



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



1 **Welcome and Administrative**

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

4
5 Czaplewski asked for agenda modifications, none were requested.

6
7 Czaplewski asked for the LAC’s recommendation on the minutes of the January 15, 2013
8 meeting.

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10 **Shadle made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 15, 2013 LAC meeting.**
11 **The motion was seconded by LaBonde and passed unanimously.**

12
13 **GC Update and Other Committee Coordination Information**

14 *GC Update*

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

22
23 The next GC meeting is June 11 & 12, 2013 in Cheyenne, WY.

24
25 *Other Committee Coordination*

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

37
38 Czaplewski asked Kenny for an update on the Short Duration High Flow event this spring.
39 Kenny said it will not be a full “high flow” event, but instead be around 3,000-4,000 cfs. The
40 flow will begin to ramp up slowly as soon as repairs are finished at Kingsley Dam on Lake
41 McConoughy. The peak should arrive in the associated habitat area around April 13-15.

42
43 Czaplewski updated the LAC on recent TAC activities. The TAC met on February 14 and 24,
44 and will meet again on March 27 and 28. The TAC approved a grassland monitoring RFP and



45 proposals were due March 22. The TAC discussed whooping crane data analysis and the
46 whooping crane telemetry project. On the 27th and 28th of March, the wet meadow working
47 group will meet to finalize details related to the whooping crane habitat availability assessment
48 being performed by the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture. This year's AMP Reporting Session will
49 be held in Omaha, NE on the 22nd and 23rd of April. This session is where Program staff and
50 contractors report on the previous year's monitoring and research activities. Any LAC members
51 are welcome to attend.

52

53 **Land Management Update**

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

56

57 **Land Offering Reviews and Excess Land Subcommittee Update**

58 **LaBonde moved to go into executive session with LAC members, alternates, and technical**
59 **staff to review details of land offerings. The motion was seconded by Merrill. The motion**
60 **carried and the committee entered executive session at 9:53 a.m.**

61

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

64

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

68

69 **Public Access Subcommittee Update**

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

79

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

85

86 Urie asked the subcommittee about their discussions on the "Wyoming Property" functioning as
87 a "refuge" for waterfowl. Rabbe said that it does hold a lot of waterfowl, but comments along
88 those lines from the hearing all came from neighbors who have hunting blinds on the property's



89 fence line, so they would be hunting these birds as well and may not have the best interest of the
90 species in mind. Addressing both the safety concerns and the well-being of the species, the
91 hunter densities allowed on PRRIP properties is very low compared to other properties in the
92 central Platte.

93

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

99

100 Shadle and Thorburn further discussed safety and the potential for disallowing high-power rifle
101 use. Peyton, Heaston, and LaBonde said the Wyoming property isn't different than any other
102 central Platte River property as it relates to hunting. However, whatever the LAC decides to do
103 for use of rifles on the Wyoming Property should be made consistent across all properties.

104 LaGrange said that in considering the Program's Good Neighbor Policy, you should be
105 considering what the "norm" is in the area, and whether you are disrupting the "norm". In this
106 case, high-power rifle use is very common during the firearm deer season in the Platte valley.

107

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

110

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

113 Heaston said the subcommittee could further consider the specific issue of allowing rifle hunting
114 for separate LAC consideration, if that was the wish. LaBonde said that at the subcommittee
115 rifle hunting was considered in the context of Wyoming property only, and was adequately
116 discussed. Urie asked about adding a non-binding suggestion like "Program recommends the use
117 of shotguns or archery as opposed to high-power rifles", instead of simply disallowing their use.

118 **Thorburn moved to amend the motion to exclude high-power rifles as an acceptable**
119 **weapon for hunting on all Program lands. Seconded by Shadle, the amendment was voted**
120 **on and failed. The original motion to accept the recommendation as presented was voted**
121 **on and passed unanimously.**

122

123 Heaston said that if it is the pleasure of the LAC, the subcommittee could still reconvene and lay
124 out the pros and cons of high-power rifle use for further structured discussion at the LAC.

125 Czaplewski agreed. LaBonde suggested adding a question to the post-firearm-lottery-season
126 user surveys like "Would you use this property during this season if high-power rifles were not
127 allowed on the property?"

128

129 **Tax Summary**

130 Sackett distributed and briefly discussed the taxes paid on Program properties in 2012. Thorburn
131 asked if these were actually taxes assessed, or shown as "in lieu of". Sackett said these are
132 assessed and paid by the Program. The average tax in 2012 was \$20.02 per acre.



133

134 **Virtual Tour of Program Lands**

135 Sackett gave a presentation with photographs and videos showing many of the habitat
136 management activities that have taken place on Program lands.

137

138 **Public Forum**

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

140

141 **Other Business**

142 **The next LAC meeting will be held May 29, 2013 at 9 a.m. in Kearney, NE.**

143

144 **Closing Business**

145 With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Czaplewski at 1:30 p.m.