



**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**  
**Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
C'Mon Inn – Casper, WY  
October 25, 2011

**Meeting Attendees**

**Water Advisory Committee (WAC)**

**State of Wyoming**

Mike Besson – Member

Matt Hoobler – Alternate

**State of Colorado**

Suzanne Sellers - Member

**State of Nebraska**

Pat Goldt – Alternate

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)**

Tom Econopouly – Member

Jeff Runge – Alternate

**Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)**

Mahonri Williams – Member

Brock Merrill – Alternate

**Downstream Water Users**

Cory Steinke – Member (WAC Chair)

Duane Woodward – Member

Jeff Shafer – Member

Mike Drain – Alternate

**Colorado Water Users**

Jon Altenhofen – Member

**Environmental Groups**

Duane Hovorka – Alternate

Larry Hutchinson – Alternate

**Executive Director's Office (EDO)**

Jerry Kenny, Executive Director (ED)

Beorn Courtney

Steve Smith

Sira Sartori

Matthew Welsh

Bruce Sackett (call-in)



48 **Welcome and Administrative:** *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*

49 Introductions were made. There were no agenda modifications. Sartori stated that all requested  
50 changes to the Draft July WAC Minutes were incorporated into the current version. Altenhofen  
51 requested a grammatical revision to lines 74 and 75. **The July WAC Minutes were approved**  
52 **with modifications discussed during the meeting.**

53  
54 **Hydrologic Conditions Data:** *Sira Sartori, ED Office*

55 Sartori explained the Draft Hydrologic Condition Designation Memorandum that was distributed  
56 to the WAC by the ED Office prior to the meeting. The ED Office has compiled annual and  
57 periodic hydrologic designations that are used to determine Service target flows. Periodic  
58 designations are at monthly to tri-monthly time-steps. Sartori explained the methodology that  
59 was used by the Service to develop the annual designations from 1947 to 1994 data. Since 1994  
60 the hydrologic condition has been based on designated flow thresholds for the applicable period.  
61 Periodic designations from June 2007 through present are available on the PRRIP website under  
62 “Hydrologic Conditions.” Don Anderson, formerly with the Service, calculated the periodic  
63 designations from 1994 to 2009, and the ED Office has calculated the periodic designations since  
64 December 2009. Altenhofen requested that the ED Office post the Memorandum on the PRRIP  
65 website.

66  
67 Woodward stated that CPNRD requested this information from the ED Office. Courtney added  
68 that several other Program partners have also requested the historical monthly designations and  
69 explained that monthly information is not available before 1995. Econopouly asked whether the  
70 ED Office could compare Anderson’s pre-2006 monthly designations to the designations that  
71 would be calculated using the current methodology. Sartori was unsure whether the necessary  
72 data would be available. Econopouly requested that the ED Office attach Anderson’s 2006  
73 Journal of American Water Resources Association (JAWRA) article explaining the periodic  
74 hydrologic condition designation approach as an appendix to the Memorandum. Steinke asked  
75 about the current “normal” designations given the relatively wet conditions. Sartori explained  
76 that there are only “dry” and “not dry” designations for some periods; in these instances the ED  
77 Office labels “not dry” as “normal” as was done by Anderson. **The ED Office will update the**  
78 **Hydrologic Condition Memorandum and post it to the PRRIP website on the hydrologic**  
79 **conditions page.**

80  
81 **WAP Project Updates:** *Beorn Courtney, ED Office*

82 Courtney thanked Besson and Hoobler on behalf of the WAC for yesterday’s tour of Pathfinder  
83 Reservoir.

84  
85 ***J2 Reregulating Reservoir*** – The Program and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources  
86 (NDNR) are continuing to negotiate a three-party sponsorship agreement with the CNPPID.  
87 Courtney explained that Olsson and the ED Office have been evaluating CNPPID’s request to  
88 use the J2 Reregulating Reservoir during the irrigation season to improve system efficiency. The  
89 recommended alternative for meeting CNPPID’s request is to dedicate Area 2 of the  
90 Reregulating Reservoir to irrigation operations from June 15 to August 31. If Area 2 is



91 unavailable to the Program during that period, Olsson’s model shows the average yield will be  
92 reduced by approximately 6%. The costs associated with this alternative are relatively small as  
93 compared to the other alternatives presented by Olsson. The J2 Reregulating Reservoir project  
94 will continue into the feasibility design stage with short duration high flows (SDHFs), target  
95 flows, hydrocycling mitigation, and irrigation season uses by CNPPID. The yields from a total  
96 of nine scenarios have been compared to the baseline yield, evaluated at an hourly time-step with  
97 Olsson’s model. Courtney stated that the hourly analyses are maximizing the capabilities of the  
98 current models. Olsson is evaluating incremental costs related to the expansion of the J2  
99 Reregulating Reservoir.

