



PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (PRRIP or Program)
Governance Committee Meeting Minutes

Hampton Inn & Suites Denver/Airport – Gateway Park
4310 Airport Way
Denver, CO 80239

Meeting Attendees

Governance Committee (GC) Table

State of Wyoming

Harry LaBonde – Member

Bryan Clerkin – Alternate

State of Colorado

Don Ament – Member (Chair)

Carlee Brown – Alternate

Suzanne Sellers – Alternate

State of Nebraska

Jeff Fassett – Member

Jennifer Schellpeper – Alternate

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)

Michael Thabault – Member

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

Chris Beardsley – Member (via phone)

Brock Merrill – Alternate

Environmental Entities

Bill Taddicken – Voting Member

Duane Hovorka – Member

Upper Platte Water Users

Dennis Strauch – Member

Bob Mehling – Alternate

Colorado Water Users

Alan Berryman – Member

Kevin Urie – Alternate

Deb Freeman – Alternate

Downstream Water Users

Don Kraus – Member

Brian Barels – Member

Mark Czaplewski – Voting Member

Kent Miller – Member

Executive Director's Office (EDO) Staff

Jerry Kenny, Executive Director (ED)

Jason Farnsworth

Bruce Sackett

Chad Smith

Audience Members

Matt Rabbe – Service

Tom Econopouly – Service

Tracy Zayac – North Platte NRD

Elizabeth Miller – North Platte NRD



TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2016

Welcome & Administrative

Ament called the meeting to order at 8:04 AM Mountain Time. The group proceeded with introductions.

CNPPID Water Leasing Agreement

Kenny discussed the proposed one-year Water Leasing Agreement with CNPPID. The terms are the same as the agreement from last year. The Board of CNPPID has approved this agreement. Berryman asked when Central would make the call on an allocation for next year. Kraus said that would typically happen in September but there is little chance of a reduced allocation for next year because Lake McConaughy is nearly full.

*Berryman moved to approve the Water Leasing Agreement with CNPPID; Strauch seconded. Kraus, Miller, and Czaplewski abstained. **Water Leasing Agreement approved.***

Public Comment

Ament asked for public comment. None offered.

Executive Session

*Czaplewski moved to enter Executive Session; Thabault seconded. **GC entered Executive Session at 9:58 AM Mountain Time.***

*Thabault moved to end Executive Session; LaBonde seconded. **GC ended Executive Session at 10:24 AM Mountain Time.***

PRRIP Executive Session Motions

*Merrill moved and Mehling seconded to allow the Executive Director's Office to attempt to purchase at auction Tract 1603. **Motion approved.***

PRRIP First Increment Extension Proposal and Budget

Discussions related to the Extension Proposal and draft Extension budget were recorded and will be incorporated into a revised draft of the Extension Proposal and related budget spreadsheet for discussion at the September 13-14, 2016 GC meeting in Kearney, NE. Please see the attached document for a record of those discussions.

Future Meetings & Closing Business

Upcoming 2016 GC meetings:

- **September 13-14, 2016 @** Kearney, NE (quarterly meeting); Signatories and EDO will meet the morning of September 13, 2016 at 8:00 AM Central Time in Kearney to discuss the Extension proposal and budget
- **November 2, 2016 @** Denver, CO (Extension Proposal/Budget and FY17 Budget)
- **December 6-7, 2016 @** Denver, CO (quarterly meeting)

Upcoming 2016 ISAC meetings:

- 2016 AMP Reporting Session – **October 18-19, 2016 @** Omaha, NE (EDO and ISAC meet alone on October 20)

Meeting adjourned at 2:44 PM Mountain Time.



Summary of Action Items/Decisions from August 17, 2016 GC meeting

- 1) Approved Water Leasing Agreement with CNPPID.
- 2) Approved allowing the EDO to attempt to purchase at auction Tract 1603.

