



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

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7                   **Attendees**

- 8                   Mark Czaplewski, Interim Chair, Local Nebraska Rep (Central Platte Natural Resources District)  
9                   Jerry Kenny – Executive Director  
10                  Bruce Sackett – ED Office  
11                  Justin Brei – ED Office  
12                  Jason Farnsworth – ED Office  
13                  Tim Tunnell – ED Office  
14                  Matt Rabbe – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
15                  Ted LaGrange – State of Nebraska, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission  
16                  Jennifer Schellpeper – State of Nebraska, Nebraska Dept. of Natural Resources  
17                  Harry LaBonde – State of Wyoming, Wyoming State Engineer’s Office  
18                  John Shadle – Downstream Water Users, Nebraska Public Power District  
19                  Jim Jenniges – Downstream Water Users, Nebraska Public Power District  
20                  Brock Merrill – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (by phone)  
21                  Kevin Urie – State of Colorado, Denver Water (by phone)  
22                  Suzanne Sellers – State of Colorado, Colorado Water Conservation Board (by phone)  
23                  Jonas Davis – Environmental Groups, Ducks Unlimited (by phone)  
24                  Bill Taddicken – Environmental Groups, Audubon Rowe Sanctuary  
25                  John Heaston – Environmental Groups, The Nature Conservancy  
26                  Jim Bendfeldt – Local Nebraska Rep (Joint CPNRD/TBNRD)  
27                  David Raffety – Local Nebraska Rep (Tri-Basin Natural Resources District)

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30                  **Welcome and Administrative**

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

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34                  Czaplewski asked for agenda modifications. None were provided.

35  
36                  Czaplewski requested a moment of silence in recognition of the passing of the Land Advisory  
37                  Committee’s former chairman, Scott Woodman.

38  
39                  **LaBonde made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 26, 2011 LAC meeting, as**  
40                  **modified. The motion was seconded by Rabbe and passed unanimously.**

41  
42                  **GC Meeting Update**

43                  Czaplewski updated the LAC on recent GC activity. The GC met on September 13 & 14 in  
44                  Scottsbluff, NE and held a conference call on October 18. The GC had much discussion related



45 to the Platte River caddisfly with respect to the Program. The GC asked the ED Office to  
46 prepare a proposal by June 2012 to ask the ISAC for recommendations on dealing with the PRCF  
47 in the Program. The ED Office will consider planned tree clearing projects in PRCF areas low in  
48 priority for the time being. The GC discussed progress on the proposed reregulating reservoir  
49 near J-2 Return on the Platte River east of Lexington, NE and formed a committee to begin  
50 negotiating the agreement among the partners of the project.

51  
52 In land-related GC action, the GC approved proceeding with appraisals and negotiations on tract  
53 0832 and 0901. The GC accepted the LAC's recommendation to cease pursuit of tracts 1105 and  
54 1107. The GC approved providing a 14-day offer to a neighbor of tract 2009008 to resolve a  
55 boundary dispute and instructed the ED Office to construct a fence on the survey boundary if an  
56 agreement is not reached. The GC approved an excavation project on tract 2011001 where a  
57 contractor will remove fill material from the area and create off-channel tern and plover nesting  
58 habitat in exchange for the material.

59  
60 LaGrange asked for further clarification on the discussion of Platte River caddisfly. Farnsworth  
61 said there are currently two known PRCF populations on Program lands that could be impacted  
62 by tree clearing. Those projects are still planned, but will be considered a low priority for  
63 execution until further information or instruction is available.

64  
65 The GC meets next on December 6 & 7, 2011 in Denver, CO, and will hold a conference call on  
66 November 18 to discuss the draft 2012 budget.

67  
68 **Other Committee Coordination Information**

69 Farnsworth updated the LAC on recent TAC activities. The TAC last met on October 5 & 6.  
70 The TAC elected to have the recent directed vegetation research project peer-reviewed, and  
71 recommended a 3-person peer review panel to the GC. Contractors working on the sediment  
72 augmentation feasibility and pilot project presented an update to the TAC. The project will not  
73 augment enough sediment for full reversal of the degradation, but the monitoring efforts should  
74 show a slowing of the effects. The TAC also had a presentation by a contractor who is  
75 assembling a comprehensive database of whooping crane sightings from approximately 1940 to  
76 date. The TAC approved a request for proposals for implementation of the geomorphology and  
77 in-channel vegetation monitoring protocol. The current three-year contract expires this year.  
78 The TAC (and subsequently the GC) approved continued participation in the whooping crane  
79 telemetry project, and reviewed the TAC portion of the draft 2012 Program budget.

