



1                                   **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**  
2                                   **Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
3                                   Conference call/Webex  
4                                   October 16, 2012

7                                   **Meeting Attendees**

9                   **Water Advisory Committee (WAC)**

10           **State of Colorado**

11           Suzanne Sellers – Member

13           **State of Nebraska**

14           Pat Goltl – Member

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

17           Tom Econopouly – Member

18           Jeff Runge – Alternate

19           Matt Rabbe

20           Eliza Hines

22           **Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)**

23           Mahonri Williams – Member

24           Brock Merrill – Alternate

26           **Downstream Water Users**

27           Cory Steinke – Member (WAC Chair)

28           Duane Woodward – Member

29           Jeff Shafer – Member

30           Landon Shaw – Member

31           Mike Drain – Alternate

32           Nolan Little

34           **Environmental Groups**

35           Bill Taddicken – Member

**Executive Director’s Office (ED Office)**

Jerry Kenny, Executive Director (ED)

Beorn Courtney

Matthew Welsh

Scott Griebing



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

48 Introductions were made. There were no agenda modifications. Griebing reviewed the August  
49 WAC Minutes modifications on the website provided by various WAC members. *Woodward*  
50 *moved to approve the August 2012 WAC minutes; Shafer seconded. Minutes approved with*  
51 **the modifications in the current website version.**

52  
53

54 **Draft 2013 Water Plan Budget:** *Beorn Courtney, ED Office*

55 Courtney gave an overview of the draft 2013 Water Plan budget, explaining that the draft version  
56 has been presented to the Finance Committee and the final version will be presented to the  
57 Governance Committee (GC) in December for their approval. The format is similar to last year  
58 with a spreadsheet supported by workplans.

59

60 *WP1: Active Channel Capacity Improvements*

- 61 • *WP1(a) North Platte Channel above Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation*  
62 *District (CNPPID) Diversion Dam.* This task focuses on the choke point near North  
63 Platte. With a proposed budget of \$500,000, this task includes the implementation of the  
64 flood proofing concepts previously presented to the WAC, improvements to bypass  
65 canals and ditches on the North Platte for use in routing flows around the choke point,  
66 and design and permitting for dredging. EA Engineering, Science, and Technology is  
67 under contract for the design and preliminary permitting of the flood proofing concepts  
68 and should complete this work by the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2013. While the specific details of  
69 dredging for the choke point are not solidified, the Program anticipates some level of  
70 dredging activities being designed or initiated in 2013.
- 71 • *WP1(b) CNPPID Diversion Dam to Grand Island.* This task involves clearing biomass  
72 from the river channel between Kingsley Dam and Chapman. It is similar to what has  
73 been completed in previous years with a cost-sharing agreement with Platte Valley and  
74 West Central Weed Management Areas. The proposed budget is \$200,000. Runge  
75 supported the effort in managing invasives but asked how long biomass activities were  
76 expected to carry on, considering that some of the weeds being cleared have been  
77 declared noxious weeds. The management of noxious weeds may now be the  
78 responsibility of the land owners. Kenny replied that the budget for this task decreases in  
79 future years to \$100,000, indicating the Program anticipates lower levels of biomass  
80 clearing. Kenny also pointed out that the Program is a land owner along the reach and  
81 biomass clearing is its responsibility as such. The management of noxious weeds outside  
82 of the channel is discussed in the Land Plan section of the Program budget. **Kenny**  
83 **agreed that it would be good to have Weed Management provide an update to the**  
84 **WAC on the status of the clearing.**

85

86 *WP4: Water Action Plan Projects WAP projects*

- 87 • *WP4(a) J-2 Regulating Reservoir.* The J-2 Regulating Reservoir (J-2) is the largest  
88 budget item, with a proposed budget of \$13,000,000. As discussed in previous WAC  
89 meetings and last year's budget meeting, the J-2 project is driving the Water Plan budget



90 and the entire Program budget. It requires a large amount of money up-front for land  
91 acquisition, design, and construction. The \$13,000,000 in the 2013 budget will primarily  
92 go toward land acquisition and design, and the \$13,000,000 in 2014 and 2015 budget will  
93 primarily go to design and construction. The budget numbers for the years beyond 2015  
94 reflect operation and maintenance costs. As of September, less than \$40,000 of the  
95 \$9,000,000 budgeted for J-2 in 2012 had been spent. The 2012 budget of \$9,000,000 had  
96 assumed land acquisition and design initiated in 2012 which will not occur until 2013.  
97 RJH is currently under contract to review the Olsson design and recommend design  
98 modifications. They should have preliminary budget numbers to compare these numbers  
99 with by the end of the year and will present their findings to the GC in March.