ATTACHMENT: Notes from Extension proposal and budget discussion



GC Discussion – August 17, 2016
Denver, CO

General Discussion – Extension Proposal

Land Acquisition

- LaBonde – should we open acquisition up for non-complex land as well; has been discussion lately about sandpits and their benefit for terns/plovers
- Taddicken – several bridge segments now with no complexes; the 1,500 acres would include bridge segments with no complexes
- Thabault – inclined to agree with Taddicken; can we tie in what we agreed to through SDM and say we are going to implement that; the 1,500 acres was to start a new complex
- Rabbe – goal is 60 acres that GC agreed to in SDM process; that may happen before the end of the First Increment
- LaBonde – if accomplished before the end of the First Increment, that is fine; this is a recovery program and we have identified habitat that produces tern/plovers; don't see anything in Extension proposal now that deals with that (sandpits); should we be able to consider additional pits if they come up? Argue for flexibility in how/what we acquire
- Thabault – given where we are with SDM, we are trying to maintain the status quo for plovers with maybe a couple more pairs; so, what is missing for the species that we want to help grow? Don't want to dilute that into the future
- Barels – group had talked about sandpits and wet meadows in non-complex acres; thought we had sent the issue back to the TAC to see if wet meadow acres could instead be sandpit acres; is our new goal 11,500 acres; if we already have 12,000 acres, is our goal 13,500? Need to be clear on what ultimate goal is
- Thabault – after last meeting the TAC was to look at the structure of acres; the Service is looking at the delta or change
- Czaplewski – need to clarify location; we may end up with a small focus area given existing lands, buffer, bridges, etc.
- Thabault – can priority where you are going to focus
- Taddicken – was thinking about focusing on Shelton to Wood River; but could come up with language to broaden that
- Sellers – we have some sub-optimal lands; question of whether we can dispose of some of those and use land/acres for the new property
- Hovorka – 29,000 means something to us, but species need habitat complexes in enough bridge segments; do we have enough complexes in bridge segments now? if we extend 10-13 years, how much progress do we need to make to get to the right number of complexes in the right number of bridge segments; not sure 1,500 acres is the right number
- Kraus – there is an effort to review that
- Farnsworth – could use SDM process with LAC/TAC to develop criteria related to this issue
- Thabault – looked at what land was producing for target species; need to get together to look prospectively forward to determine what counts and what doesn't count
- Barels – would be a good step to tie species to habitat? Is there a shortage of habitat for the species?
- Taddicken – original numbers were tied to species and were likely less than the Service originally asked for
- Freeman – 29,000 acres is a Second Increment question; for Extension, we have a proposal from the Service for 1,500 acres; what process do we need to follow to focus what we do with the 1,500 acres



- Rabbe – part of Service thinking regarding 1,500 acres, we anticipated Second Increment was going to start in 2020; now we have a period of 10-15 years when 29,000 will be put on back burner; 1,500 acres is a starting point to bridge that gap in time
- Fassett – had been thinking we achieved First Increment land milestone, so wouldn't the new target now be 11,500 for the Extension and we continue to move forward as we do things now
- Merrill – we are already at the new number; are we looking at what we have now plus 1,500 acres, or the milestone of 10,000 acres plus 1,500?
- Thabault – looking for 1,500 acres regardless of what the Program has now
- Rabbe – current acreage of approximately 12,000 acres is acknowledged to include a lot of conservation land that came in; 1,500 acres is a good faith effort on top of that
- Czaplewski – why is 1,500 the number?
- Thabault – we used a methodology we thought was appropriate; absent any other input or methodology, this is the number we are staying with
- Strauch – if we don't acquire 1,500 in right bridge segment, are we failing?
- Thabault – yes
- Strauch – what about willing buyer/seller? If we can't meet that requirement in right bridge segment, are we setting ourselves up for failure
- Thabault – use existing processes to avoid overly constraining ourselves
- Merrill – if we establish a new complex but only have 1,000 acres, will we have met goal
- Barels – need to be able to tell people why the number is 1,500; merit in having TAC/LAC look at Service methodology and weigh in on what the right number is
- LaBonde – would be a worthy goal for LAC/TAC going into Extension; comfortable with 1,500 and then look at criteria, location, etc. during Extension; have Extension goal of 1,500 additional acres
- Thabault – comfortable with “up to” language
- Beardsley – with language of “up to” I am comfortable

