



PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call & WebEx
February 4, 2014

Meeting Attendees

Water Advisory Committee (WAC)

State of Colorado

Suzanne Sellers – Member

State of Wyoming

Mike Besson – Member

Greg Lanning - Alternate

Bryan Clerkin – Alternate 3

State of Nebraska

Jesse Bradley – Member

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Tom Econopouly – Member

Downstream Water Users

Cory Steinke – Member (WAC Chair)

Duane Woodward – Member

Jeff Shafer – Member

Landon Shaw – Member

Mike Drain – Alternate

Nolan Little – Interested Party

Upstream Water Users

Dennis Strauch – Member

Colorado Water Users

Jon Altenhofen – Member

Environmental Groups

Greg Wingfield – Member

Executive Director’s Office (ED Office)

Jerry Kenny, Executive Director (ED)

Beorn Courtney

Matthew Welsh

Justin Brei

Scott Griebing

Sira Sartori

Janice Rainwater

Kevin Werbylo

Contractors

Matt McConville - HDR

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47



48 **Welcome and Administrative:** *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*
49 Introductions were made. There were no agenda modifications. Steinke reviewed the October
50 2013 WAC Minutes. Econopouly requested to change his status to citizen due to the government
51 furlough during the October WAC meeting. Woodward made a motion to approve the modified
52 October 2013 WAC Minutes, which was seconded by Shafer. **The October minutes were**
53 **unanimously approved.** Altenhofen nominated Steinke for re-election as WAC Chair and
54 Shafer seconded the motion. **Steinke was re-elected as the WAC Chair for 2014.** Kenny
55 announced that Beorn Courtney and Matt Welsh are leaving Headwaters.
56

57 **WAP Project Updates**

58 ***J-2 Regulating Reservoir: Cory Steinke, CNPPID***

59 Steinke reported that RJH has been kept on for project management and that Kleinschmidt is
60 working on permitting and land acquisition. The CNPPID board approved moving forward with
61 the J-2 Regulating Reservoir project. The CNPPID has met with counties to address public issues
62 and are working on a general implementation plan for land acquisition. The critical step will be
63 to obtain FERC permitting near the end of 2015.
64

65 ***Phelps Groundwater Recharge: Matt Welsh, ED Office***

66 Welsh presented an overview of the third season of recharge. In the fall of 2013, diversions into
67 recharge occurred from September 19, 2013 through October 28, 2013. Welsh explained that the
68 Program paid for groundwater recharge above Mile Post 13.3 of the Phelps County Canal,
69 although water was diverted below Mile Post 13.3 for flood mitigation.
70

71 Kenny noted that the Program also paid to divert water to Funk Lagoon during the high flows to
72 check the hydraulics in that area. In response to Altenhofen's question as to whether Funk
73 Lagoon could be used for groundwater recharge, Kenny explained that Funk Lagoon is one of
74 the WAP alternatives from the 2000 report as a surface water storage vessel, though the
75 possibility of groundwater recharge has been raised. Groundwater monitoring instrumentation
76 has been installed and the data will be assessed soon.
77

78 Welsh reported that a new water temperature probe was installed on the 24th of October.
79 Monitoring data show that groundwater water levels are quite a bit lower than in previous years
80 and are well below the triggers. The three years of recharge show positive results and during the
81 fall 2013 operations, no major complications or landowner issues were reported (note that
82 additional recharge may still occur in the coming months if excesses are available).
83

84 ***CPNRD Water Leasing: Duane Woodward, CPNRD***

85 Woodward reported that the Governance Committee (GC) signed an agreement in December
86 2013 with the CPNRD to lease water from the Thirty Mile, Orchard Alfalfa, and Cozad Canals.
87 The lease has two components – a groundwater recharge component using excess flows and a
88 surface water transfer component. The CPNRD is currently working on the water right transfers
89 for instream flow enhancements. Woodward noted that due to tree clearing near the head gates
90 and channel reshaping efforts, the CPNRD was not able to take flood waters at either the Cozad



91 or Orchard Alfalfa Canals in fall 2013. Woodward showed several photos of ongoing canal
92 rehabilitation and reported that the Thirty Mile Canal and Cozad Canal should be completed by
93 this spring and that construction on the Orchard Alfalfa Canal will likely continue until next
94 spring.

95
96 Altenhofen requested the timeline on scoring the CPNRD projects, and Kenny responded that the
97 CPNRD scoring efforts will begin soon after Pathfinder scoring is completed. Sellers asked
98 whether the change of water right applications have been submitted to the NDNR. Woodward
99 reported that the CPNRD is in the process of developing accounting for the water lease,
100 completing canal rehab contracting and construction and evaluating the development of recharge
101 ponds.

