

NPBRT Minutes: 12-6-11 Meeting

NFS Conf. Room (7-9PM)

100 Main Street, Walden, CO

Members/Liaisons Present

(* Voting members)

Deb Alpe

Mike Alpe

*Mike Allnutt

*Jimmer Baller

Paula Belcher

*Kent Crowder

*Randy Miller

*John Rich

Carl Trick II

*Ty Wattenberg

*Barbara Vasquez

Guests Present

Shanna Lewis

Meg McElveen

Matt Reddy

Jeff Streeter

Caid Waldron

Members/Liaisons Absent

*James Carothers

Pete Conovitz

*Scott Fischer

*Tom Hackleman

Debbi Heeney

*Mike Honholz

*Kay Meyring

Ann Timberman

Hunter Townsend

Michael Wright

*Rick Wyatt

I. Agenda Review: The agenda was accepted as published.

II. Approval of NPBRT Minutes: Sept 20 & Oct 25, 2011 Meetings

There were clarifications on the 9/20 meeting minutes offered by Carl Trick, Kent Crowder and Ty Wattenberg in the sections dealing with the Flaming Gorge Taskforce and the vote to sunset the NCNA committee. It was moved (Ty Wattenburg), seconded (Jim Baller) and approved by the RT members to accept the 9/20 minutes as modified and the 10/25 minutes as published. Final 9/20 minutes will be distributed separately.

III. Progress Report on WSRA Project – North Park Irrigated Meadow

Conservation Program – Phase 1: Matt Reddy, Regional Biologist, Ducks Unlimited, Inc. The power-point presentation used to update the NPBRT on this project is distributed with these minutes. Matt explained that the project is somewhat behind schedule due to delays in getting funding source contracts (NAWCA, Co Parks & Wildlife, WSRA) in place. In addition, the long cold spring of 2011 caused

damage that required his attention to make repairs for other projects. For the Wet Meadows project, he plans on the ground work in 2012. There are four tasks outlined for this project: 1) modeling, 2) site assessments, 3) priority project survey & design and 4) assessment & permitting.

Matt enumerated the deliverables of Task 1 and stated he was this presentation addressed deliverable 4.

1. Thunderstorm map of priority irrigated meadow areas
2. Map of potential Program project sites
3. Contact list of potential Program landowners
4. North Platte Basin Roundtable Board Review and Approval of Map
5. Outreach to potential Program landowners

He walked through the results of the modeling, in which the number of variables had been reduced from 8 to 5 based on overlap. Those variables are wetland abundance, wetland proximity, land cover type & value, proximity to irrigated lands, proximity to managed complexes. The results of the modeling gave at waterfowl rank (1-10, arbitrary units) a total of 65 parcels of 15 acres or larger that rated a waterfowl habitat desirability score of 8, 9 or 10. The next step was to look for the subset of high ranking waterfowl habitat parcels that are currently not irrigated. Matt showed maps derived from the CDSS for the North Platte Basin of three types of irrigated lands: 1) heritage (shown as irrigated on all years mapped), 2) recent (added in 2005) and 3) historical (irrigated prior to '05 but NOT in '05, independent of whether mapped as wetland on NWI). It is the historic (previously irrigated, but not irrigated on the last year mapped) that Matt defined as 'irrigable'. (Future analysis may include distance for existing irrigation infrastructure.) He turned next to a map of Jackson County land tracts (767 tracts totaling 706,137 acres/ 68% of the county). By searching for the overlap of best waterfowl habitat & 'irrigable' (historic) private lands, Matt has generated a map of the highest ranking parcels in the Basin for this project, which total 42. He has derived a list of landowners for these highest potential parcels, but needs to verify current land ownership with the County Assessor or Recorder. Some of the landowners are individuals that DU and/or their partners have already established working relationships. Deb Heeney offered to help by consulting with Matt about landowners unfamiliar to him. With updated ownership info, his next task is to reach out to potential private land partners to determine their level of interest in participation in his project. Whether water is physically and legally available to irrigate these parcels remains to be determined. The restrictions associated with this project for private landowners depending on the funding source. Parks and Wildlife funding imposes a requirement for rest rotation (skip haying) and a hard date before which haying is not allowed (Aug 1?). NAWCA funding allows ranchers to manage the meadows for hay with no requirement for a fixed duration of flooding. Carl asked whether CP&W or DU had data on nest success on "managed" lands versus meadows under standard hay management. Matt said that CPW hadn't done such a study yet for North Park. Carl: How does Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge determine productivity. Matt: Samples are taken by dragging ropes to flush birds, then mark nests. They can count # of breeding pairs in an area, then model estimated population trends.

