PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
Land Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Executive Director’s Office Conference Room – Kearney, NE
March 26, 2013

Meeting Participants

Land Advisory Committee (LAC)
State of Wyoming
Harry LaBonde – Member, Wyoming Water Development Office

State of Colorado
Suzanne Sellers – Member, Colorado Water Conservation Board
Kevin Urie – Alternate, Denver Water

State of Nebraska
Ted LaGrange – Member, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Matt Rabbe – Member, USFWS

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBOR)
Brock Merrill – Member, USBOR

Power Districts
John Shadle – Member (Vice-chair), Nebraska Public Power District
Mark Peyton – Member, Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District
Jim Jenniges – Alternate, Nebraska Public Power District

Environmental Entities
John Heaston – Member, The Nature Conservancy
Jonas Davis – Alternate, Ducks Unlimited

Local Nebraska Rep. – Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD)
Mark Czaplewski – Member (Chair), CPNRD Staff

Local Nebraska Rep. – Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD)
None

Local Nebraska Rep. – Joint CPNRD/TBNRD
John Thorburn – Member, TBNRD Staff
Jim Bendfeldt – Alternate, CPNRD Board

Executive Director’s Office (EDO)
Jerry Kenny, Executive Director
Bruce Sackett
Justin Brei

Other Participants
Mark Morten – The Crane Trust
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 requested.
Czaplewski asked for the LAC’s recommendation on the minutes of the January 15, 2013 meeting.
Shadle made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 15, 2013 LAC meeting. The motion was seconded by LaBonde and passed unanimously.

GC Update and Other Committee Coordination Information

GC Update
Czaplewski updated the LAC on recent GC activities. The GC met March 12 & 13, 2013 in Kearney, NE. The GC discussed the impact of the Federal budget sequestrations on the Program. Generally not a large impact on the Program. Some PRRIP participants have limited travel restrictions, and there is some impact with staffing/furloughs for USGS monitoring crews. In land-related items, the GC moved to acquire tract 1114. The GC also received a powerpoint “virtual tour” of Program lands and management activities, as well as a partial day of visiting Program properties to see some of the activities.
The next GC meeting is June 11 & 12, 2013 in Cheyenne, WY.

Other Committee Coordination
Kenny updated the LAC on recent WAC activities. At the request of the TAC, the WAC discussed a study plan for wet meadow hydrology which will look at the interaction between the river, precipitation, ground water, etc. A subcommittee of the WAC & TAC was formed The WAC was updated on year 2 of the pilot groundwater recharge project, in which Phelps Canal was filled with recharge water in non-irrigation months. Executive Director’s Office staff are working on a scoring memo for the project. The WAC received a report from Duane Woodward of CPNDRD on a potential for water leasing from three canal districts. Woodward’s presentation covered analysis of the net effects of transferring cropland from surface irrigation to groundwater irrigation. The WAC was updated on the North Platte chokepoint “flood protection” projects. These projects are being looked at to relieve some impacts of flows near the current minor flood stage of 6.0 feet, with the hopes of increasing minor flood stage at North Platte to 6.5 feet.

Czaplewski asked Kenny for an update on the Short Duration High Flow event this spring. Kenny said it will not be a full “high flow” event, but instead be around 3,000-4,000 cfs. The flow will begin to ramp up slowly as soon as repairs are finished at Kingsley Dam on Lake McConoughy. The peak should arrive in the associated habitat area around April 13-15.

Czaplewski updated the LAC on recent TAC activities. The TAC met on February 14 and 24, and will meet again on March 27 and 28. The TAC approved a grassland monitoring RFP and
proposals were due March 22. The TAC discussed whooping crane data analysis and the
whooping crane telemetry project. On the 27th and 28th of March, the wet meadow working
group will meet to finalize details related to the whooping crane habitat availability assessment
being performed by the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture. This year’s AMP Reporting Session will
be held in Omaha, NE on the 22nd and 23rd of April. This session is where Program staff and
contractors report on the previous year’s monitoring and research activities. Any LAC members
are welcome to attend.

Land Management Update
Sackett briefly discussed recent land management and maintenance activities. More was to be
covered during the virtual tour portion of the meeting.

Land Offering Reviews and Excess Land Subcommittee Update
LaBonde moved to go into executive session with LAC members, alternates, and technical
staff to review details of land offerings. The motion was seconded by Merrill. The motion
carried and the committee entered executive session at 9:53 a.m.

Peyton moved to come out of executive session. Bendfeldt seconded and the motion
carried. The committee came out of executive session at 11:07 a.m.

