



PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
Land Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
November 28, 2011

Attendees (conference call)

Mark Czaplewski, Interim Chair, Local Nebraska Rep (Central Platte Natural Resources District)
 Bruce Sackett – ED Office
 Justin Brei – ED Office
 Jason Farnsworth – ED Office
 Tim Tunnell – ED Office
 Matt Rabbe – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 Brock Merrill – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
 Ted LaGrange – State of Nebraska, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
 Jennifer Schellpeper – State of Nebraska, Nebraska Dept. of Natural Resources
 Harry LaBonde – State of Wyoming, Wyoming State Engineer’s Office
 Suzanne Sellers – State of Colorado, Colorado Water Conservation Board
 John Shadle – Downstream Water Users, Nebraska Public Power District
 Jim Jenniges – Downstream Water Users, Nebraska Public Power District
 Kent Aden – Downstream Water Users, Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District
 Mark Peyton – Downstream Water Users, Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District
 Jonas Davis – Environmental Groups, Ducks Unlimited
 Bill Taddicken – Environmental Groups, Audubon Rowe Sanctuary
 John Heaston – Environmental Groups, The Nature Conservancy
 Jim Bendfeldt – Local Nebraska Rep (Joint CPNRD/TBNRD)
 John Thorburn – Local Nebraska Rep (Joint CPNRD/TBNRD)

Welcome and Administrative

Chairman Czaplewski called the meeting to order at 9:00 am Central Time and the group proceeded with introductions.

Czaplewski asked for agenda modifications. None were provided.

Shadle made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 26, 2011 LAC meeting, as modified. The motion was seconded by LaBonde and passed unanimously.

Review Budget and Recommend Approval to GC

Sackett, Merrill, and Farnsworth updated the LAC on the funding challenges the Program may face in 2012. Merrill said that currently, \$16 million is obligated to the Program. If the budget is approved as-is for 2012, available funding is not likely to be sufficient for 2013 as projected. Farnsworth said the big issues are not day to day operational expenses, but the large influx of cash necessary over a short period of time to fund the J-2 Reservoir project. The Governance



44 Committee and Finance Committee are working to find alternative ways to ensure all projects
45 can keep moving forward.

46
47 Sackett walked the LAC through the budget work plan presented in the meeting packet. The
48 work plan has a line-item summary of budgeted 2012 dollars, as well as a breakdown of specific
49 activities by complex.

50
51 Thorburn asked for more information about the LP-6 special advisors. Sackett said they are farm
52 management firms that take care of ag responsibilities such as FSA requirements, writing and
53 administering leases for both cropping and grazing, advising and administration for crop leases
54 and sharecrops, etc. They help ensure tenants are using appropriate chemicals, grazing rotations
55 and stocking rates, etc to keep land uses in line with Program objectives.

56
57 Shadle asked for more information on the plan for flow consolidation at Cottonwood Ranch.
58 Farnsworth said the plan for 2012 is to plug two channels that opened up during the high flows in
59 2011 with sand dams. One channel is west of CWR and diverts flow to the north channel; one
60 channel is an eroded plug that NPPD placed several years ago and is losing water to the south
61 channel. Another activity is to begin design and analysis of potential flow consolidation
62 scenarios for full implementation. Shadle said it seemed like a lot of excess study when the
63 necessary actions seem straight-forward. Farnsworth said most of the work results from the need
64 for a 404 permit, but it will also contribute to the adaptive management structure. By
65 implementing activities in this fashion at CWR, the overall benefits can be better assessed and
66 exported to other river locations where consolidation is not as straight-forward.

67
68 LaGrange asked for more information about the Fish & Wildlife Coordination task in each of the
69 complex breakdowns. Farnsworth said this item covers species surveys (Platte River caddisfly,
70 river otters, etc), and footprint consultations which are necessary for Program land management
71 plans and work projects.

72
73 Czaplewski asked for some acknowledgement in relation to LP-3 that prioritizes the acquisition
74 of non-complex wetlands lands. This doesn't affect budget numbers, but the need should be
75 documented. Farnsworth said the ED office will add a summary sheet that will detail 2012
76 priorities on these line items. Heaston said it may be useful to form an ad hoc group to examine
77 the Program's progress on land objectives more closely and look at priorities moving forward.
78 Czaplewski asked that this discussion be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

79
80 Shadle asked for an update on sediment augmentation. Farnsworth said it is still held up in
81 permitting. The permit has been submitted and been through a couple comment periods. A
82 request for public hearing was received by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Program is
83 currently awaiting a Corps decision on whether or not a public hearing is required, and
84 subsequently the final decision on the permit. If the permit is approved this winter, trial scale
85 sediment augmentation activities will begin in the spring. The trial scale activities include
86 50,000 tons of sand to be pushed into the river at Cottonwood Ranch and 50,000 tons to be
87 pumped into the river at Program property 2009003 near Overton, NE.