100  
101 The next step of the project is a feasibility level design and opinion of probable costs, anticipated  
102 to be complete in early 2012. CNPPID and the ED Office have started working on the water  
103 supply permitting process. Altenhofen asked about the capacity of the pumping plant. Steinke  
104 reported that the capacity would be 300 cfs. Several scenarios are still being considered and the  
105 ED Office will be following up with Olsson and the workgroup in the coming week.

106  
107 **Ground Water Recharge** – Courtney reported that Bill Hahn, special advisor to the ED Office,  
108 has completed the numerical modeling for the project. The excavation of the recharge basin was  
109 completed in late September. Recharge operations commenced on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. CNPPID and  
110 EA Engineering, Science, and Technology (EA) are collecting the monitoring data. The  
111 preliminary data suggests that the infiltration rate of the recharge basin is approximately one-half  
112 of what was predicted, while the infiltration rate of the Phelps canal is approximately double  
113 what was predicted. The meter on the line to the recharge basin will be replaced since the  
114 pumping rate is at the low end of the operating range for the meter currently installed. Courtney  
115 discussed the status of the proposed Data Evaluation Plan. EA will complete the Data  
116 Evaluation Plan with preliminary check point submittals. The workgroup has a field visit to the  
117 project site scheduled for November 8<sup>th</sup>. Steinke has agreed to provide intermittent preliminary  
118 field data to the workgroup as often as possible. Altenhofen asked about the details of field work  
119 to date. Steinke elaborated on the observed problems with the propeller meter that is being used  
120 to measure flows to the recharge basin and explained that the new meter will be installed soon.  
121 Steinke reported that the infiltration rate in the canal is approximately 5 cfs per mile. There is  
122 approximately 40 to 50 cfs being diverted to the Phelps canal, as measured with the Parshall  
123 flume. The water level in the canal is approximately 0.5 feet below the top of the canal to  
124 provide a buffer for precipitation events.

125  
126 **Water Leasing & Water Management Incentives (WMI)** – The Water Leasing and Water  
127 Management Incentives workgroups had a combined conference call on October 3, 2011. The  
128 purpose of the call was to discuss the general status of these two Water Action Plan projects, to  
129 receive input from workgroup members on future activities, and to discuss methodologies to  
130 evaluate yield from potential projects. Two landowners with property located in NPPD’s system  
131 are interested in leasing water to the Program. The water right is under NPPD, and therefore  
132 NPPD would need to submit a temporary transfer for the relinquished acres to an instream use  
133 for the PRRIP. Woodward has been assisting with the analysis of these potential lease



134 agreements because the parcels will subsequently be irrigated with groundwater. The  
135 workgroups agreed that it will be beneficial for the ED Office to continue working through the  
136 water leasing process for these projects. The workgroups discussed opportunities to collaborate  
137 with Platte Basin Habitat Enhancement Project (PBHEP). Kenny stated that the ED Office has a  
138 meeting with PBHEP scheduled in January 2012. Woodward suggested that Kenny speak with  
139 Mark Czaplewski at CPNRD about PBHEP collaboration. Kenny stated that PBHEP  
140 collaborates with NRCS programs that provide incentives and funding to farmers for removing  
141 lands from irrigation or crop production on a temporary or permanent basis. Most Federal  
142 programs usually have a 10 to 15 year agreement, while PBHEP allows for more permanent  
143 agreements. Kenny stated that most PBHEP agreements have been tied to acreage and that water  
144 yields still need to be quantified. Altenhofen asked whether the NPPD water could be stored in  
145 the Environmental Account in Lake McConaughy. Shafer stated that the surface water available  
146 for lease is a natural flow right and could not be stored in Lake McConaughy.

