



**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**  
**Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission – Lake McConaughy Visitors Center  
October 11, 2016

**Meeting Attendees**

**Water Advisory Committee (WAC)**

**State of Colorado**

Suzanne Sellers – Member

**State of Wyoming**

Bryan Clerkin – Member

**State of Nebraska**

[Jessie Winter – Member](#)

[Colby Osborn](#)

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

Jeff Runge - Alternate

**U.S. Bureau of Reclamation**

Brock Merrill – Alternate

**Downstream Water Users**

Cory Steinke – Chair

Duane Woodward – Member

Jeff Shafer – Member

Landon Shaw – Member

Nolan Little

Tyler Thulin

Rich Walters

**Colorado Water Users**

Jon Altenhofen – Member

Luke Shawcross

**Upper Platte Water Users**

**Environmental Groups**

Jacob Fritton – Member

Bill Taddicken – Member

Duane Hovorka – Member

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

Jerry Kenny, ED

Kevin Werbylo

Sira Sartori

**Contractors**

Matt McConville – HDR

Rick Wilson – JEO Consulting

**Welcome and Administrative:** *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*

This document is a draft based on one person's notes of the meeting. The official meeting minutes may be different if corrections are made by the Water Advisory Committee before approval.

PRRIP WAC Meeting Minutes

Page 1 of 4

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Introductions were made. There were no agenda modifications. There were no edits reported on the August 2016 WAC meeting minutes. Motion to approve meeting minutes was made by Woodward, seconded by Merrill, unanimously approved.

#### **WAP Projects and Other Brief Water Updates**

##### ***J-2 Regulating Reservoir: Cory Steinke, CNPPID & Jerry Kenny, ED***

The amendment to the J-2 Reservoir Water Service Agreement should be ready for distribution later this week. The updated agreement states the project is on hold; however, the CNPPID can discuss land acquisition if interested landowners come forward. The updated agreement will require approval from the GC at the next meeting. Data and studies collected for the J-2 Reservoir site are wrapping up for now.

##### ***CPNRD Water Leasing Permits: Duane Woodward, CPNRD***

Woodward discussed the estimated volumes of excess flows delivered for recharge in the 30 Mile, Cozad and Orchard-Alfalfa Canals for this fall to-date, as well as for the year. The Orchard-Alfalfa Canal is recharging at a low rate and the CPNRD is doing some work on the bottom of the canal to increase rates. The CPNRD is also working on the temporary surface water transfers for the year. They are working with the CNPPID to address objections to the permit applications.

##### ***NPPD Water Leasing Permits: Jeff Shafer, NPPD***

The surface water transfer permit application has not been approved by the DNR. The NPPD has been operating recharge of excess flows at the Dawson County and Gothenburg Canals this fall. They are in the process of compiling the volumes delivered into each canal.

##### ***CNPPID Water Leasing: Jerry Kenny, ED***

Kenny said that the Program entered into a second year of agreements to lease irrigator water in the CNPPID system. The CNPPID acts as the administrator for the project and will be sending out offers to the irrigators soon. The Program put a cap of 2,000 acres to be leased. Those acres would be converted to dryland farming for the following irrigation season. Due to a lot of rain in the past year, dryland crops likely did well for the irrigators during the last round of leasing. There are no projections as to how many irrigators will participate in the leasing this year.

##### ***COHYST Update: Jerry Kenny, ED***

The COHYST schedule is on-track and everyone seems happy with the progress and capabilities of the GUI (graphical user interface). COHYST should be wrapping up the project by approximately June 2017. Woodward mentioned some additional analysis updates and calibration tweaks that will be wrapping up soon.

##### ***Project Scoring Efforts: Sira Sartori, ED Office***

Sartori said the GC accepted the Cook recapture well score of 160 acre-feet (AF) at the last GC meeting. The GC also approved the increase in the Phelps County Canal groundwater recharge score to represent 75% of the deliveries, per temporary and permanent water service agreements



with the CNPPID. The total score for both projects is 2,860 AFY. The Cook tract recapture well was turned on in the past week, as there was a shortage to target flows. This project is now officially active. The well may be turned off in the next couple of days due to an increase in streamflow.

**Broad-Scale Recharge and Slurry Wall Storage Update:** *Kevin Werbylo, ED Office*

Updates were given on the feasibility testing completed to-date for broad-scale recharge projects and slurry wall storage projects. Project concept updates were also provided during the discussions.

Werbylo discussed the preliminary results derived from data collected at the two infiltration pits constructed to test the feasibility of recharge operations at the Cottonwood Ranch site. He also discussed the groundwater model of the site developed by the ED Office. The U.S. Geological Survey completed geotechnical investigations at the site in September; the data is currently being processed and will be provided soon. The Program is still continuing to focus on Cottonwood Ranch as a broad-scale recharge site because it has a dual purpose as a water project and crane habitat, it is land already owned and managed by the Program, the site is in close proximity to the river and the costs are more affordable than or similar to those of the other concepts. The Program will soon develop an RFP (request for proposal) on the engineering design work for the project. Evaluations of other potential sites and the permitting aspects of the project will also be evaluated by the ED Office in the near future.

Taddicken asked if there are issues with high groundwater for other landowners. Kenny mentioned that the Program may be working out an agreement with the immediate downstream landowner to incorporate the land into part of the design. The ED Office will also monitor groundwater levels in the area and may develop recapture wells to prevent adverse impacts downstream.

Werbylo went over the concept of a slurry wall storage projects. Geotechnical evaluations of potential sites were done through work with Aqua Geo Frameworks (using airborne electromagnetic surveys) and by drilling boreholes on potential sites, including the Plum Creek complex, Cottonwood Ranch complex, Elm Creek complex and the Lindstrom/Stall properties. The sites appear to have a low permeability layer, based on the draft logs to-date. The next steps include compiling all the data collected, developing conceptual designs and drafting an RFP for the engineering design work to be completed. Werbylo noted that the ED Office is currently working with the CNPPID to develop a delivery system to bring excess flows to the areas where broad-scale recharge and slurry wall projects will be sited.

Altenhofen asked how water would be recovered from the slurry wall aquifer storage project. Werbylo responded that the project would serve as a controlled holding space and water would be pumped out when needed. Kenny noted that the Cook/Dyer properties are anticipated sites for slurry wall storage, as these sites might be mined for sediment augmentation.

**2017 Draft Water Plan Budget:** *Jerry Kenny, ED*

Kenny went over the draft Water Plan work plan distributed to the WAC. It was stressed that the budget numbers are subject to change, as the work plan and project budgets are works in progress. If any WAC members have suggestions or comments, please let the ED Office know. The work plan and budget line items will be discussed at the November FC meeting and then presented for approval at the December GC meeting.

The WP-1 (Chokepoint Activities), WP-4 (Water Action Plan projects), WP-5 (Management Tool) and WP-8 (Special Advisors) and the individual line items under each budget item were discussed. Kenny noted that there will be a change in the broad-scale recharge and slurry wall storage project costs, as some land acquisition will be added into the 2017 budget. There was some discussion about Water Management Incentives, as these types of projects are not shown in out years. These projects will continue to be evaluated; however, there is currently no budget in 2017 through 2019 allotted for these types of projects. It was noted that the conservation of water should be from the consumptive use portion of water rights, not the return flows. Historical return flows should be maintained to avoid impacts to water users and instream flows.

**Additional Business:** *Cory Steinke, WAC Chair*

The next WAC meeting is February 7, 2017. The October 2017 meeting may be rescheduled at the February 2017 meeting.

**Action Items****General WAC**

- n/a

**ED Office**

- n/a