

# Platte River SDM GC Meeting: Pre-reading Cover Memo

May 24, 2016

## Workshop Objectives

Attached is the agenda and pre-reading for the SDM portion of the GC meeting on June 7 in Cheyenne, WY. The main objective of the meeting is to make a final decision regarding on- and off-channel habitat alternatives and the use of flow for Interior Least Tern and Piping Plover.

## Workshop Organization and Flow

The workshop is planned for one afternoon session (see Agenda). Optionally, if required, we may extend to the first hour of the following morning.

In the *Decision Process Recap* session we will briefly review the decision process to date, with emphasis on recent updates to the objectives, performance measures, and consequence estimates. In the *Decisions Required* session, we will review each of the individual decisions the GC will be making, with time for questions and discussion.

Once the GC is comfortable with the information at hand, in the *Preference Elicitation* session, we will move into eliciting preferences for the alternatives under consideration and a discussion of areas of agreement and disagreement. In order to ensure decisions that are informed, transparent and stable, we propose the following process.

### *Habitat Alternatives*

For the choice of on- and off-channel habitat alternatives, GC members will be asked to:

1. **Complete a preference questionnaire.** This is an individual exercise that helps to quickly establish trends in the group. By doing it individually, we ensure everyone participates and avoid biases or pressures that can arise in a group setting. At minimum, we will ask you to rank and score the alternatives in order of preference. Optionally, we may ask you to weight the performance measures. The weighting exercise takes longer, but can be helpful if we expect the group to have difficulty reaching a consensus.
2. **Discuss** ranks and scores. We'll collate your individual questionnaire responses during a short break and use these to focus discussion. In some cases, a consensus will be readily identified. In others, the results will help the group to clarify areas of agreement and difference, focus the discussion on key trade-offs, and seek solutions that could lead to a consensus.
3. **Indicate degree of support** for the alternatives. After discussion, GC members will be given time to caucus, and then each voting group will be asked to indicate which alternatives they support. We normally use a three-point scale: *Endorse* (This is a great alternative), *Accept* (I can live with / support this alternative), or *Oppose* (I can't support this alternative). This exercise establishes which alternatives are satisfactory to the group as a whole.

Any questionnaires or exercises you are asked to complete at Step 1 are used only to facilitate discussion. During the discussion, you will learn from the perspectives of others, and may shift

your preferences based on what you've learned and/or as a means of seeking a mutually acceptable compromise. Your final preferences are those that you state at step 3. Depending on the outcome of Step 3, the GC may choose to develop a formal motion per your normal procedures.

### *Flow Alternatives*

For the choice of whether or not to include a flow component, the TAC concluded:

- That the release of water for plover nest initiation flows is not generally justified on the basis of the estimated benefits for plovers;
- That such releases should in general (in the absence of special circumstances) be considered a lower priority than releases for other purposes (no specific special circumstances were identified);
- That the most efficient use of water for plovers occurs in years immediately after a flood year when there is new naturally-formed habitat;
- That if water is released for plovers, even under the most favorable conditions, the benefits, if any, would not be measurable.

The GC will be asked to:

- Confirm support for these conclusions;
- Define recommendations (if desired) for the FWS or other next steps.

## **Overview of the Pre-reading**

In addition to the agenda and this cover memo, the pre-reading is organized into three documents.

1. **Decision Summary** – This includes descriptions of the Round 3 Alternatives, and shows the consequences of each habitat alternative and discusses the key trade-offs relative to the decisions discussed above.
2. **TAC Meeting Notes** – Summary of key outcomes from the April TAC meeting.
3. **Flow Summary Memo (Optional)** – This describes alternative methods for implementing nest initiation flows, dependent on different hydrologic conditions. It is the same Flow Summary Memo that was distributed for the TAC meeting in April.

## **Preparing for the Meeting**

Please ensure you have completed the pre-reading. The meeting agenda assumes that participants have read the pre-reading and considered key issues and discussion points in advance. If you have questions or comments, please submit them to EDO. We will use any input received in advance to organize discussion topics at the meeting.



**PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**  
**Governance Committee (GC) Meeting Agenda**  
**SDM Workshop**  
Wyoming Water Development Commission  
6920 Yellowtail Road  
Cheyenne, WY 82009  
June 7, 1:00-4:30 pm Central

## Meeting Objective

- Make a final decision (for the remainder of the First Increment) on habitat and flow management alternatives for terns and plovers

## Agenda

Start	Topic	Document(s)
1:00	<b>Workshop Objectives and Agenda</b>	Agenda
1:15	<b>Decision Process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recap of SDM process to date</li><li>• Overview of the decision process for today</li></ul>	Cover Memo
1:30	<b>Decisions Required</b> Brief overview of each decision for today, with questions and discussion as required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Off-channel habitat</li><li>• On-channel habitat</li><li>• Plover initiation flow</li></ul>	Decision Summary, Flow Summary Memo (Optional)
2:15	<b>Preference elicitation</b> Each GC member will individually complete a questionnaire	N/A
2:30	<b>Break</b> (and processing questionnaire results)	
3:00	<b>Results and Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss results, clarify areas of agreement and disagreement</li><li>• There will be a short break for voting groups to caucus</li><li>• Seek agreement on a preferred alternative</li></ul>	N/A
4:00	<b>Synthesis and Next Steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Synthesize final decision and any outstanding issues</li><li>• Next steps for documentation and reporting</li></ul>	N/A
4:30	<b>Close</b>	

**Note:** The regular GC meeting will begin after the SDM workshop.