147  
148 Altenhofen asked if CPNRD would evaluate the effects of increased groundwater pumping  
149 associated with the irrigation of the lands formerly irrigated with NPPD surface supplies.  
150 Woodward responded that wells have existed on these lands for a number of years. Since  
151 groundwater use will increase, they will use COHYST to evaluate the stream depletion  
152 associated with historical and future conditions.

153  
154 **WAP Projects & Lake McConaughy Storage:** *Beorn Courtney, ED Office and Mike Drain,*  
155 *CNPPID*

156 Drain described the types of permits that CNPPID has for the Environmental Account and other  
157 storage rights in Lake McConaughy. He also explained that in Nebraska you need an additional  
158 permit to actually use the stored water. The Environmental Account is a storage use permit.  
159 There is not a separate storage permit for the Environmental Account, as all of CNPPID’s  
160 storage rights are pooled together. NPPD has a storage appropriation that allows water to be  
161 exchanged from Sutherland Reservoir to Lake McConaughy. CNPPID had to modify their  
162 storage use permit to allow use for fish and wildlife and instream flows. The volume of  
163 Environmental Account storage in Lake McConaughy is calculated as 10% of the storable  
164 natural inflows with 100,000 ac-ft and 200,000 ac-ft caps. Drain added that the Program  
165 Agreement also has language regarding the storage of water from Tamarack, Net Controllable  
166 Conserved Water (NCCW), and Wyoming projects. For example, water from the Pathfinder  
167 Reservoir will be released and stored in Lake McConaughy. When Lake McConaughy is  
168 spilling, the Environmental Account resets to 100,000 ac-ft. Drain reported that NCCW has  
169 been stored in the Environmental Account for seven years. Drain indicated that there are legal  
170 questions with regard to whether NPPD’s water can be transferred to CNPPID’s Environmental  
171 Account. All water stored in the Environmental Account is lumped together regardless of the  
172 source, as it would have been difficult to fairly account for which water was spilled when the  
173 account resets to 100,000 ac-ft after spilling.

174  
175  
176



177 **Choke Point:** *Steve Smith, ED Office*

178 Smith gave an update on the analyses of the North Platte choke point and Kearney area flow  
179 capacity. Flow capacity is important because it may limit SDHF releases from the  
180 Environmental Account in Lake McConaughy. Smith indicated that the goal is to have a SDHF  
181 release in 2013. Smith reviewed the ranked alternatives that were presented at the July WAC  
182 meeting. As requested at the July WAC meeting, Smith completed sensitivity testing with the  
183 sediment transport model. Smith summarized the recent shifts to the stage-discharge curve for  
184 the North Platte River at North Platte gage and stated that the NDNR plans to revise the official  
185 rating table in November. The shifts suggest that capacity at the flood stage of 6.00 feet  
186 increased during high flows of summer 2011. The maximum flood stage capacity was  
187 approximately 2,300 cfs and the current capacity is approximately 1,800 cfs. Drain noted that  
188 the increased capacity may have been a short-term phenomenon and may not exist after flows  
189 decrease and the stream bed aggrades.

190  
191 The Program document states that releases, whether for SDHF or to reduce shortages to target  
192 flows, cannot cause river flows to exceed the flood stage. The Army Corps of Engineers has  
193 been documenting flood levels in North Platte, and Smith will compare their observations to the  
194 6.00 feet flood stage that was defined by the National Weather Service. This will shed light on  
195 who gets wet at what flows, and help to pinpoint problem areas. Drain stated that Nebraska law  
196 requires reservoir owners to pay for damages caused by flooding. Therefore, releases from the  
197 Environmental Account that have the potential to increase flows above the flood stage are  
198 concerning for CNPPID. Sellers suggested that flood leases be considered for lands that would  
199 potentially be flooded by Program reservoir releases.

200  
201 Smith reported on the results of the sensitivity analysis of the sediment transport model.  
202 Sensitivity test results indicate that aggradation/degradation is consistently sensitive to sediment  
203 inputs, but that results vary with hydrologic inputs (i.e., less aggradation in some areas but more  
204 aggradation in other areas). Additionally, differences between sensitivity runs seem to  
205 equilibrate near the Highway 83 Bridge, suggesting that the system is in sediment equilibrium.  
206 This indicates that sediment management would not necessarily lead to an increased capacity at  
207 the choke point. It was speculated that the proliferation of Phragmites in the 1990s may have  
208 trapped the sediment. Steinke reported that the maximum flow through North Platte in 2011 was  
209 5,700 cfs.

