



**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**  
**Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**EDO Office, Kearney and Conference Call**  
**June 3, 2019**

**Meeting Participants**

**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

**Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)**

Brock Merrill – Member

**State of Colorado**

Jojo La – Member

**State of Wyoming**

Barry Lawrence – Member

**State of Nebraska**

Carol Flaute – Member

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

Matt Rabbe – Member

**Environmental Entities**

Rich Walters – Member

Andrew Pierson – Alternate

**Upper Platte Water Users**

**Colorado Water Users**

Jason Marks – Member

**Downstream Water Users**

Dave Zorn – Member

Mark Czaplewski – Member

Jim Jenniges – Member

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

Jason Farnsworth

Chad Smith

Dave Baasch

Patrick Farrell

Scott Griebling

**Other Participants**

Michelle Koch – NGPC

Andrew Caven – Trust

Sarah Nevison – Nebraska

Briana Barber – Nebraska

Tom Econopouly – USFWS

Brandi Flyr – CNPPID



### **Welcome and Administrative**

Merrill called the meeting to order, the group did a roll call, and Merrill and asked for any agenda modifications. None offered.

### **TAC Minutes**

Merrill asked the group if there were any suggested changes for the October 16, 2018 TAC Minutes. **Walters moved to approve the April 30, 2019 TAC minutes; Jenniges seconded the motion; all supported the motion.**

### **2019 State of the Platte Report**

Smith informed the TAC that the EDO has been working on the AMP Version 2 in parallel to developing the State of the Platte Report of which some of the content ended up in the AMP. Smith and Baasch discussed the 2019 State of the Platte Report briefly and noted the only change in the status of the Big Question assessments was BQ10 had been changed to 2-thumbs up. La mentioned she had some minor edits that would be sent to the EDO for consideration. The group proceeded to discuss comments associated with each Big Question as summarized below and the EDO will consider the suggestions in the upcoming weeks.

### **Program Learning (Page 6)**

- Rabbe suggested changing the language to “SDHF is unlikely to create or maintain whooping crane habitat...” rather than “will not...”. Rabbe also suggested adding a bullet to acknowledge the Program is still committed to implementing an SDHF. Jenniges stated an SDHF may be beneficial in the fall, but that it is fairly clear it won’t do much in the spring as currently proposed. Smith stated the definition of what an SDHF is currently defined as is in the State of the Platte and if we want to consider fall SDHF releases that should be tested in the AMP Version 2.
- Rabbe suggested changing “system scale benefits associated with high flow events” to “system scale benefits associated with natural flow events”

#### **BQ-1**

- Rabbe suggested changing the language to “SDHF is unlikely to create or maintain whooping crane habitat...” rather than “will not...”.
- Caven stated the logistic curve was difficult to interpret given the bar chart. Baasch stated the bars are a count of pixels and the line is a measure of acres.
- Nevison pointed out there was a missing year in the list of years for natural high flow events.

#### **BQ-2**

- Rabbe suggested explaining what the “12-foot increase” meant if it was an annual increase or a 1-time benefit.
- Rabbe suggested adding “disking during most years...”
- Rabbe suggested explaining how the 1,300 cfs was derived in the caption of Figure 4.
- Rabbe asked why the model seemed to consistently track low. Farrell said the predicted is based on median and observed was based on mean and that the figure will be changed.



- Rabbe suggested why “dry” years was included twice in the “We Estimate With Confidence” section.

**BQ-3**

- La asked if we state “It will be challenging to measure the effectiveness of augmentation...” why we had a 1-thumbs up but stated she didn’t disagree with the assessment. Farnsworth discussed the background and stated if sediment isn’t augmented the degradation would move downstream but the beneficial effects are currently unknown so that’s why it’s a 1-thumbs up.

**BQ-4**

- La asked if it was possible to update Figure 3 with recent data. Farnsworth stated we are in the process of doing that, but that current measures are being calculated on an area basis rather than a transect basis.

**BQ-5**

- Koch stated that the hypothesis included “flow consolidation, etc.” and asked if given flow consolidation had not been implemented due to legal and other issues, should this hypothesis be left as unconfirmed.
- Caven suggested changing the range in Figure 5 to 600-800 feet and Figure 6 to 300-800 feet.
- Rabbe suggested including results from Baasch et al. 2019 in the captions rather than a channel width range as currently stated.

**BQ-6**

- La suggested changing the language in the Management Implications section to “Based on results of Program analyses, the Program has agreed to increase off-channel habitat availability by 60 acres.”

**BQ-7**

- La and Koch suggested changing the language in the We Estimate with Confidence section. Changed to “Managed off-channel nesting habitat is necessary to maintain the presence of central Platte River tern and plover populations.”
- La suggested changing the language in the Management Implications section to “Based on results of Program analyses, the Program has agreed to increase off-channel habitat availability by 60 acres.”

**BQ-8**

- No comments

**BQ-9**

- Rabbe stated Jeff Runge (Service) had made several suggestions that were distributed to the TAC prior to the meeting and that had been brought up on several occasions before. Smith stated the EDO has wrestled with this Big Question for years and didn’t know how to



change the language to better capture what has been learned and stated the Program is moving forward by addressing this question during the Extension.

- Rabbe asked if any publications or the EDO white paper could be used to add any additional information to the Big Question.

#### **BQ-10**

- No comments.

#### **Additional First Increment Learning**

- No comments.

#### **Program Publications**

- Jenniges stated there were Program reports missing from the list (e.g., Bankhead scour research, Program reports, etc.)

Smith stated once the EDO gets the State of the Platte Report cleaned up based on TAC input we would distribute it to the ISAC in the upcoming weeks.

Rabbe asked if the EDO was prepared to monitor the choke point in the event natural flows reach flood stage at North Platte; Farnsworth said we are ready.

#### **Upcoming 2019 TAC Meeting Schedule**

A Doodle Poll will be distributed to set the next TAC meeting which would be late October. The following items would be discussed during the upcoming meeting.

- October 15<sup>th</sup>-ish – 4-hour TAC meeting to discuss FY2020 Budget, progress/direction for the AMP, species updates, and any other items that may come up.

#### **Summary of Decisions from the April 30, 2019 TAC Meeting**

##### **1. The TAC approved the April 30, 2019 TAC Meeting Minutes as Final**