



PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
Land Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
February 14, 2017

Meeting Participants

Land Advisory Committee (LAC)

State of Wyoming

Lee Arrington, Alternate, Wyoming State Engineer's Office

State of Colorado

Suzanne Sellers – Member, Colorado Water Conservation Board

Kevin Urie – Alternate, Denver Water (by phone)

State of Nebraska

Ted LaGrange – Member, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission (by phone)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Matt Rabbe – Member, USFWS

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBOR)

Brock Merrill – Member, USBOR

Power Districts

Dave Zorn – Member, Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District

John Shadle – Member (Vice-Chair), Nebraska Public Power District

Environmental Entities

Andrew Pierson – Member, Audubon Rowe Sanctuary

Local Nebraska Rep. – Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD)

Mark Czaplewski – Member (Chair), CPNRD

Local Nebraska Rep. – Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD)

None

Local Nebraska Rep. – Joint CPNRD/TBNRD

None

Executive Director's Office (EDO)

Jerry Kenny, Executive Director

Bruce Sackett

Justin Brei

Tim Tunnell

Jason Farnsworth

Chad Smith

Other Participants

None



1 **Welcome and Administrative**

2 Vice-Chairman Shadle called the meeting to order at 9:05 am Central Time and the group
3 proceeded with introductions.

4
5 Shadle asked for agenda modifications. Sellers requested that the discussion on the three land
6 memos be moved to the top of the agenda since that discussion may inform other topics on the
7 agenda. The committee agreed.

8
9 Shadle asked for the LAC’s recommendation on the minutes of the August 15, 2016 meeting.

10
11 **Sellers made a motion to approve the minutes from August 15, 2016 LAC meeting. The**
12 **motion was seconded by Merrill and passed unanimously.**

13
14 **Land Memos**

15 Farnsworth discussed three memos related to PRRIP lands. The first memo described the current
16 status and options for updating of management plans. Early in the Program, management plans
17 were envisioned to be revisited every five years. This timeframe has elapsed for some tracts, so
18 the LAC is being asked to discuss options. Merrill said that he is comfortable deferring updates
19 to management plans until after high priority science items are resolved and results can be
20 incorporated into updates. Merrill said that it would be beneficial to have a short memo that
21 guides general land management for all PRRIP tracts until plan updates are completed. Rabbe
22 said that the 5-year requirement was self-imposed by the LAC and is not required by the
23 Program Document, and he is also OK with deferring updates. Shadle said the memo should
24 specifically mention major objectives such as broad scale recharge and sediment augmentation.

25
26 **Sellers moved to recommend development of a memo outlining management actions for all**
27 **PRRIP lands as a placeholder until plan updates can be completed. Motion seconded by**
28 **Merrill and passed unanimously.**

29
30 The second memo discussed by Farnsworth describes a request by the Governance Committee
31 for input on how to use remaining non-complex acres for acquisition. As it stands, 146 acres of
32 palustrine wetland have yet to be acquired to reach the goal. The GC is asking for the LAC to
33 comment on whether it is reasonable to transfer those 146 acres of palustrine wetland to focus on
34 off-channel sand and water tracts. Within the PRRIP Associated Habitat corridor, there exists
35 very little palustrine wetland habitat within the landscape and the Program has already evaluated
36 a number of those existing tracts. Additionally, analysis of crane use within the Associated
37 Habitat has shown no selection for palustrine wetlands over other habitat types. While this
38 habitat type is widely used throughout the migration corridor, it is not a feasible alternative to
39 riverine roosting habitat due to its very low availability in the PRRIP Associated Habitat. On the
40 other hand, off-channel sand and water habitat has shown very high production for least terns
41 and piping plovers and a shift in the objective would be an application of Program adaptive
42 management to make better use of available time and money. LaGrange said he does not want to
43 close the door completely on acquisition of palustrine wetland habitat. Shifting the focus to off-
44 channel sand and water areas is reasonable, but continue to consider any available wetland



45 properties. Sellers said the justification for this switch is in the science. In the Associated
46 Habitat, the cranes select for the river. Adaptive management should dictate the focus on off-
47 channel sand and water which is highly successful for terns and plovers. Science should be
48 guiding the decisions on where PRRIP spends its limited resources.