210  
211 Smith outlined potential structural and institutional solutions to the choke point. Structural  
212 options include drainage improvements and levee construction. One drainage improvement  
213 involves increasing the capacity of culverts along North River Road west of Highway 83 to  
214 convey ponded water that gets trapped behind driveways to private properties in the area. These  
215 new culverts could potentially restore a historic flow path along the north bank of the river, and  
216 increase capacity at flood stage. The flows would be routed to the east under Highway 83 and to  
217 an existing ditch that runs west to east along Hall School Road toward Whitehorse Creek.  
218 Lincoln County Roads has discussed this option with landowners who are agreeable to such a  
219 project. But Lincoln County Roads does not have funding for these types of projects, and the



220 federal government will not provide assistance because they are county roads. Smith estimated  
221 that the improvements would cost approximately \$1,500 per culvert site, and assuming  
222 approximately 10 driveways, the total cost would be less than \$20,000. If pursued in greater  
223 detail, then Smith suggested that a local engineering firm be hired to evaluate potential sites and  
224 complete preliminary design during 2012. The landowners may be willing to cooperate and  
225 potentially share the cost given the recent flooding problems on their property. Kenny stated that  
226 capacity increases associated with Phragmites removal has largely been maximized.

227  
228 Besson asked whether this would subsequently flood downstream landowners. Kenny stated that  
229 there is a large undeveloped wet-meadow area downstream. Runge pointed out that a 404 permit  
230 may be needed for this type of project, and if there are enough sites then an individual permit  
231 may be required.

232  
233 Smith presented earthen levees as another potential structural solution. Given that part of the  
234 flooding issues in this area are a result of ground water, the overall effectiveness of levees may  
235 be limited.

236  
237 Institutional solutions include developing flood easements, modifying the Program document to  
238 allow flows to go past initial flood stage to moderate or major flood stage; or modifying the  
239 National Weather Service flood stage. Smith recommended pursuing drainage improvements  
240 and modifications to the NWS flood stage. Smith will follow up with the Lincoln County Roads  
241 Department about the feasibility of the drainage improvements.

242  
243 The flood stage at the Kearney gage is also 6.00 feet. Flows have exceeded flood stage in 2008,  
244 2010, and 2011. Smith indicated that local officials view 6.00 feet as overly conservative and  
245 they do not get concerned with river levels until the stage exceeds 7.00 feet. The last event with  
246 a stage in excess of 7.00 feet was in 2008. Even during 2008 high flows above 7.0 feet, there  
247 were only minimal effects (access limited to some properties) that property owners were not  
248 overly concerned about. The USGS doesn't plan to update the Kearney rating curve because  
249 they do not think there is a trend in the data. Smith will follow up with the USGS on the shift  
250 trends he is seeing, and get the USGS' interpretation of the trend.

251  
252 Runge asked about the level of interest by Program participants to consider the acceptable level  
253 of risk associated with EA releases for SDHFs. Given the five day travel time to Kearney, there  
254 is potential for other operations or runoff events that could add to a Program release enough to  
255 increase flow above flood stage at Kearney. Runge noted the long-term decline in flood channel  
256 capacity at flood stage near Kearney. The channel capacity at flood stage was at 12,340 cfs in  
257 1984, and there was a steady decline in capacity to 5,900-7,090 cfs in 2010. Runge also stated  
258 that, since the decline in channel capacity is long-term, the observed short-term improvements  
259 may be temporary similar to what was observed at the North Platte gage. Runge asked Smith to  
260 continue monitoring trends in gage shifts at Kearney. Runge asked how much of the change in  
261 capacity is related to sediment transport versus Phragmites removal through flows and weed



262 removal. Kenny agreed that we should continue monitoring gage shifts. Goltl suggested that  
263 Smith also look at 2009 and 2010 seasonal shifts at Kearney.

264  
265 Kenny pointed out that the North Platte choke point has been the focus on ED Office's efforts  
266 since it is more restrictive than Kearney. The ED Office will continue to monitor other choke  
267 points, but will focus on the bigger issues.

