



1 **PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP or PROGRAM)**  
2 **Governance Committee (GC) Quarterly Meeting Minutes**

3  
4 Tuesday, December 10, 2018 – 2:00 PM – 5:45 PM  
5

6 **Note: All times Mountain.**

7  
8 **Meeting Location:**  
9 Warwick Hotel Denver  
10 1776 Grant Street  
11 Denver, CO 80203  
12 (303) 861-2000

13 **Governance Committee (GC)**

14 **State of Wyoming**

15 Harry LaBonde – Member

16 **State of Colorado**

17 Don Ament – Member

18 JoJo La – Alternate

19 Carlee Brown – Alternate

20 **State of Nebraska**

21 Jeff Fassett – Member (2018 GC Chair)

22 **Upper Platte Water Users**

23 Dennis Strauch – Member

24 Bob Mehling – Alternate

25 **Downstream Water Users**

26 Mark Czaplewski – Member

27 Don Kraus – Member

28 Brian Barels – Member

29 Kent Miller – Member

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

31 Jason Farnsworth, ED

32 Chad Smith, DED

33 Bridget Barron

34 Dave Baasch

35 Courtney Black

36 Scott Griebing

37 Bruce Sackett

38 Seth Turner

39 Kevin Werbylo

40 **Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)**

41 Chris Beardsley – Member

42 Brock Merrill – Alternate

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

44 Michael Thabault – Member

45 **Environmental Entities**

46 Bill Taddicken – Member

47 Rich Walters – Member

48 **Colorado Water Users**

49 Alan Berryman – Member

50 Deb Freeman – Alternate

51 **Audience Members**

52 Mike Drain – CNPPID

53 Tom Econopouly – Service

54 Matt Rabbe – Service

55 Devin Brundage – CNPPID

56 Steve Kuehr – Brierley Associates

57 Blain Dwyer – HDR

58 Jeff Cowley – State of Wyoming

59 Rick Wilson – JEO

60 Becky Mitchell – CWCB

61 Brent Newman – CWCB

62 Erik Skeie – CWCB



**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2018**

## **Welcome & Administrative**

Fassett called the meeting to order at 2:09 PM Mountain Time and the group proceeded with introductions.

**GC Decision** – Ament moved to approve the following GC Minutes; Merrill seconded. Minutes approved.

- *September 11-12, 2018 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes as amended by Colorado.*
- *November 13, 2018 GC Special Session minutes as amended by Colorado*

## Program Committee Updates

### Land Advisory Committee (LAC)

Czaplewski provided an update on the latest LAC activities. The LAC met on October 29 and largely discussed FY19 budget items. There was discussion about Tract 1804 that is on the GC agenda later today. Czaplewski is LAC Chair and John Shadle is LAC Vice Chair for 2019.

## Water Advisory Committee (WAC)

Turner provided an update on the latest WAC activities. The WAC last met on October 2 with updates on groundwater recharge, leasing, slurry wall, and Cottonwood Ranch broad scale recharge (BSR). The WAC also discussed the FY19 budget.

### *Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)*

Merrill provided an update on the latest TAC activities. The TAC had a short meeting on October 16 just before the start of the 2018 AMP Reporting Session. The TAC then discussed the process of updating the AMP and there will soon be a schedule.

### *Finance Committee (FC)*

LaBonde said the FC last met on November 6 and handled several action items including a Cottonwood Ranch BSR contract addendum; contract amendment for the PRRIP web site and database; discussed the FY19 budget; and approved the expenditure of \$24,000 for an upgrade to the Program's IT infrastructure.

## Program Outreach Update

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## *PRESENTATIONS*

- Jason Farnsworth presented an update on the Program at the Nebraska Natural Resources Districts Annual Conference on September 25, 2018 in Kearney, Nebraska.
- George Oamek presented on the Program to a Senior Survey Class in Environmental Policy at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado on October 4, 2018.
- Deb Freeman and Jason Farnsworth presented an update on the Program at the South Platte Forum on October 25, 2018 in Loveland, Colorado.
- Tom Smrdel presented on the Program's sediment augmentation to the Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District (CNPPID) Board of Directors on October 26, 2018 in Holdrege, Nebraska.
- Dave Baasch presented on the Program to the Fisheries Society of America meeting on December 4, 2018 at Rowe Sanctuary.

