)
Mike Besson – Wyoming Water Development Office
Mike Drain – CNPPID
Rich Holloway – Tri-Bain NRD
Bill Taddicken – Environmental Groups/Rowe Sanctuary
Pat Goltl – Nebraska DNR

Other Attendees
Ann Bleed – CDR Associates

Welcome and Administrative
Introductions. No agenda modifications. Schellpeper had several edits to the meeting notes which Beorn reviewed. Anderson verbally requested several edits to the meeting notes. The July WAC Action Item Minutes (i.e., meeting minutes) were approved. Kenny informed the group that Ann Bleed, who was present, has been retained by the ED Office as a special advisor for Nebraska water rights and associated administrative processes.

Colorado Depletions Plan
Altenhofen addressed comments on Colorado’s depletions plan reporting, related to the Cumulative Effects Report dated April 30, 2009. Altenhofen previously gave a presentation regarding the accounting tools at the July WAC meeting, at which time the WAC requested
additional information specifically related to the changes in assumptions for which Colorado was seeking approval. Altenhofen provided a follow-up memo dated August 6, 2009, with a summary of the revised assumptions that were described in the April 30, 2009 report. Altenhofen provided a new handout at the September 15, 2009 WAC meeting, addressing comments received. Colorado is requesting approval of two changes in assumptions: a modification of the gross per capita water requirement and a modification of the percentage of mixes of the 6 water sources.

Anderson will provide Altenhofen a copy of the Hydrosphere report.

Altenhofen will more explicitly state in Colorado’s Depletion Report that the augmentation plans have not led to an increase in irrigated acreage or consumptive use. He will also clarify that there is no new information that would lead to a change in assumptions with the exception of those identified regarding the two proposed assumptions changes.

The WAC motioned to recommend approval to the GC of the two revised assumptions as presented in Colorado’s August 6, 2009 memo to the WAC. The motion was approved. Kwapnioski asked if the WAC also wanted to accept the Plan as presented. The WAC agreed to receive the report. Ted Kowalski (State of Colorado) supported the WAC approvals (via phone).

Water Action Plan Update
Courtney noted that the ED Office won’t go into great detail about the projects today. She noted that as we get into feasibility studies for several projects, questions are being identified. For example, Excess to Target Flows are a source for several Water Action Plan (WAP) projects. The ED Office is working on a memo to describe how to quantify excess flows with a smaller subgroup. Also the ED Office and subgroups are working to update project yields at the habitat. The ED Office is also working with AECOM to confirm that new yields can be compared consistently with the yields presented in older reports. The ED Office has contracted with an economist, George Oamek, to evaluate project costs and ensure they are comparable or if not, that this is appropriate. Courtney mentioned that the GC asked how projects used for short duration high flows (SDHF) and target flows would be scored. The 2000 WAP doesn’t discuss SDHF at all as this concept wasn’t integrated at that time. The ED Office thinks it makes sense to consider integrating SDHF in how the projects will be scored because this is key to how many projects will be designed and to the initial focus in which project to advance at the early stages of the Program. Anderson discussed if there should be a bonus/credit given to projects with SDHF purposes. This would require a policy shift.

CNPPID Reregulating Reservoirs
Courtney reported that we are working on the CNPPID Reregulating Reservoirs pre-feasibility study with a smaller workgroup. Olsson will be looking at the project for both SDHF and target flows as well as other potential benefits such as hydrocycling. There will be a presentation of results either before the October GC meeting or adjacent to the November WAC meeting. The
ED Office will check on the time and date of the Olsson reregulation reservoir presentation. This is a 1st tier project that we're moving forward with.

Water Leasing
Kenny reported on Water Leasing in Nebraska. The ED Office has enlisted George Oamek to develop a plan for water leasing. Oamek is developing an assessment of a fair value of water. He is working with University of Nebraska at Lincoln and Colorado State University professors. The ED Office will probably contact additional individuals at the University of Wyoming’s Agricultural Economy Department. Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (CNPPID) and Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) have indicated a willingness to explore water leasing opportunities. Water leasing in Nebraska is a 2nd tier WAP project because the process needs to be developed.

Water Management Incentives
Kenny reported that The ED Office is working with Nebraska DNR, UNL, and Flatwater to determine how to incentivize and to make sure there’s good value to the river and that other users are not being injured. This is 2nd tier WAP project because it will take a while to define and implement.

Dry Creek/Fort Kearny Cutoffs
Kenny reported the project’s water source has decreased and as a result, the focus has now shifted. The Funk Lagoon component of this project no longer viable. The Kapa ethanol plant has a waste line that runs parallel to the river. Using active groundwater management and outputting water into that line could provide a new project in cooperation with Tri-Basin NRD. We’d need to do careful accounting to ensure that the project would have a net positive effect and are in the exploratory stage of discussing this with Tri-Basin NRD. This was a 1st tier WAP project because it sounded simple, but it has quickly gotten more complex.

Dawson/Gothenburg (and potentially Phelps County Canal) Groundwater Recharge
Courtney reported that this project is in the pre-feasibility stage. There’s a workgroup and the ED Office is working with Bill Hahn on this. The plan is to have updated yields and costs by the end of the year. This is a 1st tier WAP project.

Groundwater Management Active Pumping
Courtney reported that this is a tier 2 WAP and we are learning information under other WAP pre-feasibility studies that will assist us in better defining this WAP project.

Net Controllable Conserved Water (NCCW)
Courtney reported that the ED Office is working with CNPPID to update costs. NCCW will be a lot more expensive than we thought but it is something CNPPID is already doing so it could be available as soon as the Program and CNPPID can get a contract in place.
Pathfinder Municipal Account & Glendo
Courtney reported this is a tier 1 WAP project and the ED office is working with Wyoming to update information.

Tamarack III
Courtney reported this is a tier 1 WAP project and the ED office is working with Colorado to update information.

The ED Office plans to bring a draft of the updated WAP to the WAC in November and then a draft to the GC in December for approval.

Initial 2010 Budget Estimates
Courtney showed a draft 2010 PRRIP Water Plan Related Budget table with proposed budget items. The total draft budget is $2,900,000. Jerry walked the group through the line items and their descriptions including assumptions.

North Platte Choke Point Update
Jerry provided an update on information obtained from SEH. We had assumed the choke point capacity was being constrained in the reach below the highway bridge by phragmites. It now appears, based on preliminary modeling that in addition to constricting vegetation, there has been sand deposition in the bed. In other locations, once phragmites clearing occurs, the bed remobilizes which clears out some of the deposition. Clearing the North Platte choke point is intended to increase the capacity there to at least 3,000 cfs or maybe 4,000 cfs if possible. Steinke suggested that it may be good to time additional discing or ripping right before irrigation season to help mobilize areas of sand deposition.

Flow Routing Report
Belanger told the group that the FWS and ED Office have been working on a report for the April 2009 flow routing event. A draft report will be provided to the group prior to the November WAC meeting. The report will then be provided to the GC prior to their December meeting. The ED Office will update the report to clearly state that the 2009 event’s primary goal was to test implementation and coordination.

Additional Business
Frank asked if there was anything else that needed to be addressed. Courtney reminded the group that that the UNL Platte River Symposium is being held adjacent to the October GC meeting. This is included on the WAC schedule. The next WAC meeting, assuming the reregulation reservoir report is made adjacent to the GC meeting, will in Ogallala on November 17. The EAC/RCC meeting will be moved to the 18th.

The meeting was adjourned.