268

269 **Study of the Platte River Appropriation Status:** *Duane Woodward, CPNRD*

270 Woodward presented on CPNRD and NDNR's investigation of the approach for fully  
271 appropriated (FA) and over appropriated (OA) designations. This presentation was postponed  
272 during the July 2011 WAC meeting due to time constraints.

273

274 Legislature Bill 962 that was passed in 2004 requires that appropriation statuses must be  
275 evaluated annually before January 1<sup>st</sup>. If FA status is determined then an Integrated Management  
276 Plan (IMP) must be completed within 3-5 years. CPNRD started working on the IMP in 2009  
277 and needs to quantify the difference between FA and OA as required by LB 962. The existing  
278 methodology does not determine the OA-FA difference, so CPNRD and NDNR have led the  
279 effort to develop a standardized methodology. Their approach was to research what is being  
280 implemented elsewhere in the western U.S., identify the desired elements of the method, and  
281 develop a system for testing the method.

282

283 The proposed method involves creating a virgin flow hydrograph that is meant to reflect the  
284 water supply without any diversions. Virgin flow is calculated by adding surface water  
285 consumptive uses and ground water depletions to gaged streamflow data. The virgin flow  
286 records are then used to create flow duration curves. All surface water and ground water  
287 demands, including instream flows, are then compiled into a demand hydrograph and demand  
288 flow duration curve. The demand curve is then compared to the virgin flow curve to evaluate the  
289 percentage of time that the virgin flow exceeds the demands. If demands are less than the  
290 supply, then the system is not fully appropriated. If demands exceed supply then the system may  
291 be fully or over appropriated and additional analyses are required.

292

293 The interim report will be available for review and comment soon. Woodward expects the report  
294 to be posted on the NDNR website. Once approved, the rulemaking process will begin.

295

296 Hutchinson asked whether there would be a peer review on the report being completed by HDR  
297 and Flatwater. Woodward responded no, but public comment will allow for review during  
298 rulemaking. Hovorka asked whether there would be a specific exceedance value that represented  
299 OA and FA. Woodward explained that Texas uses a 75/75 exceedance rule (i.e., 75% of the  
300 demands would be met 75% of the time) to define fully appropriated (total demands versus  
301 virgin supply). Woodward's presentation is available on the NDNR website.

302

303 **2012 Draft Water Plan Budget:** *Jerry Kenny and Beorn Courtney, ED Office*



304 Kenny reviewed the budget work plans that were distributed to the WAC prior to the meeting.  
305 Some of the work plans have subsequently been updated since being distributed. **The ED Office**  
306 **will distribute the updated budget to the WAC.** The 2012 budget will need to be approved at  
307 the December Governance Committee (GC) meeting. There will be a preliminary GC meeting  
308 on November 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be a Finance Committee session on the 2012 budget prior to the  
309 November meeting. **Kenny requested input from the WAC prior to the Finance Committee**  
310 **meeting.** Kenny summarized each of the Water Plan (WP) Implementation line items in the  
311 2012 budget.

312  
313 **WP-1:** This task relates to active channel capacity improvements and has two sub-tasks.  
314 WP-1(a): This sub-task pertains to the North Platte choke point. As evidenced earlier during the  
315 meeting, future investigations are needed to evaluate opportunities to increase channel capacity  
316 through North Platte and other choke points. Drainage improvements discussed above may  
317 require the hiring of a local engineering firm. Another consultant may also be needed to evaluate  
318 the hydraulics of the north channel. The budget request for this sub-task is \$200,000.

319 WP-1(b): This sub-task pertains to the reach from the CNPPID diversion dam to Grand Island.  
320 The budget request would provide for an additional year of contributions to the Platte Valley and  
321 West Central Weed Management Area. The budget request for this sub-task is \$200,000. The  
322 Program contributed funds in 2010 and 2011. The 2012 funding would allow the project to be  
323 largely completed. Funding after 2012 will be related to maintenance activities with a funding  
324 requirement between \$50,000 to \$100,000, declining over time to \$50,000 and then remaining at  
325 that level.

