



PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
Wet Meadow Literature and Information Review Workshop Minutes
 ED Office Conference Room – Kearney, NE
 February 15, 2011

Attendees

Mike Besson – State of Wyoming (Chair)
 Chad Smith – ED Office
 Dave Baasch – ED Office
 Jason Farnsworth – ED Office
 Mark Peyton – Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District
 Jim Jenniges – Nebraska Public Power District
 Mark Czaplewski – Central Platte Natural Resource District
 Jeff Runge – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Matt Rabbe – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Doug Hallum – Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
 Pat Golte – Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
 Mike Fritz – Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
 Suzanne Sellers – Colorado Water Conservation Board
 Karine Gil – Whooping Crane Trust
 Enrique Weir – Whooping Crane Trust
 Felipe Chavez-Ramirez – Whooping Crane Trust
 Tim Tunnel – Ed Office
 Rich Walters – Nature Conservancy
 Kevin Urie – Colorado Water Users (teleconference)

Welcome and Administrative

Besson called the workshop to order and the group proceeded with a roll call.

Sandhill Crane Survey Proposal Discussion

Baasch stated the Trust was seeking funding for a 2-year research project on sandhill cranes and mentioned if the group wasn't interested in supporting funding for the 2-year project another option would be to consider funding the aerial survey work which would cost less than \$5,000 during 2011 and asked the group what their position was on both of these options. Farnsworth stated with the crane migration season upon us the group needed to decide whether they supported providing funding or not. Sellers stated the Colorado Water Conservation Board team had issues with funding a non-target species research project. Hallum and Besson stated their offices felt the same way. The group decided not to support any level of funding for the sandhill crane research.

Wet Meadow Information Review

Weir led the discussion and presented content of the Trust's Report.

Chavez-Ramirez presented the Trust's responses to reviewers' comments. Chavez-Ramirez indicated it may be impossible to develop criteria for defining 'high-quality Wet Meadow for whooping cranes' with the information that is currently available. Chavez-Ramirez stated developing a working definition of Wet Meadow for the Program should be defined by the TAC or broader group of the Program; however, the Trust could provide a working definition if the group wanted them to. Baasch, Rabbe, and Jenniges suggested the Trust put together a working definition that the TAC can comment on and modify to fit



Program needs. Chavez-Ramirez stated the database at the USFWS contains a lot of valuable information; however, it needs to be analyzed and summarized to be more useful. Trust can inform the Program on best candidate Wet Meadow sites to acquire, but probably cannot determine on how best to restore Wet Meadows because the information is not available yet. Smith indicated the RFP did not ask the Trust to inform us on best candidate Wet Meadows to purchase; it was to inform the Trust of a potential use of their report. Information gaps were partially addressed in the ‘second Report’ and will be further addressed in the Final Report. Chavez-Ramirez indicated information on many species of concern is not available or is not published. Smith asked if anyone had knowledge of a potential database for the Trust to search to find information on more species of concern. Rabbe stated he thought there were a few publications on prairie fringed orchid and asked if that information was included in the report. Chavez-Ramirez stated he recalls the publication and believes the information was incorporated into the tables, but was not positive. Rabbe stated he sent the Trust several publications and asked if they went through them and included that information. Chavez-Ramirez stated many of the publications that were sent to the Trust were review articles so the Trust went directly to the original publication and included the information that way. Farnsworth stated the literature review compiled in EndNote will be uploaded to the non-public program library so people within the Program can access them.

BREAK

Smith led discussions on next steps for the Information review and provided a position on next steps for handling Wet Meadows. Smith suggested the Trust incorporate suggestions from the workshop, finalize editorial revisions, include the comments and the Trust’s responses as an appendix, and finalize the Report. Smith asked Chavez-Ramirez how long he thought it would take to finalize the Report. Chavez-Ramirez indicated they could finalize and submit the Final Report to the Program within 30 days. Chavez-Ramirez stated that if anyone knew of additional published literature that was not included in their report they could send it to them and they would include it.

Smith suggested the Program move forward with building Wet Meadows as outlined in Table 1 at a site such as the Fox Tract and monitor species response to what we build. Smith stated Wet Meadows should be treated as a land management action rather than an adaptive management action. Jenniges asked if everyone would agree at the end of the first increment that habitat constructed to Table 1 design is truly Wet Meadow habitat. Besson suggested we wait until we get the Trust’s working definition of Wet Meadow and compare their definition to what is laid out in Table 1 of the Land Plan and try to agree on what to build at that point. The group decided not to start building Wet Meadows until we develop an agreed upon working definition of a Wet Meadow and then we’ll attempt to build Wet Meadows within those confines. Smith asked what response we are looking at for Wet Meadows and Peyton stated the only response outlined in the Program document that we need to measure is whooping crane use. Runge stated we could have a consultant work on locating sites to design a Wet Meadow and start the design process. Peyton suggested the Program conduct a baseline biological survey of sites of where Wet Meadows will be built so we can determine how species abundance and diversity changes in relation to management actions. Farnsworth suggested the ED Office compile generic information and the TAC hold a workshop in the summer to develop a rough design for a Wet Meadow at the Fox Property that could be provided to the consultant that will be designing a Wet Meadow for us.

Summary of Action Items/Decisions from 15 February, 2011 Workshop

- 1) The Trust would develop a draft version of a working definition for Wet Meadows for the TAC to revise and make fit Program needs.
- 2) Information gaps that were not fully outlined in the draft report will be addressed in the final report.



- 3) The Trust will submit the a revised version of the Wet Meadow Report, the TAC will have about 2 weeks to provide final comments, and the Trust will submit the Final Report to the Program.
- 4) The TAC will hold a couple-day workshop with site visits etc to refine the Trust's working definition of Wet Meadows and will discuss design criteria that will be provide to the consultant designing Wet Meadows for the Program.