49
50 **Merrill moved to recommend that PRRIP use the remaining, or a portion of the remaining**
51 **non-complex acres to make progress towards the development of the additional 60 acres of**
52 **off-channel tern and plover nesting habitat, but do not preclude evaluation and acquisition**
53 **of palustrine wetlands. Motion seconded by Sellers and passed unanimously.**

54
55 The last memo discussed by Farnsworth asks the LAC to comment on whether or not PRRIP
56 should be spending resources for habitat restoration on lands purchased specifically for water
57 objectives (ie. groundwater recharge, slurry wall pits) when the opportunity exists. Rabbe said
58 that, on a case-by-case basis, this can be a no-brainer. For relatively low cost, restoration work
59 can create suitable habitat – especially when tracts are adjacent or near existing complexes or
60 high priority areas. Shadle said that if money is spent on restoration, acres that have been
61 restored for habitat purposes should be credited to the overall habitat land objectives. Merrill
62 agreed. Rabbe doesn't want to take away from Extension land objectives through piecemeal
63 restorations of tracts acquired for water projects. Extension land objectives were created to
64 prioritize new complexes and high priority acquisitions. Farnsworth said no action on this item
65 is being requested, but discussion will be forwarded to the Governance Committee.

66
67 **Land Offering Reviews**

68
69 **Merrill moved to go into executive session with LAC members, alternates, and technical**
70 **staff to review details of land offerings. The motion was seconded by Pierson. The motion**
71 **carried and the committee entered executive session at 10:07 a.m.**

72
73 **Arrington moved to come out of executive session. Sellers seconded and the motion**
74 **carried. The committee came out of executive session at 11:17 a.m**

75
76 **Merrill moved to recommend that the GC cease pursuit of tract 1607 and tract 1608.**
77 **Rabbe seconded and motion passed unanimously.**

78
79 **Rabbe moved to table tracts 1209 and 1606. Merrill seconded and motion passed**
80 **unanimously.**

81
82 **PRRIP First Increment Extension**

83 Smith discussed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process for the
84 extension of the Program's First Increment. The GC has come to agreement on the language of
85 the proposed extension, but the budget has not been finalized. The Bureau of Reclamation must
86 conduct a NEPA environmental review process for the extension. To assist with this process,
87 USBOR will hire a contractor and is requesting input from PRRIP committees on development



88 of the scope of work. Any recommendations for the scope of work should be sent to Smith who
89 will compile suggestions and forward them to USBOR.

90

91 **Land Management Work Review 2016**

92 Tunnell presented the LAC with the 2016 Land Management Report which details all Land Plan
93 operations, maintenance, and management expenditures on PRRIP lands in 2016.

94

95 **Miscellaneous Items**

96 Sackett requested that the LAC form a subcommittee to review and make recommendations on
97 surplus PRRIP lands. Volunteers were requested.

98

99 **Shadle appointed Merrill, Rabbe, LaBonde, Sellers, Czaplewski, Farnsworth, Shadle.**

100

101 Rabbe then discussed plans for the public comment on the Platte River Recreation Access
102 Program. This has typically taken the form of a public meeting, where comments were accepted
103 in person or by mail. Attendance at this meeting is sparse and has declined year by year, and
104 Rabbe would like to transition to an open comment period without a public meeting. The LAC
105 was generally in agreement but took no formal action.

106

107 **Land Goals Review**

108 Rabbe discussed current PRRIP land goal status in the context of First and initially envisioned
109 Second Increment goals – which includes future crediting of other conservation lands in the
110 Associated Habitat. Rabbe and Czaplewski reviewed existing PRRIP and other conservation
111 lands throughout the Associated Habitat for their applicability to target species in order to look at
112 land goals for the First Increment Extension and begin the discussion for the Second Increment.
113 Rabbe recounted a few specific examples of lands that would or would not be considered for
114 inclusion into the Program in the future. This presentation is from discussions between
115 Czaplewski and Rabbe and has not been previously discussed by the LAC. Jeffery Island, since
116 it is required to be maintained by CNPPID for their FERC license, should not be included in the
117 Program under a sponsorship agreement, Rabbe said. CNPPID is allowed to sell Jeffery Island,
118 but would be required to be offset those acres through purchase of another comparable tract
119 using funds obtained through the sale of Jeffery Island. Rabbe also discussed the fact that many
120 Nebraska Game & Parks lands prioritize habitat management for public hunting (heavily
121 forested, tallgrass prairie, etc.), which is not always consistent with target species objectives, or
122 are located in areas that would not be suitable target species habitat. This presentation was
123 informational only and no action was taken.

124

125 **Public Forum**

126 Vice Chairman Shadle asked for public comments, none were offered.

127

128 **The next meeting of the LAC was scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 9:00 AM central
129 time.**

130

131 **Reorganize Officers**



132 **Rabbe moved to retain Czaplewski as LAC Chair for 2017. Motion seconded by Zorn and**
133 **passed unanimously.**

134

135 **Merrill moved to retain Shadle as Vice-Chair for 2017. Motion seconded by Arrington and**
136 **passed unanimously.**

137

138

139 With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Vice-Chairman Shadle at 1:00 p.m.