## *EXHIBITS/SPONSORSHIPS*

- The Program exhibited at Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island on September 11, 12, and 13, 2018 in the Natural Resources Districts building. We made 1,400 contacts over the course of the three days.
- The Program exhibited at the South Platte Forum on October 24 & 25, 2018 in Loveland, Colorado. We made 172 contacts over the course of the two days.

49     • The Program exhibited at the Boo!-Seum at the Kearney Children's Museum on October 25, 2018.  
50       Attendance was over 400 children and adults. The Program gave children attending the event candy  
51       and kits to make their own bird feeder.  
52     • The Program exhibited at the joint convention of the Nebraska Water Resources Association and the  
53       Nebraska State Irrigators Association on November 18 -20, 2018 in Kearney, Nebraska. We made 100  
54       contacts at the conference.

55     **UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS/EXHIBITS**

56     • The Program will be exhibiting at the annual meeting of the Four States Irrigation Council in Fort  
57       Collins, Colorado on January 9-11, 2019.  
58     • Justin Brei will be presenting to the Nebraska Land Improvement Consultants (NLIC) conference on  
59       January 16, 2019 in Kearney, Nebraska. His session is titled, "*Water Projects and Habitat Restoration*  
60       *for the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program – Past, Present, and Future*".  
61     • The Program will be exhibiting at Colorado Water Congress in Denver, Colorado on January 30 –  
62       February 1, 2019.  
63     • Bruce Sackett will be presenting at the Joint Venture Rainwater Basin Information Seminar in Grand  
64       Island February 7, 2019 about the Program accomplishments and the Public Access Program with  
65       Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

66     **MEDIA/OTHER**

67     • The Kearney Hub published an article in the November 28, 2018 newspaper regarding the construction  
68       of the berms for the Broad-Scale Recharge Project. Kevin Werbylo was interviewed for the article and  
69       Jason Farnsworth and Jeff Fassett were quoted.

70     **PRRIP FY18 Budget Update**

71     Farnsworth discussed the status of the FY18 budget, expenditures, and forecast for the rest of 2018.

72     **PRRIP FY19 Budget & Work Plan**

73     Farnsworth discussed the draft FY19 PRRIP budget and work plan and the FY19 EDO contract. Walters  
74       discussed the history of funding for phragmites control on the central Platte and how much the Program has  
75       contributed over time. LaBonde asked how big this program is each year. Walters said roughly \$600,000  
76       each year. LaBonde asked how much the Nebraska Department of Agriculture is going to contribute this  
77       year. Walters said hopefully \$200,000. Ament said if you get behind on weeds, then you are behind for a  
78       long time. He discussed finding a way to draw down the amount of Program funding slowly. Kraus said he  
79       appreciates Walters' efforts and bringing this to the GC. Ament asked if the EDO helps with this.  
80       Farnsworth said Tim Tunnell is president of the WMA, the EDO provides some GIS support, etc. He said  
81       the biggest uncertainty right now is the Environmental Trust grant. Beardsley asked what a reduced effort  
82       would look like. Walters said the main change would be having the contractor spray less of the channel.  
83       Thabault said he would hate to see the Program slide backward and have a stranded investment of the  
84       money we have already invested over time. La asked what prospects we have of cost sharing with other  
85       entities and staying at a total effort of \$600,000 if the Program is at \$250,000. Walters said he feels good  
86       about the possibilities.