- 100 • *WP4(b) Nebraska Ground Water Recharge.* \$200,000 is budgeted for a water service  
101 delivery contract from CNPPID at the Phelps Canal. Drain commented that this number  
102 looks reasonable but noted that if there is not enough excess water to provide to the  
103 Program the money may not get spent. The groundwater recharge portion of the CPNRD  
104 lease is budgeted for under WP4(f).
- 105 • *WP4(c) Net Controllable Conserved Water (NCCW).* The program is investigating the  
106 economic feasibility of obtaining NCCW with George Omek, Duane Hovorka, and  
107 CNPPID as well as discussing the details of the lease with CNPPID. 2013 will be the  
108 year to decide if obtaining NCCW for the Program is possible or not. The current budget  
109 plans on leasing 6,000 acre-feet of water for \$250 per acre-foot, which is lower than what  
110 has been estimated by CNPPID but higher than the Program planned for in the WAP.  
111 Runge asked if this water would come online in 2013 and Courtney explained that it  
112 could, but the cost is holding the process up at the moment. Drain indicated the water  
113 would likely be added to the environmental account (EA) in the fall if it were to be  
114 available in 2013.
- 115 • *WP4(d) Pathfinder Municipal Account.* This was not discussed in detail as upfront  
116 payment for the First Increment was provided to Wyoming this year.
- 117 • *WP4(e) Colorado Ground Water Management.* Nothing is budgeted for this project until  
118 2016 to balance out the larger short-term budget needs of J-2. Colorado has also  
119 indicated that water might not be available from this project.
- 120 • *WP4(f) Nebraska Water Leasing.* \$150,000 is budgeted for the lease of 2,000 acre-feet  
121 from Central Platte Natural Resource District (CPNRD) and 1,000 acre-feet from  
122 Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) at \$50 per acre-foot. Lease rates and yields are  
123 still being refined.
- 124 • *WP4(g) Water Management Incentives.* Nothing is budgeted for this until 2016.
- 125 • *WP4(h) Nebraska Ground Water Management.* \$250,000 is being used as a placeholder  
126 in the budget for a water service agreement with Tri-Basin Natural Resource District  
127 (TBNRD) for the Dry Creek Expansion project. Kenny will advance discussions  
128 regarding this project with TBNRD. Courtney noted that coupling groundwater  
129 management with groundwater recharge may be a possibility in 2013.

130  
131 *WP5: Management Tools*



132 \$50,000 is being budgeted for investigating the COHYST model, which the Program hopes will  
133 be operational in 2013. The model promises to be a good tool for investigating the combined  
134 impacts of multiple projects. The budgeted amount is intended to help the Program understand  
135 the model's capabilities and identify modifications that will be needed to evaluate Program  
136 projects. More significant amounts are budgeted in 2016 and 2018 to look at involving the  
137 COHYST model in the final scoring of multiple projects. The \$50,000 for Management Tools  
138 from the 2012 budget was not used because the model is not yet available.

139

140 *WP8: Water Plan Special Advisors*

141 \$125,000 is budgeted for special advisors to advise the Program on economics, ground water,  
142 hydrogeology, structural engineering, and permitting. Drain noted that expenditures for special  
143 advisors in 2010 and 2011 were greater than the amount budgeted in 2013. Kenny explained that  
144 the Program is moving more from studying to implementing; for example, while the Program  
145 used the ground water special advisor extensively for the ground water recharge feasibility  
146 studies in the past, current implementation activities will require less assistance. There will be a  
147 shift toward infrastructure and dam special advisors as the J-2 begins construction, but overall  
148 the Program anticipates less need for special advisors in 2013.