Water Conservation and Supply

- Thabault – number related to state water projects seem to keep changing; change language to 130,000-150,000 acre feet to be consistent
- Hovorka – need to commit to getting all pieces in place by a certain time (2022?) so we can operate the system and look at the science
- Kenny – need to look at implications of good, fast, cheap
- Berryman – not sure if 2022 or 2025 is right date but need to have flexibility
- Thabault – wanted to keep ultimate water goal in mind
- Thabault – concerned about ability of Program to deliver Plan B to do what is intended; can't push EA water through North Platte because of choke point; need language to say that if Plan B doesn't get us what we need for species, we need some way to ensure choke point will be fixed to get EA water downstream
- Kenny – broad-scale recharge and slurry wall gravel pits water will be through pumping; tough to get 2,000 cfs that would have come from J-2; renewed effort at choke point to be able to get EA water downstream to ensure we can implement releases like SDHF; have to get choke point to 3,000 cfs
- Barels – need to create an understanding of what we are trying to do with water; do SDHF achieve Service's objectives; what are objectives and are they in AMP; what are expected outcomes of SDHF and what science have we gained during First Increment
- Thabault – target flows are part of this as well; want to be able to move enough water to do all the environmental pieces
- Kenny – choke point discussion will focus on getting capacity to 3,000 cfs at North Platte



- Fassett – where will money come from for all this
- Thabault – 3,000 cfs might be perfectly fine; what is still fuzzy is how all the operational parts fit together to provide all the water at right time, duration, magnitude, etc.; need to know how parts fit together to deliver Program water where it needs to be when it needs to be there; have not seen how volume dots are being pulled together to deliver
- Hovorka – need date certain (milestone) to know when Nebraska will fully offset depletions; suggest tying it to the 2025 date
- Fassett – no report today, moving away from J-2 is requiring additional evaluation
- Hovorka – important to bring along Nebraska piece as we are putting together the additional water pieces that related to the overall water milestone
- Taddicken – agree we need to set a milestone on this
- Thabault – could say it will be fixed by the start of the Extension
- LaBonde – is this a Program obligation or a Nebraska obligation? This is a Program document and adding this may expand this beyond a Nebraska obligation
- Kraus – principle is that the depletion plans are approved and the states are operating under them; idea that Nebraska gets a share of water projects was always on the table
- Thabault – appropriate for State of Nebraska to say now that J-2 is not going forward we have done a critical analysis of how the other water projects will work
- Hovorka – if Nebraska wants to be part of new projects that is OK; concern is we have 10,000 acre-feet or more that may wait 10-15 years that leaves a hole in the river during that time; important to say whether you rely on Program water projects on table now or rely on other projects, how do you fully offset

General Discussion – Extension Budget

- Thabault – Jeffrey Island issue; have been digging into the FERC articles; need to have conversation about habitat benefits to the Program and is there a business case to be made for the Program to pay to get it to Program standards; not sure right now either of these supports bringing Jeffrey Island into the Program
- Farnsworth – we would treat it as a sponsorship agreement and just pay for baseline habitat management
- Kraus – we will continue to do our baseline activities; we could have an agreement that the Program would pay for anything above that.
- Thabault – may need to have FERC in the room to talk about this since they have requirements that need to be met
- Farnsworth – the budget reflects a management agreement for Jeffrey Island similar to what we have for Rowe Sanctuary right now
- Econopouly – can renew our water lease arrangements? Kenny – yes, they can all be renewed
- Rabbe – I thought at last meeting we were talking about 5,000 acres of acquire and retire, now we are talking about 2,000 acres
- Farnsworth – we backed it down because it is the most expensive option
- Kenny – we are facing the constraints of a fully appropriated or Overappropriated basin
- Merrill – Reclamation has been viewing the Extension as more of a maintenance mode rather than an implementation mode; federal dollars will be limited against other high priority projects; we have done well getting funding for the Program thus far; \$19.1 million for the Program in the President's budget for next year; ability to provide big dollars will be limited; BOR will only be able to provide a portion of the estimated \$115 million for the 10-year Extension so we will need our other cash partners to kick in more; BOR has contributed roughly 83% of the cash in the First Increment



- 241 • Thabault – will we stick to the same split?
- 242 • Beardsley – we don't want to move away from the 50/50 split, but we are concerned about the heady
- 243 outlay of cash on the part of Reclamation; need to have a conversation about the in-kind contributions
- 244 in the Extension; not reasonable to expect Reclamation to cover 83% of the expected \$115 million in
- 245 new cash needed for the Extension
- 246 • Sellers – how we handle in-kind contributions will have a big impact on those going to ask for more
- 247 cash for the Program