87     LaBonde said we discussed this last year and there was discussion of ramping down the Program's funding  
88       level. The Program still seems to be the fallback cash cow for this vegetation control program. It is an  
89       excellent program, it is just that the PRRIP is funding at too high of a level given the relative percentage of  
90       benefits. LaBonde said he will not support the motion increasing the amount of funding to \$250,000. Merrill  
91       echoed those comments. Thabault said we aren't just protecting the phragmites investment, we are

97 protecting all of the Program's investments. Taddicken said the phragmites control has likely been the  
98 keystone effort of the Program during the First Increment and we would be much further behind without it.  
99 Freeman asked if there is anything the Program could do to encourage more support from other parties.  
100 Farnsworth said it really hinges on grant applications that are in now that we won't learn about until at least  
101 the end of January. Fassett said there has been some discussion of creating an endowment. Walters said  
102 those discussions are happening but nothing firm yet.  
103

104 Beardsley suggested we fund this line item at \$250,000; that sends a message that Program funding is on  
105 the decline; and that we are looking at being at \$200,000 the next year to keep the Program closer to the  
106 one third support. LaBonde said this program needs to move to an O&M approach and get away from so  
107 much support from grants.  
108

109 **GC Decision** – *Thabault moved to increase FY19 PRRIP budget line item WP-1(b) to \$250,000 for FY19; Ament seconded. The State of Wyoming (Program Signatory) opposed the motion; motion failed.*  
110

111 Czaplewski asked about WP-4b(ii) – the work plan text refers to \$2.3 million in acquisition costs but is  
112 specific and wonders what that refers to. Farnsworth said if the owners of the parcels immediately  
113 downstream of the BSR project area, this would provide us cash to acquire that land if necessary.  
114 Czaplewski asked if this is more of a contingency. Farnsworth said yes.  
115

116 **GC Decision** – *LaBonde moved to approve the FY19 PRRIP budget and work plan; Ament seconded. Motion approved.*  
117

118 **GC Decision** – *Thabault moved to approve the 2019-2023 EDO contract; Taddicken seconded. Motion approved.*  
119

### **PRRIP Publications, Peer Review, & Monitoring Update**

120 Baasch provided an update on the latest PRRIP publications, tern and plover monitoring results, the latest  
121 whooping crane population estimate, and introduced the EDO technicians that work for the PRRIP with  
122 species monitoring, data collection, and data analysis. Fassett asked about banding variability by site.  
123 Baasch said he does not have a clear answer as to why some sites had much lower banding as opposed to  
124 some sites having higher banding rates. It could have something to do with bird movement and re-nesting.  
125 Farnsworth said it probably also has to do with a small sample size.  
126

127 **GC Decision** – *Czaplewski moved to approve publication of the tern/plover inside/outside monitoring  
128 manuscript; LaBonde seconded. Publication approved.*  
129

### **Environmental Account (EA) Annual Operating Plan (AOP)**

130 Econopouly discussed the main focus items of the 2019 EA AOP, which includes a test of conveyance  
131 capacity at the choke point. LaBonde asked about safeguards that are in place related to any issues with  
132 flooding or inundation at the choke point. Farnsworth said discussions are underway with the National  
133 Weather Service, City of North Platte, and other entities to plan for this. Farnsworth has been working  
134 closely with Central on the mechanics of how this will work. There will be extensive monitoring of the  
135 event and Jim Hawks from North Platte will be a key player. La asked whether there are concerns about  
136 blowing out the new State Channel berm. Farnsworth said it would be a lot more water to overtop and blow  
137 out that berm. LaBonde asked what the measurable results were from the October release this year.  
138 Econopouly said about 75% of the flow made it past Grand Island and Rabbe said it eliminated the effects  
139 of hydrocycling.  
140

145 **Tiered Consultations**

146 Rabbe discussed possible changes to the template for tiered consultations. Thabault said the Service is  
147 looking for two to three key individuals to help clean up language and propose changes. Freeman, Merrill,  
148 Econopouly, and Farnsworth will help Rabbe with possible edits.

149

150 **PRRIP Water Action Plan (WAP) Update**

151 Werbylo introduced Wilson from JEO and Kuehr from Brierly who gave a short presentation on the updated  
152 status of the Lakeside Slurry Wall project design. LaBonde asked if part of the cost is to bring material in  
153 to help with areas that are mined closely. Kuehr said yes. Drain asked why we would pursue permitting  
154 now if we just wanted to get to final design. Barels asked what will take the project to final design. Wilson  
155 said integrating final comments and moving the plans to a final version. LaBonde asked if the slurry wall  
156 would pass the test in Colorado and if not, how issues of capacity and storage will be dealt with in Nebraska.  
157 Wilson said this design would not pass the strict requirements of Colorado but we have to talk with the  
158 Nebraska DNR to get a read on how it will work in Nebraska. LaBonde asked if we should continue to  
159 investigate issues related to leaking and how the Nebraska DNR will handle that – whose water is it if it  
160 leaks and how is it handled? That could fall under permitting but it is really a pre-permitting question.  
161 LaBonde said it might be wise to take action until we have answers for these types of issues. Fassett asked  
162 if that is a precursor to final design. LaBonde said yes.

