



**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**  
**Land Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**February 14, 2017**

**Meeting Participants**

**Land Advisory Committee (LAC)**

**State of Wyoming**

Lee Arrington, Alternate, Wyoming State Engineer's Office

**State of Colorado**

Suzanne Sellers – Member, Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Kevin Urie – Alternate, Denver Water (by phone)

**State of Nebraska**

Ted LaGrange – Member, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission (by phone)

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

Matt Rabbe – Member, USFWS

**U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBOR)**

Brock Merrill – Member, USBOR

**Power Districts**

Dave Zorn – Member, Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District  
John Shadle – Member (Vice-Chair), Nebraska Public Power District

**Environmental Entities**

Andrew Pierson – Member, Audubon Rowe Sanctuary

**Local Nebraska Rep. – Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD)**

Mark Czaplewski – Member (Chair), CPNRD

**Local Nebraska Rep. – Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD)**

None

**Local Nebraska Rep. – Joint CPNRD/TBNRD**

None

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

Jerry Kenny, Executive Director  
Bruce Sackett  
Justin Brei  
Tim Tunnell  
Jason Farnsworth  
Chad Smith

**Other Participants**

None

**Welcome and Administrative**

Vice-Chairman Shadle called the meeting to order at 9:05 am Central Time and the group proceeded with introductions.

Shadle asked for agenda modifications. Sellers requested that the discussion on the three land memos be moved to the top of the agenda since that discussion may inform other topics on the agenda. The committee agreed.

Shadle asked for the LAC's recommendation on the minutes of the August 15, 2016 meeting.

**Sellers made a motion to approve the minutes from August 15, 2016 LAC meeting. The motion was seconded by Merrill and passed unanimously.**

**Land Memos**

Farnsworth discussed three memos related to PRRIP lands. The first memo described the current status and options for updating of management plans. Early in the Program, management plans were envisioned to be revisited every five years. This timeframe has elapsed for some tracts, so the LAC is being asked to discuss options. Merrill said that he is comfortable deferring updates to management plans until after high priority science items are resolved and results can be incorporated into updates. Merrill said that it would be beneficial to have a short memo that guides general land management for all PRRIP tracts until plan updates are completed. Rabbe said that the 5-year requirement was self-imposed by the LAC and is not required by the Program Document, and he is also OK with deferring updates. Shadle said the memo should specifically mention major objectives such as broad scale recharge and sediment augmentation.

**Sellers moved to recommend development of a memo outlining management actions for all PRRIP lands as a placeholder until plan updates can be completed. Motion seconded by Merrill and passed unanimously.**

The second memo discussed by Farnsworth describes a request by the Governance Committee for input on how to use remaining non-complex acres for acquisition. As it stands, 146 acres of palustrine wetland have yet to be acquired to reach the goal. The GC is asking for the LAC to comment on whether it is reasonable to transfer those 146 acres of palustrine wetland to focus on off-channel sand and water tracts. Within the PRRIP Associated Habitat corridor, there exists very little palustrine wetland habitat within the landscape and the Program has already evaluated a number of those existing tracts. Additionally, analysis of crane use within the Associated Habitat has shown no selection for palustrine wetlands over other habitat types. While this habitat type is widely used throughout the migration corridor, it is not a feasible alternative to riverine roosting habitat due to its very low availability in the PRRIP Associated Habitat. On the other hand, off-channel sand and water habitat has shown very high production for least terns and piping plovers and a shift in the objective would be an application of Program adaptive management to make better use of available time and money. LaGrange said he does not want to close the door completely on acquisition of palustrine wetland habitat. Shifting the focus to off-channel sand and water areas is reasonable, but continue to consider any available wetland



properties. Sellers said the justification for this switch is in the science. In the Associated Habitat, the cranes select for the river. Adaptive management should dictate the focus on off-channel sand and water which is highly successful for terns and plovers. Science should be guiding the decisions on where PRRIP spends its limited resources.

