



1                                   **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**  
2                                   **Governance Committee Meeting Minutes**  
3                                   Executive Director's Office Conference Room – Kearney, NE  
4                                   March 12-13, 2013

5  
6                                   **Tuesday, March 12, 2013**

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8                                   **Meeting Attendees**

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10                                  **Governance Committee (GC) Table**

11                                  **State of Wyoming**

12                                  Harry LaBonde – Member

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15                                  **State of Colorado**

16                                  Don Ament – Member

17                                  Suzanne Sellers – Alternate

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19                                  **State of Nebraska**

20                                  Jesse Bradley – Alternate

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

23                                  Mike George – Alternate

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25                                  **Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)**

26                                  Gary Campbell – Member

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29                                  **Environmental Entities**

30                                  Tom Dougherty – Member

31                                  John Heaston – Member

32                                  Marian Langan – Member

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34                                  **Upper Platte Water Users**

35                                  Dennis Strauch – Member

36                                  George Williams – Member

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38                                  **Colorado Water Users**

39                                  Alan Berryman – Member

40                                  Deb Freeman – Alternate

41                                  Kevin Urie

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43                                  **Downstream Water Users**

44                                  Brian Barels – Member

45                                  Don Kraus – Member

46                                  Mark Czaplewski – Member

47  
**Executive Director's Office (EDO) Staff**

Jerry Kenny, Executive Director (ED)

Bridget Barron

Beorn Courtney

Jason Farnsworth

Bruce Sackett

Chad Smith

Dave Baasch

**Audience Members**

Matt Rabbe – Service

Mike Besson – State of Wyoming

Mike Drain – CNPPID

Cory Steinke – CNPPID

Brock Merrill – BOR

Pat Engelbert – HDR

Dan Bigbee – EA

Dale Schlautman – EA

Christine Reed – UNO

Deniz Zeyneplevenger – UNO

Anthony Campbell – UNO

Tom MacDougall – RJH

Bob Huzjak – RJH

Lori Potter – Kearney Hub



48 **Welcome & Administrative**

49 Ament called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. Central time. The group proceeded with introductions.

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51 *LaBonde moved to approve the November 2012 Special Session and December GC minutes; Dougherty*  
52 *seconded. Minutes approved.*

53  
54 **Program Committee Updates**

55 *Land Advisory Committee (LAC)*

56 Czaplewski provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC met on January 15 and did  
57 consider a motion related to Tract 1227 but there was no consensus. The next LAC meeting is March 26.  
58 There was a public meeting in early March in Kearney regarding the public access component of the  
59 Program.

60

61 *Water Advisory Committee (WAC)*

62 Steinke provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC met on February 12 and discussed a  
63 Water Action Plan update, groundwater recharge scoring, water service agreements, Phelps County  
64 groundwater recharge project (shut off on March 11), Duane Woodward presented on Central Platte NRD  
65 water leasing, choke point update, update on the 2013 short-duration medium flow, and the wet meadows  
66 hydrology monitoring project (subcommittee formed).

67

68 *Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)*

69 Besson provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC met twice in January and discussed:

- 70 • Whooping crane data analysis plan.  
71 • Whooping crane habitat availability analysis.  
72 • Grassland vegetation monitoring RFP.  
73 • Information on ultraviolet analysis of tern/plover nesting habitat.  
74 • Wet meadow hydrology monitoring project – the TAC supported this project conditioned on review  
75 by the WAC. That review occurred and there is now a subcommittee evaluating the project further.  
76 • Update on sediment augmentation pilot-scale management action.

77

78 There is a Wet Meadow Working Group workshop scheduled for later this month.

79

80 *Finance Committee (FC)*

81 Campbell provided an update on the latest FC activities. The FC held two conference calls this year and  
82 approved:

- 83 • 2013 tern/plover monitoring amendment  
84 • 2013 USDA APHIS trapping amendment  
85 • 2013 ISAC agreement and amendments  
86 • Independent science review 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment  
87 • Whooping crane stopover site evaluation project agreement  
88 • Database management system 4<sup>th</sup> amendment  
89 • 2013 sediment augmentation change orders  
90 • 2013 water quality monitoring contract amendment  
91 • Approved the grassland vegetation monitoring RFP

92

93

**Program Outreach Update****PRESENTATIONS**

- Jason Farnsworth presented a Program update at the annual meeting of the Nebraska Association of County Officials on December 13, 2012 in Kearney, Nebraska.
- Jerry Kenny and Dennis Strauch presented on the progress of the Program at the annual meeting of the Four States Irrigation Council in Fort Collins, Colorado on January 18, 2013.
- Bruce Sackett presented on the Program, with an emphasis on the land aspects, to the Nebraska Chapter of the American Association of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers on February 13, 2013 in Kearney, Nebraska.
- Beorn Courtney presented a Program update to the “Water Resources and Management in the West” class at the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado on February 13, 2013.
- Kevin Urie was the featured speaker at the Colorado section of the American Water Resources Association February luncheon in Denver, Colorado on February 26, 2013. His topic was PRRIP & SPWRAP: How are they related and why are they good for Colorado?

**EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS**

- The Program was a sponsor and exhibitor at the annual meeting of the Four States Irrigation Council in Fort Collins, Colorado on January 16-18, 2013. We made 296 contacts during the event.
- The Program exhibited at Colorado Water Congress in Denver, Colorado on January 30 – February 1, 2013. We made 474 contacts over the course of the three days.
- The Program exhibited at the Rainwater Basin Informational Seminar on February 6, 2013 in Hastings, Nebraska. We made 189 contacts during the event.

**UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS**

- Jason Farnsworth and Jerry Kenny will be presenting on the Program to the Nebraska Water Leaders class on March 15, 2013 in Kearney, Nebraska.
- Jason Farnsworth will be presenting to a group from the International Crane Foundation on the Program’s work in managing river habitat for cranes on March 16, 2013 at the Elm Creek complex.
- Jason Farnsworth will be presenting on the Program at the update at the Rivers & Wildlife Celebration in Kearney, Nebraska on March 23, 2013.
- The Program will be exhibiting at the Rivers & Wildlife Celebration in Kearney, Nebraska on March 23, 2013.

**MEDIA/OTHER**

- The Program sponsored the Migration Special issues of Prairie Fire (January, February and March 2013 issues). The February issue included the pull-out field guide, with the Program’s ad prominently displayed.
- On December 23, 2012 the Kearney Hub published an article about the Program titled, “Platte River Recovery Implementation Program is creating a place for whooping cranes to stay during their migration”. Jerry Kenny and Bruce Sackett were interviewed for the article.
- Jerry Kenny was interviewed by Channel 5 in Hastings, Nebraska for a story on the Program on March 6, 2013.
- NEBRASKAland magazine published an article titled, “The Crane Trust; Sinking Roots, Deepening the Vision” in the March 2013 issue. The article was written by Brad Mellema, the former Director of the Crane Trust Nature & Visitor’s Center.



- 139 • Rural Electric Nebraskan published an article by Mark Peyton titled, “Whooping Cranes along the  
140 Platte River” in the March 2013 issue. The work of the Program was highlighted as well as photos of  
141 whooping cranes on the Platte taken by Mark Peyton and Dave Baasch.
- 142 • The Program’s 2011 & 2012 Bi-annual report will be distributed at the June Governance Committee  
143 meeting.
- 144 • Thank you card from the family of Norm DeMott.
- 145 • Information about Program giveaways.

146

#### 147 **PRRIP Budget Items**

148 Kenny discussed the status of the FY13 PRRIP budget and provided details about the Program’s budget  
149 history from 2007-2012. Campbell asked if the graphics would be posted for the GC on the web site.  
150 Kenny said yes it would be posted for the GC. Kenny discussed potential impacts on the Program related  
151 to the federal budget sequester. Potential impacts so far include travel restrictions (some ISAC members,  
152 agency personnel) and hiring and furlough restrictions (e.g. USGS tern/plover monitoring technicians).  
153 Kenny discussed the grassland vegetation monitoring RFP and the need to appoint a proposal selection  
154 panel. Smith said the TAC recommended names are Baasch, Jenniges, Czaplewski, Peyton, and Fritz.  
155 Berryman added Urie to represent Colorado.

156

157 George moved to appoint the Grassland Vegetation Monitoring RFP Proposal Selection Panel: LaBonde  
158 seconded. Proposal Selection Panel appointed.

159

#### 160 **Final PRRIP Document**

161 Kenny discussed the minor typographical error in Attachment 5, Section 1 (Water Management Process)  
162 of the Final Program Document. Fixing this error requires GC discussion and approval.

163

164 *Campbell moved to approve the language change; Williams seconded. **Language change approved.***

165

#### 166 **Whooping Crane Tracking Project**

167 Smith discussed proposed changes to the “data use” section of the Whooping Crane Tracking Project  
168 Partnership Agreement. Dougherty asked if there would be restrictions on current core partners  
169 publishing on preliminary telemetry data. Baasch said the work would have to be peer reviewed, and then  
170 the other core partners would have to weigh in once the peer review is complete. Baasch said even if the  
171 Program agreed to be the conduit for the information for a certain project, other core partners could still  
172 say no to sharing the data for that purpose.

173

174 LaBonde asked whether this would withstand a FOIA request. Baasch and Smith said they were not sure  
175 where this would end up under a FOIA request. George said it is data and the main question is whether it  
176 is pre-decisional. Rabbe said if the Program is making decisions based on this data that would put this in  
177 a gray area related to it being “pre-decisional”. Barel asked if the Program wanted to do a certain  
178 analysis and other project core partners did not support the analysis would it stop the Program from  
179 conducting that analysis. Baasch said yes that is the interpretation.

180

181 Campbell said he thinks the Program owns the data. It is in a research mode, and research is not FOIA-  
182 able. If we are just collecting data for research and are not making decisions on the data, then others that  
183 want the data at the conclusion of the research project should be contributing money to the research as  
184 well. Barel said it would be hard to support this language because it seems it would tie the Program’s  
185 hands until after the First Increment. Baasch said analysis and reporting would start in 2016 and be



186 concluded by 2019. Barels said he would like to see language that clarifies what the Program can do with  
187 the data and when. George said one issue is all the data is not in yet, and another issue is leaving control  
188 to the data to the researchers that want to complete analysis on their own schedule.