326  
327 Altenhofen requested that the ED Office include a summary of previous expenditures in the  
328 WAP work plan summaries. Kenny referred Altenhofen to the GC summary spreadsheets that  
329 have the expenditures from previous years (distributed at each GC meeting). Kenny indicated  
330 that the work plan formats currently distributed reflect what was requested by the GC in previous  
331 years. **The more detailed spreadsheet with previous expenditures will be distributed along**  
332 **with the future drafts of the Work Plan summaries, but not included in the work plan**  
333 **summaries themselves.**

334  
335 In an October 18 e-mail, the Service requested additional funding under WP-1(b) to develop a  
336 monitoring program, similar to WP-1(a), to ensure that channel capacity improvements are  
337 providing the desired channel conveyance. Runge noted that, given the long-term decline in  
338 channel capacity, it may be beneficial to have this monitoring in place. Members of the WAC  
339 asked for clarification on the additional studies, and revisited the monitoring that was conducted  
340 for the 2009 flow routing test. Kenny also noted there may be places in the budget as drafted to  
341 support such studies upon further clarification by the Service and input from the WAC. **The ED**  
342 **Office will continue monitoring trends in gage shifts at the Kearney gage.** Runge and Drain  
343 discussed whether other choke points would warrant similar investigations in the future even if  
344 3,000 cfs at North Platte is achieved.

345





346 **WP-4:** Advancing WAP projects from the feasibility stage. Kenny indicated that the numbers  
347 are hard to estimate due to unknowns of how far projects will actually advance, such as if the J2  
348 Reregulating Reservoir project progresses. The Program has historically asked for a maximum  
349 value in case projects advance faster than anticipated. Funds are disbursed very conservatively,  
350 which leads to the perception that additional funds are not needed. There is a federal reserve that  
351 needs to be drawn down or else it will be reassigned to other projects. The current estimate of  
352 \$2,200,000 includes \$2,000,000 for the J2 Reregulating Reservoir and \$200,000 for ground  
353 water recharge. Altenhofen asked what was spent in 2011. Kenny responded \$0. The J2  
354 Reregulating Reservoir work to date has been under WP-6 since it has not progressed past the  
355 feasibility stage. Drain deferred to the recommendations being provided by the GC regarding the  
356 best approach to maximizing federal funding. Williams inquired about the definition of new  
357 money requested. Kenny explained that any unexpended money is not rolled over to the next  
358 year. However, there is a “reserve” of unexpended federal dollars. As previously discussed, that  
359 reserve will need to be drawn down before a large sum of new funds is requested. Colorado  
360 keeps its money in the Nebraska Community Foundation holding entity. Wyoming keeps their  
361 funds in their own account and disburses quarterly as requested by the Program. Federal funding  
362 is appropriated, but an expenditure request must be submitted for a specific amount and then it is  
363 electronically transferred.

364  
365 **WP-5:** Management tool. Upon completion of COHYST, the Program may need to buy or be  
366 trained to use software, or to build additional components into the model for the ED Office to  
367 make such runs. COHYST will reportedly be completed before end of year with peer review  
368 thereafter. Modeling will be useful for the Water Leasing and WMI projects. COHYST may not  
369 provide the resolution required for specific projects. The budget request for this task is  
370 \$200,000.

371  
372 Altenhofen asked where Runge’s discussion items that were emailed to the WAC would be  
373 included in the budget. (Runge’s discussion items pertained to hydraulic modeling and  
374 probabilistic modeling). Kenny stated that these types of projects could be funded by WP-2 or  
375 under the special advisor task (WP-8) if they were completed by someone other than the ED  
376 Office. The projects could also be viewed as a feasibility or miscellaneous study. Runge would  
377 like to gauge the level of support for these projects prior to categorizing the requests.

378  
379 **WP-6:** Feasibility studies. The Program will continue to evaluate water leasing and WMI  
380 projects (\$100,000) and groundwater management (\$100,000).

381  
382 **WP-7:** Water acquisitions. If Pathfinder Reservoir is completed and the municipal agreement is  
383 executed, then the upfront payment will be \$1,958,400. Other acquisitions may also become  
384 available, so the total budget request for this task is \$2,500,000.

385  
386 **WP-8:** Water advisors. The program intends to continue using three special advisors: Bill Hahn  
387 for ground water modeling, George Omeck for economics, and Tara Schutter for civil. The  
388 budget request for 2012 was reduced to \$150,000 based on previous expenditures.