80  
81 Kenny updated the LAC on recent WAC activities. The WAC met last on October 25 in Casper,  
82 WY. The WAC is continuing to refine optimization of J-2 reregulating reservoir operations, and  
83 discussed the agreement progress with Nebraska DNR, CNPPID, and PRRIP. The project has a  
84 potential yield of about 40,000 acre-feet, of which 30,000 AF is for Program use and 10,000 AF  
85 is for use by Nebraska DNR. The Program has a groundwater recharge demonstration project  
86 under way. A small 0.5-acre recharge pit was constructed and is being operated and intensely  
87 monitored through spring 2012. The WAC has reconvened a subgroup working on water  
88 management incentives to start moving that alternative forward. The WAC discussed the North



89 Platte chokepoint where, despite significant efforts to date including vegetation spraying and  
90 biomass removal, flow capacity has not improved. The next step is to examine a few potentially  
91 under-sized culverts in a side-channel around the chokepoint.  
92

93 Czaplewski noted that, as vice-chair, he assumed the role of interim chairman for this meeting  
94 and that regular elections for the positions in 2012 will be held in December. If you're interested  
95 in either position, contact Bruce Sackett.  
96

97 Heaston said that the environmental groups are reorganizing their committee roles and he will  
98 likely be transitioning from the LAC to the WAC. As a result he may no longer be able to serve  
99 as the GC-LAC liaison, and the LAC will need to recommend a replacement at the December  
100 meeting.  
101

102 **Executive Session**

103 **Shadle moved to go into executive session with LAC members, alternates, and technical**  
104 **staff to review details of land offerings. The motion was seconded by LaGrange. The**  
105 **motion carried and the committee entered executive session at 9:34 a.m.**  
106

107 **Heaston moved to come out of executive session. LaBonde seconded and the motion**  
108 **carried. The committee came out of executive session at 10:40 a.m.**  
109

110 Czaplewski suggested that a small group be formed to recommend a plan for disposition of the  
111 east part of tract 2009008. John Heaston will chair the group, and the members are: Rabbe,  
112 Czaplewski, Jenniges, Bendfeldt, Taddicken. The group will consider what portion of the tract  
113 to keep and what to do with any excess portion, including irrigated acres. Kenny and Heaston  
114 will coordinate with the WAC on recommendations for retiring irrigated acres.  
115

116 **Revisit 2011001 East Portion**

117 Sackett said that when 2011001 was purchased, the GC directed the USFWS and the LAC to  
118 form a recommendation on what should be done with the portion of tract 2011001 east of the  
119 highway. USFWS has provided a letter recommendation to the LAC, recommending that part of  
120 the tract be retained as non-complex off-channel nesting habitat (Tract A, 62 acres approx.), and  
121 that part of the tract be considered excess (Tract B, 48 acres approx.).  
122

123 The LAC had some discussion of whether or not to sell Tract B with a no-build easement.  
124 Sackett said with the tract's location and current market conditions, a no-build easement is not  
125 likely to significantly affect the value. The LAC discussed whether or not a no-build easement  
126 would have to be "counted" towards Program goals. LaBonde would argue that a no-build  
127 easement is not the same as a management easement and should not count towards Program  
128 goals. Heaston said that, if counting is an issue for the Governance Committee, the easement  
129 rights could be donated to another entity – such as The Nature Conservancy – who could then be  
130 the holder of the no-build easement after the property is sold.  
131



132 **Rabbe moved to recommend that the GC consider Tract B as excess acres and begin the**  
133 **process of sale with a no-build easement, including the possibility of donation of said**  
134 **easement to another environmental entity, and to recommend that the Program retain**  
135 **Tract A as non-complex land. Motion seconded by Taddicken. Heaston abstained. Motion**  
136 **passed.**

137  
138 **Discuss 1109 Land Review**

139 Details of the land evaluation were discussed in executive session. **Shadle moved to accept the**  
140 **evaluation team recommendation and recommend that the GC continue pursuit of tract**  
141 **1109 as complex habitat. Motion seconded by Urie and passed unanimously.**  
142