102
103 ***NPPD Water Leasing: Jeff Shafer, NPPD***

104 Shafer noted there were no updates to report at this time.

105
106 ***CNPPID Water Leasing: Jerry Kenny, ED***

107 Kenny reported that he has initiated discussion with Don Kraus at the CNPPID regarding water
108 leasing opportunities. The GC decided at the December 2013 meeting to not accept the offer for
109 Net Controllable Conserved Water (NCCW), and CNPPID has presented a separate offer to lease
110 water from irrigators based on a price per acre. The CNPPID would act as the liaison between
111 the irrigators and the Program. There are permitting questions to discuss with Nebraska
112 Department of Natural Resources (NDNR).

113
114 Altenhofen asked whether the leasing would put water into the Environmental Account (EA) and
115 about the possibility of increased groundwater irrigation. Kenny responded that one of the
116 advantages of this option is the ability to store the leased water in Lake McConaughy and that
117 increased well depletions will be an issue to address during the permitting process. Econopouly
118 inquired about the asking price of the water, and Kenny responded that the price is still being
119 discussed. Altenhofen asked whether the CNPPID board has expressed an opinion on the leasing
120 option. Drain responded that there has been preliminary discussion and the CNPPID board is
121 cautiously open to the option. Kenny concluded the discussion by adding that this option has a
122 direct benefit to the land owners and that leasing of water may be a purely economic decision.

123
124 **Choke Point Updates: Justin Brei, ED Office**

125 Brei updated the WAC on the status of projects aimed to increase flood stage capacity at the
126 North Platte Chokepoint. The Finance Committee has approved a contract amendment with EA
127 Engineering to pursue the 404 individual permit required for the State Channel berm project.
128 Efforts will begin in the next couple of weeks. Econopouly asked whether the ED Office had
129 looked into potential design modifications to increase the protection offered by the State Channel
130 berm. Brei explained that EA Engineering's original design elevations were based on the
131 elevation of an adjacent power substation and the ED Office determined that the berm height was
132 adequate. Brei reported that the Whitehorse Creek project was covered by a nationwide 404
133 permit and was substantially completed by January 10, 2014.



134 Brei discussed the status of the alternative to route water from the North Platte River to the South
135 Platte River around the choke point by use of canals. Canals of interest are the Suburban, Keith-
136 Lincoln, and the Platte Valley (previously North Platte) Canals. Brei reported that the Platte
137 Valley Canal could be a big contributor with some remediation. The ED Office is working on a
138 cost analysis for constructing a new wasteway upstream of an identified bottleneck that may
139 increase the capacity. Besson asked how much conveyance these projects were expected to yield
140 with relation to the 3,000 cfs goal. Brei responded that the floodproofing projects are not
141 directly increasing conveyance, but are aimed at getting flood stage increased to 6.5 feet,
142 corresponding to a flow of around 2,400 cfs.

143

144 **Wet Meadows Update:** *Scott Griebing, EDO*

145 Griebing explained that hydrologic monitoring has been in place at the Fox and Binfield wet
146 meadow sites for the past nine months. The monitoring project's main question is to determine
147 how river flow, precipitation, and evapotranspiration are related to groundwater levels. He noted
148 that telemetry and winter precipitation gages have been installed since the last WAC meeting.

149

150 Griebing explained that members of the project's working group (comprised of members from
151 both the Technical Advisory Committee and the Water Advisory Committee) will review
152 methods for determining evapotranspiration, data validation, and the groundwater models before
153 the project approach is peer reviewed. The peer review will occur within the year a final peer
154 review of the project's results will occur toward the end of the first increment.

155

156 **Hydroclimatic Indices Updates:** *Jerry Kenny, ED*

157 Kenny explained the Program has been working on a small investigation to determine if indices
158 (designations that describe ocean temperatures, air temperatures, etc.) can provide long-term
159 streamflow forecasts. The Program hired a contractor to provide an analysis focusing on North
160 Platte stream flow responses to hydroclimatic indices. The methodology and results should be
161 finalized by May for the North Platte River and analysis of the South Platte River may follow.

162

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

164 The 2014 WAC meeting schedule was reviewed and **the October 7 meeting was moved to**
165 **October 21** to avoid a conflict with a TAC field trip. The 2014 meeting schedule is posted on
166 the WAC website. **The next WAC meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2014, from 9:30 am –**
167 **3:00 pm (Mountain Time) at the Lake McConaughy Visitors Center.**

168

169 **(No Action Items)**

170