163

164 Farnsworth said he is hearing a desire to investigate some of the regulatory, administrative, and operational  
165 aspects of this project before going further with final design. The GC agreed. Thabault said it seems odd to  
166 stop when we are so close to final design on the slurry wall. Beardsley said it is more of a pause until we  
167 get further information.

168

169 **Choke Point**

170 Farnsworth gave a quick update of activities to deal with the idea of a choke point test flow next year and  
171 the draft indemnity agreement. Drain said he is incorporating comments into the agreement and has  
172 contacted staff at FERC to start discussions about this. Hopefully, this can be addressed by FERC within a  
173 month or two. Fassett asked about the preference of when the test would happen. Farnsworth said hopefully  
174 May or June. Drain said NWS staff prefer to go in the fall. Barels asked about the length of the test and  
175 what the NWS is thinking. Farnsworth said probably something like a couple to several days with no steep  
176 drop-off. Drain said likely something like five days to a week, dependent on the season. LaBonde asked if  
177 we have quantified the impacts we would be indemnifying Central for. Farnsworth said we are preparing  
178 all associated monitoring and modeling and also will consider establishing a set of triggers related to flow  
179 levels.

180

181 **Public Recreation Access (PRRA) Program**

182 Sackett said he has not yet heard back from the NGPC about possibly lowering what the Program pays them  
183 to administer the Program.

184

185 **Public Comment**

186 Fassett asked for public comment. None offered.

187

188 **Executive Session**

189 *Amend moved to enter Executive Session; LaBonde seconded. GC entered Executive Session at 5:00 PM*  
190 **Mountain Time.**

191

192 *Beardsley moved to end Executive Session; Kraus seconded. GC ended Executive Session at 5:15 PM*  
193 **Mountain Time.**

**PRRIP Executive Session Motions**

**GC Decision** – Czaplewski moved to authorize the EDO to enter into negotiations for acquisition of Tract 1804; LaBonde seconded. Motion approved.

**Future Meetings & Closing Business**

**GC Decision** – Elected LaBonde (State of Wyoming) as 2019 GC Chair and Ament (State of Colorado) as 2019 GC Vice Chair and Beardsley (Bureau of Reclamation) as 2019 GC Alternate Vice Chair.

Upcoming 2019 GC meetings:

- GC Quarterly Meeting – **March 4-5, 2019** @ Kearney, NE
- GC Quarterly Meeting – **June 11-12, 2019** @ Cheyenne, WY
- GC Quarterly Meeting – **September 10-11, 2019** @ Kearney, NE
- 2019 AMP Reporting Session – **October 8-10, 2019** @ Omaha, NE
- GC Special Session (FY20 Budget/Work Plan) – **November 12, 2019** (conference call/webinar only)
- GC Quarterly Meeting – **December 3-4, 2019** @ Denver, CO

**Meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM Mountain Time.**

**Summary of Action Items/Decisions from December 10, 2018 GC Quarterly Meeting**

- 1) Approved the following GC minutes:
  - September 11-12, 2018 GC Quarterly Meeting minutes.
  - November 13, 2018 GC Special Session minutes.
- 2) Approved FY19 PRRIP budget and work plan.
- 3) Approved 2019-2023 EDO contract.
- 4) Approved publication of tern/plover inside/outside monitoring manuscript.
- 5) Authorized the EDO to enter into negotiations for acquisition of Tract 1804.
- 6) Elected Labonde as 2019 GC Chair, Ament as Vice Chair, and Beardsley as Alternate Vice Chair.
- 7) Set 2019 GC meeting schedule.