189  
190 *Ament said the direction from the GC is to get clarified language regarding what the Program can do*  
191 *and when.* Smith said the EDO would work on that language, discuss it with the other core partners, and  
192 then bring it back to the GC for further discussion.

193  
194 **2012 Tiered Biological Opinion**  
195 Rabbe discussed consultations related to the Program from 2012. No questions asked.

196  
197 **Public Comment**  
198 Ament asked for public comment; none offered.

199  
200 **Executive Session**  
201 *Dougherty moved to enter Executive Session to discuss the J2 regulation reservoir and land issues;*  
202 *Langan seconded. GC entered Executive Session at 3:45 p.m. Central time.*

203  
204 *Campbell moved to end Executive Session; Bradley seconded. GC ended Executive Session at 5:24*  
205 *p.m. Central time.*

206  
207 **Program Land Tracts & Issues**  
208 *Williams moved and Czaplewski seconded:*  
209 

- *To approve allowing the ED Office to enter into a contract and complete acquisition of Tract 1114 as*  
210 *non-complex habitat.*

211  
212 **Motion approved.**  
213  
214 Ament said he would like each GC member to talk about key issues they are facing during the meeting  
215 tomorrow morning.

216  
217 **Meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m. Central time.**

218  
219 **Wednesday, March 13, 2013**

220  
221 **Welcome and Administrative**  
222 Ament called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. Central time and the group proceeded with introductions.  
223 Ament requested a group discussion about key issues facing GC members both related to the Program and  
224 generally.

225  
226 Heaston said we need to start talking about how conservation lands get brought into the Program in the  
227 Second Increment. George said the Keystone XL pipeline is a major issue in his office right now.  
228 Dougherty discussed his history with Platte River issues and the big concern about water as a remaining  
229 issue on the Platte. Sellers discussed her work on the Program and other issues for the Colorado Water  
230 Conservation Board. Langan talked about work at Rowe Sanctuary and its upcoming 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
231 (2014). Urie said Denver water is dealing with the implications of a very dry water year and also budget  
232 issues, the Moffat project, and growth in the Front Range. Ament asked Urie how much has been spent



233 on the permitting process for Moffat. Urie said around \$29 million over 10 years for permitting and  
234 mitigation. Urie said he is also the Executive Director of SPWRAP. Berryman said he is working on two  
235 different permitting processes, a potential new pipeline, and a wild and scenic river issue. Ament asked  
236 Berryman about his permitting costs. Berryman said the costs are similar to those identified by Urie.  
237 Barels said NPPD is dealing with changes to how power is bought and sold to customers. The Program is  
238 a big issue for NPPD and he also works on Missouri River issues. Czaplewski said Ron Bishop is retiring  
239 from Central Platte NRD this summer and his replacement is Lyndon Vogt. Central Platte is working  
240 with three ditch companies in Dawson County that will result in some water leasing for the Program.  
241 Kraus said they are also dealing with the implications of dry conditions and also new regulations related  
242 to power production. The COHYST model is also another big project. Bradley said the drought has  
243 impacted the work of the Nebraska DNR. The Republican River lawsuit looks to be close to being  
244 resolved and there is an effort underway to develop a basin-wide plan for the lower Platte River.  
245 Campbell said 7 of the 9 states in his region are in severe drought. Preference power customers are giving  
246 more up-front money to the BOR which leads to more money being available for the Program. Trans-  
247 basin diversions are another big issue. Williams said his area near Saratoga, Wyoming is being affected  
248 by a 1904 call on the river. Strauch said there has been no decent precipitation since fall and they really  
249 need spring rain to be able to get a crop in the ground. Aging infrastructure is also an issue. LaBonde  
250 said Wyoming snowpack is 83% of normal and it is less in the Platte River basin. Wyoming has a  
251 weather modification program involving cloud seeding. Ament said drought is the major issue right now.

252

### 253 **PRRIP Lands Virtual Tour**

254 Kenny introduced the virtual tour of Program lands and the work being done at habitat complexes. This  
255 is an update for the GC as to what has been happening on the ground with management actions and will  
256 provide context for the land tour later today. Sackett highlighted activities complex by complex.

257

### 258 **Future Meetings & Closing Business**

259 Next GC meeting:

- 260 • June 11-12, 2013 @ Cheyenne, WY

261

262 **Meeting adjourned at 10:18 a.m. Central time.**

263

### 264 **Summary of Action Items/Decisions from March 2013 GC meeting**

- 265 1) Approved November and December 2012 GC minutes.
- 266 2) Approved a minor language change in the Final Program Document, Attachment 5 Section 1.
- 267 3) Directed the EDO to develop clarifying language for the Whooping Crane Tracking Project  
268 Partnership Agreement regarding what the Program can do with project data and when.
- 269 4) Approved allowing the ED Office to enter into a contract and complete acquisition of Tract 1114 as  
270 non-complex habitat.