



1 **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**
2 **Land Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**
3 **Executive Director's Office – Kearney, NE**
4 **August 26, 2011**

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7 **Attendees**

- 8 Scott Woodman, Chair, Local Nebraska Rep (Joint CPNRD/TBNRD)
9 Mark Czaplewski, Vice Chair, Local Nebraska Rep (Central Platte Natural Resources District)
10 Bruce Sackett - ED Office (by phone)
11 Justin Brei - ED Office
12 Jason Farnsworth - ED Office
13 Matt Rabbe – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
14 Ted LaGrange – State of Nebraska, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission (by phone)
15 Harry LaBonde - State of Wyoming, Wyoming State Engineer's Office
16 John Shadle – Nebraska Public Power District
17 Mark Peyton – Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District
18 Brock Merrill - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (by phone)
19 Kevin Urie – State of Colorado, Denver Water (by phone)
20 Wendy Figueroa (for Suzanne Sellers) – State of Colorado, Colorado Division of Wildlife
21 Jonas Davis – Environmental Groups, Ducks Unlimited (by phone)
22 Mark Morten – Environmental Groups, The Crane Trust
23 John Heaston – Environmental Groups, The Nature Conservancy
24 John Thorburn – Local Nebraska Rep (Joint CPNRD/TBNRD)

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26
27 **Welcome and Administrative**

28 Chairman Woodman called the meeting to order at 9:04 am Central Time and the group
29 proceeded with introductions.

30
31 Woodman asked for agenda modifications. None were provided.

32
33 **Czaplewski made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 1, 2011 LAC meeting.**
34 **The motion was seconded by LaBonde and passed unanimously.**

35
36 **GC Meeting Update**

37 Czaplewski updated the LAC on recent GC activity. The GC last met on June 14 & 15, 2011 in
38 Cheyenne, WY. The ED office updated the GC on the 2007-2010 Adaptive Management
39 Synthesis Report, as well as ISAC activities. The GC discussed several Water Action Plan
40 alternatives, including extensive discussion of a proposed reregulating reservoir near J-2 Return
41 on the Platte River east of Lexington, NE. The current cost estimates for this project are \$50-60
42 million. The GC also discussed a pilot scale project for groundwater recharge that is under way
43 in Phelps County. The GC also approved the Pathfinder lease agreement with Wyoming.



45 In land-related GC action, the GC approved proceeding with appraisals and negotiations on tract
46 1101, 1102, and a land trade at tract 2009008.

47

48 The GC meets next on September 13 & 14, 2011 in Scottsbluff, NE.

49

50 **Other Committee Coordination Information**

51 Farnsworth updated the LAC on recent TAC and WAC activities. The ED office and members
52 of the TAC had a three day workshop with the ISAC in July. During this workshop, the
53 participants went over the Elm Creek Flow-Sediment-Mechanical “proof-of-concept” experiment
54 in depth, including detailed discussion of modeling and monitoring to see how the system
55 responds to both natural and induced flow events. The TAC also met for a workshop on June 20
56 & 21 in Kearney to discuss how to address wet meadows and wet meadow hypotheses in the
57 Program. At this workshop, the group discussed forming a wet meadow “working group” which
58 will assess individual Program properties and decide if they will be treated as wet meadow. This
59 group will also assist with management plan development for these properties. The TAC met for
60 a regular meeting on August 10, where they discussed a few whooping crane related projects
61 including recommending GC support for a whooping crane habitat selection project to be
62 performed by a UNL Ph.D. student.

63

64 Farnsworth also gave a brief update on recent WAC activities. The WAC met last on July 19 in
65 Ogallala, NE. The WAC is currently devoting most of their attention to the J-2 reregulating
66 reservoir project and the groundwater recharge pilot project.

67

68 **Executive Session**

69 **LaBonde moved to go into executive session with LAC members, alternates, and technical
70 staff to review details of land offerings. The motion was seconded by Shadle. The motion
71 carried and the committee entered executive session at 9:17 a.m.**

72

73 **Heaston moved to come out of executive session. Rabbe seconded and the motion carried.
74 The committee came out of executive session at 10:32 a.m.**

75

76 **Discussion of Land Offerings at 0832, 0901, 1105, and 1107**

77 Discussion of details of these offerings was held in executive session.

78

79 **LaBonde moved to recommend that the GC continue to pursue acquisition of 0832 as
80 complex habitat. Motion seconded by Thorburn.** Rabbe added that more tree clearing and
81 wet meadow restoration should be added to the conceptual restoration section of the evaluation
82 report. Restoration efforts should focus on attempting to achieve habitat characteristics in table 1
83 for complex tracts. Brei asked if Rabbe had an idea how far beyond what is currently depicted in
84 the evaluation report. Rabbe indicated trees should be cleared at least half the distance back
85 from the channel to the road. Czaplewski said that the evaluation team discussed whether or not
86 to pursue a sublease or other acquisition before the current lease expires, and the team was not
87 opposed to waiting. Heaston said that subleasing may hurt the Program’s position if the actual
88 intent is to buy the parcel in 2 years.