149

150 *WP9: Miscellaneous Water Resources Studies.*

151 \$25,000 is budgeted for studies aimed at understanding the water balance and/or the  
152 hydrogeology of the associated habitat. This budget item is not related to any specific project  
153 but it is still important. The amount is reduced to \$25,000 from the 2012 amount of \$50,000, of  
154 which only \$6,000 has been spent to date. Drain asked if the \$25,000 amount would be too little  
155 to accomplish any type of study. Kenny replied that there isn't any specific study that drives the  
156 budget, but there are several areas where the Program might partner with other studies, such as  
157 the Colorado Water Conservation Board investigation of hydroclimatic indices discussed in the  
158 May and August WAC meetings, the study of conservation being funded by the Platte Basin  
159 Coalition Committee, and investigations into wet meadows being completed under the Program  
160 Adaptive Management Plan. Courtney noted that the \$6,000 in the 2012 budget mostly went to  
161 equipment purchases.

162

163 Econopouly asked about improving tools used to model short duration high flows (SDHF),  
164 noting that there will likely be some smaller SDHF conducted this year. Econopouly referred to  
165 the 2009 Platte River Flow Routing Test report and asked if any effort would be made to support  
166 calibration of bypass accounting and bank storage tools. Kenny explained that GC approval of  
167 the alternative accounting method would be needed prior to modifying the model. The WAC  
168 had previously concluded that these modifications should be postponed to a later date. Kenny  
169 noted that data collected during future SDHF tests could be used to update bank storage  
170 calculations in the models. Courtney and Econopouly will have a separate discussion about  
171 specific modifications being requested by USFWS. Courtney added that this work and other  
172 HECRAS work will continue to be completed by the ED Office and that choke point analyses are  
173 now being performed by Justin Brei.

174



175 Runge commented that the flow routing spreadsheet used for previous SDHF tests was based on  
176 best professional judgment and actual operations, at times, did not match. Runge suggested  
177 developing a more formal process and methods for forecasting and SDHF planning. This process  
178 would facilitate improvements in forecasting by re-evaluating and revising methods. Runge also  
179 asked if there is a budget for flow bypass. Kenny noted there is \$150,000 for flow bypass  
180 activities under Adaptive Management Plan line item WP-10 that should be moved to line item  
181 GFC-4. **Kenney suggested continuing the discussions regarding SDHF routing.** Courtney  
182 also suggested discussing these issues at the next EAC-RCC meeting. Runge emphasized the  
183 need to update the flow routing spreadsheet to more accurately “backcast” how much water  
184 should be released to ensure a given flow target reaches Grand Island.  
185

186 Woodward asked if the new DNR gages at Shelton and Lexington have been incorporated into  
187 loss and travel time calculations. Kenny replied that he was not aware of these gages being  
188 included in loss and travel time calculations. **Kenny noted that there is enough data now for  
189 this to be done and it would be a good idea to pursue it.**  
190

191 The total Water plan budget for 2013 is \$16,000,000. Kenney encouraged everyone to send  
192 additional questions or thoughts on to Courtney and to communicate with their respective GC  
193 representatives regarding the Water Plan budget, providing them with their input and support.  
194

195 **Additional Business:** *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*

196 The draft 2013 meeting schedule was discussed. Courtney noted a two dates with reported  
197 conflicts from WAC members. The proposed October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting will be moved to October 8<sup>th</sup>  
198 to avoid traveling conflicts with Columbus Day. Other dates may be changed if multiple  
199 conflicts arise leading up to the meeting. **The schedule on the Program website will be  
200 updated to reflect these changes.**  
201

202 **The next WAC meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2013, from 9:30 am – 3 pm  
203 (Mountain Time) at the Lake McConaughy Visitors Center.**  
204

## 206 **Action Items**

### 207 **ED Office**

- 208 • Request the Weed Management provide an update on the status of the clearing at an  
209 upcoming WAC meeting.
- 210 • Continue discussion of SDHF routing test spreadsheet updates with USFWS.
- 211 • Update loss and travel time calculations with data from the DNR Shelton and Lexington  
212 gages.
- 213 • Update 2013 WAC meeting schedule on Program website.