143 **Public Access Program Update**

144 Brei introduced Ryan Chramosta with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Ryan is  
145 administering the Program’s public access policy for NGPC, including visiting the properties  
146 frequently and ensuring user compliance with the access policy. Ryan updated the LAC on  
147 what’s happened so far and the plans for the future. Properties that are in the public access  
148 program have been posted with a number of signs and parking areas have been constructed. The  
149 website has been created and is being fine-tuned. A small test was run prior to October 1 where  
150 several people were asked to reserve sites and provide feedback. Currently all sites are closed  
151 from October 1 through November 15 for whooping crane migration. Chramosta also discussed  
152 the process for the November firearm deer season on Program property, from November 16  
153 through November 20. Applications are being accepted for a lottery drawing through October  
154 31. Names will be randomly drawn from valid applications to fill available permission slots. As  
155 of the LAC meeting, 55 applications have been received. A press release for this lottery drawing  
156 was issued statewide, so many more are expected. Chramosta gave some general information on  
157 how the public contacts have gone so far. He said often he relays the allowed activities (deer  
158 hunting, turkey hunting, bird watching, fishing, hiking, mushroom hunting), answering questions  
159 on why certain activities are or are not allowed, and giving other general access program  
160 information. The website where sites can be reserved and permission slips obtained is  
161 <http://www.platteaccess.org>. The site is currently down for maintenance during the whooping  
162 crane migration and should be available in mid-November to make reservations for dates after  
163 November 20. LaGrange asked if requests have been received for activities other than hunting.  
164 Chramosta said most requests are for hunting.

165  
166 LaBonde requested that Chramosta come to the LAC in February after the hunting seasons and  
167 update the LAC again on the experience.  
168

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

170 Sackett and Brei updated the LAC on work in progress at 2011001. Hooker Brothers of Grand  
171 Island, NE is removing the top three feet of soil to use as fill for some of their projects. In  
172 exchange for the fill, Hooker Brothers is excavating an additional five feet in a “moat”  
173 configuration and placing the excavated sand in the center to form off-channel nesting habitat for  
174 terns and plovers for no cost.  
175



176 **Present Work in Progress**

177 Tunnell updated the LAC on recent activities on Program lands. The update was accompanied  
178 by several pictures of work being discussed.

179

180 **Present 2012 Proposed Budget in Progress**

181 Sackett and Farnsworth updated the LAC on land-related line items for the 2012 Program  
182 budget, and the schedule for approval. The FC go through the budget on November 9, and the  
183 GC will then go through the budget on November 18. Any changes will be incorporated prior to  
184 final GC approval in December.

185

186 Farnsworth walked the LAC through the line items related to land activities.

187 LP-2: AMP-related on the ground actions

188 LP-3: Land acquisition

189 LP-4: Operations and maintenance activities (fence, noxious weeds, etc)

190 LP-6: Special advisors (mostly ag-related)

191 LP-7: Platte River Recreation Access Program (public access to Program lands)

192 PD-13: Sediment augmentation activities including construction, monitoring, & consulting fees

193 PD-15: Permitting

194 PD-19: Flow consolidation at Cottonwood Ranch (partial implementation in 2012)

195 PD-20: 2009001 wet meadow restoration

196 IMRP-4, 5: Flow-Sediment-Mechanical “proof of concept” experiment. Construction activities  
197 and intensive monitoring efforts

198

199 LaBonde asked for further information on the special advisors line item (LP-6). Sackett said this  
200 is primarily agricultural land management consultants for cropped and grazed areas. These  
201 consultants take care of leases (crop and grazing), sharecropping agreements, coordinate with  
202 tenants on appropriate practices (ie. no residuals for properties slated for grassland restoration),  
203 coordinate with grazing tenants to move cattle according to Program goals, etc. LaBonde asked  
204 if this line item will go away when the Program sells or converts the cropland areas. Sackett said  
205 the line item will likely decrease, but there will always be some cost associated with  
206 management of grazing operations. Kenny said that the number in the current 2012 budget draft  
207 will be adjusted based on actual 2011 expenditures.

208

209 Farnsworth said that a more detailed budget and work plan will be developed for the LAC’s next  
210 meeting.

211

212 **Public Forum/Next Meeting**

213 Chairman Czaplewski asked for public comments, none were offered.

214

215 **The next meeting of the LAC will be held via conference call on Monday, November 28,**  
216 **2011 at 9:00 a.m. central time.**

217

218 **Closing Business**

219 With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Czaplewski at 12:30 p.m.