Rabbe moved to accept the excess lands recommendations document, as presented by the
subcommittee, and forward to the GC for approval. Bendfeldt seconded. LaGrange
abstained (conflict of interest). Motion passed unanimously.

Public Access Subcommittee Update
Heaston gave a brief overview of the public access hearing held at the PRRIP conference room
in Kearney, NE on March 5, 2013. Several comments were received, both in favor and opposed
to various parts of the access program. The LAC was given a DVD of the hearing and written
comments were posted to the LAC website. Urie mentioned that many issues brought up at the
meeting seemed to be at the Program’s “Wyoming Property” and some concerns may be valid.
Urie said that the LAC should look at different ways to address safety concerns without simply
deferring to neighboring landowners with obvious self-interests. Urie also noted how one of the
testimonies shed a very positive light on the opportunity this access program provides and that it
seems the program fills a void in the area.

Urie asked if, in addressing safety concerns with rifles at flat trajectories, the subcommittee
considered adding shooting towers. Heaston said the committee considered it, but it adds
liability and their use may be difficult to enforce. Shadle said it may be better to just discontinue
the use of high-power rifles in the access program, and instead allow only muzzleloaders,
archery, shotguns, etc.

Urie asked the subcommittee about their discussions on the “Wyoming Property” functioning as
a “refuge” for waterfowl. Rabbe said that it does hold a lot of waterfowl, but comments along
those lines from the hearing all came from neighbors who have hunting blinds on the property’s
fence line, so they would be hunting these birds as well and may not have the best interest of the
species in mind. Addressing both the safety concerns and the well-being of the species, the
hunter densities allowed on PRRIP properties is very low compared to other properties in the
central Platte.

Justin Haahr discussed the results of the surveys sent out to all users who made a reservation
with the system in the past year. The majority of users reported positive experiences and he will
post the survey summaries for the LAC. Some listed suggestions for improvement, and many
requested more types of allowed activities. Ryan Chromosta said personal contacts made with
users of the program were overwhelmingly positive.

Shadle and Thorburn further discussed safety and the potential for disallowing high-power rifle
use. Peyton, Heaston, and LaBonde said the Wyoming property isn’t different than any other
central Platte River property as it relates to hunting. However, whatever the LAC decides to do
for use of rifles on the Wyoming Property should be made consistent across all properties.
LaGrange said that in considering the Program’s Good Neighbor Policy, you should be
considering what the “norm” is in the area, and whether you are disrupting the “norm”. In this
case, high-power rifle use is very common during the firearm deer season in the Platte valley.

Heaston walked the LAC through each subcommittee recommendation for changes to the current
public access policy.

LaBonde moved to accept the subcommittee’s modifications as presented and forward to
the Governance Committee with recommendation to approve. Seconded by Rabbe.

Heaston said the subcommittee could further consider the specific issue of allowing rifle hunting
for separate LAC consideration, if that was the wish. LaBonde said that at the subcommittee
rifle hunting was considered in the context of Wyoming property only, and was adequately
discussed. Urie asked about adding a non-binding suggestion like “Program recommends the use
of shotguns or archery as opposed to high-power rifles”, instead of simply disallowing their use.
Thorburn moved to amend the motion to exclude high-power rifles as an acceptable
weapon for hunting on all Program lands. Seconded by Shadle, the amendment was voted
on and failed. The original motion to accept the recommendation as presented was voted
on and passed unanimously.

Heaston said that if it is the pleasure of the LAC, the subcommittee could still reconvene and lay
out the pros and cons of high-power rifle use for further structured discussion at the LAC.
Czaplewski agreed. LaBonde suggested adding a question to the post-firearm-lottery-season
user surveys like “Would you use this property during this season if high-power rifles were not
allowed on the property?”.

Tax Summary
Sackett distributed and briefly discussed the taxes paid on Program properties in 2012. Thorburn
asked if these were actually taxes assessed, or shown as “in lieu of”. Sackett said these are
assessed and paid by the Program. The average tax in 2012 was $20.02 per acre.
133 **Virtual Tour of Program Lands**
134 Sackett gave a presentation with photographs and videos showing many of the habitat
135 management activities that have taken place on Program lands.
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137 **Public Forum**
138 Chairman Czaplewski asked for public comments, none were offered.
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140 **Other Business**
141 The next LAC meeting will be held May 29, 2013 at 9 a.m. in Kearney, NE.
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143 **Closing Business**
144 With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Czaplewski at 1:30 p.m.