88
89 **Heaston moved to recommend that the GC approve the 2012 land budget and work plans**
90 **as presented. LaBonde seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

91
92 **1111 Land Exchange**

93 Sackett presented a summary of the land exchanges that have occurred in the past at 2009003.
94 Previous land exchanges have resulted in a leftover parcel of land, approximately 0.9 acres, that
95 this exchange will tie up. The land that this exchange covers is not irrigated, and there are
96 currently no fences. Once the exchange is completed, fences will be installed on the final
97 boundary.

98
99 **Thorburn moved to recommend GC approval of the land exchange at 1111/2009003.**
100 **Motion seconded by Heaston and passed unanimously.**

101
102 **Review Committee Work on 2009008 Disposition**

103 Heaston presented a document and gave an overview of the discussions of the ad hoc committee.
104 The committee separated the excess property at 2009008 into three parcels. Parcel A is the
105 irrigated half-pivot cropland with riparian woodland adjacent to the north channel, encompassing
106 approximately 286 acres. Parcel B is a 26 acre tract in the southeast corner of the property,
107 separated as potential sale/trade land for an easement access through the southern neighbor's
108 property. Parcel C is approximately 12 acres of riparian woodland and river channel that borders
109 Nebraska Game & Parks Commission's Bassway Strip WMA.

110
111 On Parcel A, the committee discussed the certified irrigated acres and felt that the water should
112 be removed from the property before the Program sells it, whether this occurs by sale to the
113 CPNRD water bank or another method.

114
115 On Parcel B, the committee recommends that the Program seek an easement for access from the
116 south so approximately 1 mile of trespass easement across retained Program property would not
117 be required. If an agreement for access from the south does not seem feasible, Parcel B would be
118 combined with Parcel A.

119
120 Heaston said the ad hoc committee and the LAC still need to discuss the logistics of the sale,
121 such as offering it through open auction, preferred conservation buyer, etc. Given the location
122 adjacent to the NGPC Bassway Strip WMA, NGPC may be interested in purchasing the
123 property. Heaston asked LaGrange if NGPC would have an interest in this property. LaGrange
124 said NGPC always prioritizes looking at parcels adjacent to existing WMAs. Heaston said the ad
125 hoc committee discussed offering NGPC an opportunity to purchase the land, but give a deadline
126 for the process to be completed so the land is not held indefinitely – possibly three years.
127 LaGrange said that sounds reasonable and a deadline may serve to keep the process moving.

128
129 Heaston said the ad hoc committee will reassemble before the next meeting and form a
130 recommendation for the LAC to address in February.

**Review Prescribed Fire Plan**

Tunnell provided the LAC a copy of a request for proposals that will be released in early 2012 to acquire services for spring burning. Tunnell has tracked down several regional and national contractors to assess interest and received responses from about 10 contractors. Czaplewski asked if there was any way to build more flexibility into the time window for the burn as presented in the RFP. Farnsworth said some language can be inserted that asks if the contractor can be flexible or not, and that can be considered to separate proposals that are otherwise ranked closely. Heaston asked if the TAC has looked at the goals that the Program is looking to achieve by burning. Farnsworth said the TAC's main objective is to provide short-stature vegetation for whooping cranes during the spring and fall migration periods. Tunnell said that the time window is more fixed for the RFP since it's likely they will be travelling from a great distance. Local crews can allow for greater flexibility and experimentation with timing, but so far the availability has been very limited.

Election of Officers

Peyton moved to appoint Mark Czaplewski as LAC Chairman for 2012. Heaston seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Aden moved to appoint John Shadle as LAC Vice-chairman for 2012. LaBonde seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum/Next Meeting

Chairman Czaplewski asked for public comments, none were offered.

The next meeting of the LAC will be held Wednesday, February 1, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. central time.

Closing Business

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Czaplewski at 10:45 a.m.