89 **Motion passed unanimously.**

90

91 **Czaplewski moved to recommend that the GC commence appraisal and negotiations for**
92 **tract 0901 as complex habitat. Motion seconded by Peyton.** Rabbe again added that more
93 tree clearing and wet meadow restoration should be reflected in the tract evaluation report.

94 **Motion passed unanimously.**

95

96 **LaBonde moved to recommend that the GC discontinue pursuit of tract 1105. Motion**
97 **seconded by Czaplewski.** Heaston mentioned that NGPC might be interested in a purchase in
98 order to provide access to the adjacent landlocked NGPC parcel. Sackett and LaGrange can
99 coordinate with any details.

100 **Motion passed unanimously.**

101

102 **Czaplewski moved to recommend that the GC discontinue pursuit of tract 1107. Motion**
103 **seconded by Rabbe.** Thorburn said that the landowner should be informed of other
104 opportunities such as Ducks Unlimited, USFWS Partners for Fish & Wildlife program, NGPC
105 private lands program, etc. Sackett will inform the landowner.

106 **Motion passed unanimously.**

107

108 **Discuss 1020 Boundary Issue**

109 Details of the boundary dispute were discussed in executive session. **Heaston moved to**
110 **recommend to the GC that the EDO make one final offer with the current terms, otherwise**
111 **proceed with reestablishing the surveyed boundary. Motion seconded by Thorburn and**
112 **passed unanimously.**

113

114 **Land Shaping and Potential Sale of Material at East 2011001**

115 Details of the potential agreement involving creating off-channel sand and water habitat by
116 allowing through an aggregate miner were discussed in executive session. **Thorburn moved to**
117 **recommend that the GC approve the EDO to enter negotiations with the contractor for**
118 **habitat improvement and material removal at 2011001. Motion seconded by LaBonde and**
119 **passed unanimously.**

120

121 **Present Work in Progress**

122 Farnsworth updated the LAC on land management activities. The public access policy will be
123 going into effect for the upcoming hunting season on several Program properties. The Program
124 has an agreement with NGPC where they will implement the policy. They have hired a new
125 employee for this implementation (Ryan Chramosta). The Program has ordered a large number
126 of signs and is working on establishing parking areas on the properties where access will be
127 allowed. NGPC is using a website reservation system to allow access. The website will contain
128 a calendar of available access days where the user may reserve a day and property, then print out
129 a permit with instructions and maps of accessible areas and boundaries. The Program will make
130 a press release once the system is operational.

131



132 Farnsworth then discussed issues the Program is having in performing prescribed burns on
133 Program properties. Currently the amount of land in the area that needs burning exceeds the
134 capacity of local burn crews, especially in seasons with limited good weather days during the
135 burn window. The ED office is working on a number of solutions, both short term and longer
136 term. In the short term (possibly for spring 2012), the ED office is considering releasing an RFP
137 that would bring in a crew (likely from out of state) for three weeks and house them at the lodge
138 on tract 2009003. During these three weeks, the crew would burn all scheduled Program lands,
139 as allowed by weather conditions. There is risk associated with this method, as it is possible that
140 you may get no burn days in that three week window. The finance committee was informed of
141 this method and approved of the general concept. The ED office will continue to refine the
142 details of this RFP for future finance committee approval.

143
144 The ED office is also exploring longer term options for accomplishing burns with local stewards
145 such as the the Crane Trust.

146
147 Peyton asked if fall burns are being considered. Farnsworth said some fall burns will occur, and
148 it is more likely that the Program can work with local burn crews like CPNRD to accomplish fall
149 burns.

150
151 Farnsworth informed the LAC that several areas of Program tracts are scheduled to be planted
152 with grass, and asked the LAC for input on seed mixes. Options include local ecotype vs.
153 commercial, and whether to apply low, medium, or high diversity mixes. Local ecotype is
154 typically purchased from a local entity such as Prairie Plains Research Institute or The Nature
155 Conservancy, and applied via broadcast spreading. Commercial mixes can be applied via
156 broadcast or seed drill. Heaston said that given the goals and restrictions of the Program
157 (managing for target species), the Program should apply medium diversity mixes that can
158 succeed over a range of moisture conditions. The LAC did not provide any other guidance, and
159 Farnsworth said the ED office will select seed type on a tract by tract basis using their best
160 judgment based on the situation/application.

161
162 Farnsworth asked the LAC to form a working group to assist the ED office with management
163 plan creation for the latest Program acquisitions. This group will help with plan creation and the
164 first round of review and comment before plans are brought to the full LAC in draft form.
165 Members drafted include: Mark Czaplewski, Jim Jenniges, Ted LaGrange, Jonas Davis, Matt
166 Rabbe, and Mark Morten.

167
168 **Public Forum/Next Meeting**

169 Chairman Woodman asked for public comments, none were offered.

170
171 **The next meeting of the LAC will be held in Kearney, Nebraska at the Executive Director's**
172 **Office on Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. central time.**

173
174 **Closing Business**

175 With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Woodman at 11:37 a.m.