389  
390 **WP-9:** Miscellaneous Water Resources Studies. The budget request for this task is \$50,000.  
391

392 Kenny completed the 2012 budget discussion. Kenny encouraged WAC members to discuss the  
393 budget items with their GC representatives.  
394

395 Runge reinitiated the choke point discussion. Runge suggested potentially using HEC-RAS to  
396 back-calculate release flow targets and confirm a realistic estimate for the SDHF target at  
397 Overton. Hovorka recalled that 3,000 was a rough estimate at the time it was selected. Courtney  
398 discussed similar investigations that were completed in the past. These were not hydraulic  
399 models, but water budget models. Courtney asked if the objective was defined well enough to  
400 warrant a new tool as opposed to modifying existing tools. Drain feels that the ED Office has  
401 always been able to complete these types of analyses in an acceptable manner in the past. Runge  
402 believes the new model would help identify other choke points. Smith noted that an unsteady  
403 hydraulic model already exists. The consensus was that another consultant does not need to be  
404 hired to complete this work. The ED Office will complete these types of analyses with  
405 cooperation from involved entities.  
406

407 Runge initiated a discussion about the willingness of the WAC to approach flood stage flows  
408 with the SDHF and other Program releases. Econopouly added to the discussion about the time  
409 lag between the release at Lake McConaughy to the habitat, and the potential effect of a  
410 precipitation event during the transit period. Runge and Econopouly would like to quantitatively  
411 evaluate the potential for a significant rainfall event during the transit period to determine what  
412 buffer may be required between the SDHF release and the flood capacity for the Kearney, North  
413 Platte, and other potential chokepoints. Runge believes such an analysis would be useful for  
414 policy makers. Smith asked how much of this modeling has already been completed by the  
415 NWS. Econopouly indicated that while NWS may be completing the analysis, it may be helpful  
416 to have a consultant assist in advancing the analysis. Drain stated that the Program has  
417 historically assumed that NWS would evaluate the precipitation effects and define the buffer  
418 required. Besson agreed. The WAC is reluctant to be involved with defining the buffer due to  
419 liability concerns. Besson pointed out that this issue will need to be discussed extensively if  
420 flood leases are pursued. Flooding was a major concern for all parties when the Agreement was  
421 reached. Drain noted that the J2 Reregulating Reservoir has been the focus for SDHFs since it  
422 does not involve flooding issues at the North Platte choke point. Econopouly is recommending  
423 the development of a probabilistic hydrologic model that uses the forecast probability of  
424 precipitation depths and distribution to calculate flow exceedances at forecast locations within  
425 the Platte River at various time scales (from days to months). Steinke believes that these types of  
426 analyses were completed for the flow routing test. The WAC requested more time to think about  
427 this issue, and Steinke pointed out that the issue will come down to the GC's level of comfort  
428 with the buffer size. Regarding future SDHF implementation, the WAC pointed out the  
429 importance of the J2 Reservoir project.  
430



431 Hovorka asked what budget task includes NCCW funding. Kenny and Drain indicated that  
432 water acquisition discussions are still underway.

433  
434 **Additional Business:** *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*

435  
436 *2012 Meeting Schedule*

437 The draft 2012 meeting schedule was discussed. **The next WAC meeting is scheduled for**  
438 **February 7, 2011, from 9:30 am – 3 pm (Central Time) at the Lake McConaughy Visitors**  
439 **Center. The ED Office will update the schedule on the WAC website.**

440  
441 **Action Items**

442 **General WAC**

443 • WAC members are to provide input on the Draft 2012 water plan budget work plans prior  
444 to the Finance Committee meeting on November 9, 2011.

445  
446 **ED Office**

- 447 • The ED Office will update the Hydrologic Condition Memorandum and post it to the  
448 PRRIP website with Anderson's 2006 JAWRA paper as an attachment.
- 449 • The ED Office will continue monitoring trends in gage shifts at the Kearney gage.
- 450 • The ED Office will distribute the updated Draft 2012 water plan budget work plans and  
451 attach the previous budget and expenditure spreadsheet.
- 452 • The ED Office will update the October 2012 WAC meeting date on the schedule and post  
453 on the WAC website.
- 454 •