Next steps for the Wet Meadows project include landowner outreach, then winnowing of the list of high potential parcels down to 10 or 11. Once the conceptual plans with

specifics are established, that 10-11 will be narrowed down to 5 before proceeding with the engineering. Along the way, the other stakeholders potentially impacted by moving water to 'irrigable' parcels will be consulted. Concerns might include destruction of sage grouse habitat as well as reduction of stream flows with consequences for aquatic habitat and fish.

As part of the deliverable #4, the RT is asked to approve the modeling results.

Randy made a motion to accept the modeling and encourage DU to proceed at the next step. Barbara seconded it and the vote was unanimous.

IV. North Platte Basin Education Project: Deb Alpe

The North Platte Basin Report had previously been distributed for final comment.

Barbara had sent 4 suggestions to Kristin and the NP Ed Committee.

On p1, the list of members is a bit confusing because the number of at-large (10) members isn't matched by the list below. It was agreed to simply remove reference to the number of each type of rep in the at-large categories. And the Wildlife rep's affiliation will be updated from DOW to CPW to reflect the recent merger. Kent will double check the membership list for accuracy. The photo of the snowmobiler will not be changed (see the head/face) because it would incur a royalty charge for the use of the photo. On page 3, reference to the haystack in the photo caption will be changed from 'loaves' to 'stacks'. Ty was asked if he wanted his ranch identified with the photo of the irrigation canal and hay meadows (he said no). Caption for the photo of the new, WSRA-funded flow control structure at the inlet of the Walden Reservoir will be changed as it does not include flow measurement. The caption on the photo of Mark Russell at the Walden Water Treatment plant will include his title. A photo of Blaine Evans will be included, and the photo of Barbara will be changed out. The population of Jackson County will be corrected from 1500 to the 2010 census figure: 1394.

With the changes listed above, it was moved by John Rich and seconded by Jim Baller to approve the North Platte Basin Report put together for us by CFWE. The motion was carried unanimously. Kristin will bring the final 'magazine' for distribution at our January meeting. There was considerable discussion about ancillary material in the Education Committee meeting, in which Kristin Maharg participated by phone, that was held prior to this NPBRT meeting. There will be a powerpoint presentation created that can be used by any of the NPBRT members to support our mandate for outreach and education. Kristin should have a draft of the powerpoint for review at our Jan meeting.

Deb reported about the Water 2012 which will be celebrating 75 anniversary of the 1937 Water Conservancy Act. A BRT poster display will be created. About 2/3 of it will be common for all basins (CDM maps, etc), but one panel can be customized for an individual basin. Deb sees use of it at least for the County Fair and Stock Growers annual meeting. When asked, Kent commented that the Jackson County Water Conservancy District was formed in 1961.

V. CWCB/IBCC update: Carl Trick III/John Rich

John Rich reported on the IBCC. He said Carl Trick made a presentation on the North Platte portfolio tool results, highlighting the message about avoiding Ag dry-up

where possible. Regarding PEPO, John said there was a long discussion about the name, and questions were raised about how the IBCC will direct PEPO to achieve the education mandate.

VI. Old Business

None

V. New Business:

Ty Wattenberg asked Barbara to provide minutes of the State-wide NCN meeting she attended on Oct.13.

VI. Set Next Meeting: The date for the next meeting is set for Tue, Jan 24, 3-5PM (winter hours). Topics suggested for the meeting include presentations by 1) Kristin Maharg on the CFWE North Platte Basin Report, 2) Deb Heeney on the Walden Reservoir WSRA project, and 3) a summary of minutes of the State NCN meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

Powerpoint presentation made by Matt Reddy will be sent by separate email due to size.