**Merrill moved to recommend that PRRIP use the remaining, or a portion of the remaining non-complex acres to make progress towards the development of the additional 60 acres of off-channel tern and plover nesting habitat, but do not preclude evaluation and acquisition of palustrine wetlands. Motion seconded by Sellers and passed unanimously.**

The last memo discussed by Farnsworth asks the LAC to comment on whether or not PRRIP should be spending resources for habitat restoration on lands purchased specifically for water objectives (ie. groundwater recharge, slurry wall pits) when the opportunity exists. Rabbe said that, on a case-by-case basis, this can be a no-brainer. For relatively low cost, restoration work can create suitable habitat – especially when tracts are adjacent or near existing complexes or high priority areas. Shadle said that if money is spent on restoration, acres that have been restored for habitat purposes should be credited to the overall habitat land objectives. Merrill agreed. Rabbe doesn't want to take away from Extension land objectives through piecemeal restorations of tracts acquired for water projects. Extension land objectives were created to prioritize new complexes and high priority acquisitions. Farnsworth said no action on this item is being requested, but discussion will be forwarded to the Governance Committee.

### **Land Offering Reviews**

**Merrill moved to go into executive session with LAC members, alternates, and technical staff to review details of land offerings. The motion was seconded by Pierson. The motion carried and the committee entered executive session at 10:07 a.m.**

**Arrington moved to come out of executive session. Sellers seconded and the motion carried. The committee came out of executive session at 11:17 a.m**

**Merrill moved to recommend that the GC cease pursuit of tract 1607 and tract 1608. Rabbe seconded and motion passed unanimously.**

**Rabbe moved to table tracts 1209 and 1606. Merrill seconded and motion passed unanimously.**

### **PRRIP First Increment Extension**

Smith discussed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process for the extension of the Program's First Increment. The GC has come to agreement on the language of the proposed extension, but the budget has not been finalized. The Bureau of Reclamation must conduct a NEPA environmental review process for the extension. To assist with this process, USBOR will hire a contractor and is requesting input from PRRIP committees on development



of the scope of work. Any recommendations for the scope of work should be sent to Smith who will compile suggestions and forward them to USBOR.

### **Land Management Work Review 2016**

Tunnell presented the LAC with the 2016 Land Management Report which details all Land Plan operations, maintenance, and management expenditures on PRRIP lands in 2016.

### **Miscellaneous Items**

Sackett requested that the LAC form a subcommittee to review and make recommendations on surplus PRRIP lands. Volunteers were requested.

### **Shadle appointed Merrill, Rabbe, LaBonde, Sellers, Czaplewski, Farnsworth, Shadle.**

Rabbe then discussed plans for the public comment on the Platte River Recreation Access Program. This has typically taken the form of a public meeting, where comments were accepted in person or by mail. Attendance at this meeting is sparse and has declined year by year, and Rabbe would like to transition to an open comment period without a public meeting. The LAC was generally in agreement but took no formal action.

### **Land Goals Review**

Rabbe discussed current PRRIP land goal status in the context of First and initially envisioned Second Increment goals – which includes future crediting of other conservation lands in the Associated Habitat. Rabbe and Czaplewski reviewed existing PRRIP and other conservation lands throughout the Associated Habitat for their applicability to target species in order to look at land goals for the First Increment Extension and begin the discussion for the Second Increment. Rabbe recounted a few specific examples of lands that would or would not be considered for inclusion into the Program in the future. This presentation is from discussions between Czaplewski and Rabbe and has not been previously discussed by the LAC. Jeffrey Island, since it is required to be maintained by CNPPID for their FERC license, should not be included in the Program, Rabbe said. Rabbe also discussed the fact that many Nebraska Game & Parks lands are managed for public hunting, which is not always consistent with target species objectives, or are located in areas that would not be suitable target species habitat. This presentation was informational only and no action was taken.

### **Public Forum**

Vice Chairman Shadle asked for public comments, none were offered.

**The next meeting of the LAC was scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 9:00 AM central time.**

### **Reorganize Officers**

**Rabbe moved to retain Czaplewski as LAC Chair for 2017. Motion seconded by Zorn and passed unanimously.**



132 **Merrill moved to retain Shadle as Vice-Chair for 2017. Motion seconded by Arrington and**  
133 **passed unanimously.**

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136 With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Vice-Chairman Shadle at 1:00 p.m.