

Platte Basin Habitat Enhancement Project

Meeting Minutes

North Platte, NE – Twin Platte NRD

May 1, 2012

Call to Order and Attendance – With a quorum present, Chairman Kent Miller called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Sponsors in attendance were: Kent Miller and Ann Dimmitt (Twin Platte NRD), Ron Bishop, Duane Woodward, Jesse Mintkin and Mark Czaplewski (Central Platte NRD), Rod Horn (South Platte NRD), John Thorburn (Tri-Basin NRD), Ron Cacek and Tina Kurtz (North Platte NRD), and Jesse Bradley (Nebraska Department of Natural Resources). Chairman Miller noted that the PBHEP abides by the Open Meetings Act in conducting business and that a copy of the Act was provided in the meeting room.

Meeting Notices – Chairman Miller reported that public notice of the meeting had been published in the Grand Island, North Platte and Scottsbluff newspapers as required by law.

Agenda Modifications – No changes were made to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes – Motion by Ron Bishop, second by Rod Horn to approve the minutes of the January 31, 2012, meeting as distributed in advance of the meeting. Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Committee Reports –

Education and Outreach Committee – No report. Czaplewski noted that Central Platte NRD is in the process of designing and installing signage denoting NET, DNR and NRD sponsorship of the Cozad and Thirty-Mile Canal rehabilitation work.

Habitat Management and Monitoring Committee – No report.

Water Tracking and Accounting Committee – No report. With the departure of Kyle Liebig from employment with South Platte NRD, the administrators discussed the need for a replacement chairperson for the committee. Given the relatively small scope of ongoing work (i.e., historic land use database update) and its link to associated work within the Platte Over-Appropriated Committee (POAC), Doug Hallum (DNR) was designated Committee chair.

Financial Report – Czaplewski provided the financial report including a discussion of the PBHEP Funding Summary spreadsheet (dated April 20, 2012) distributed in advance of the meeting. Including updated numbers associated with the implementation of fall 2011 DNR Groundwater Recharge Demonstration Project and TP/SPNRD Re-use Pits Recharge Project, total PBHEP funds spent and committed are \$14,615,798.77 leaving an estimated remaining balance of \$384,201.

Platte Basin Water Management Action Initiative (Initiative) Update - Bradley reported that the grant contract between DNR and NET has been signed. DNR continues to work on drafting an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement for the Initiative. Additional discussion was deferred to the POAC meeting this afternoon.

Collaboration with Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP) – No report. Committee Chairperson Heaston is working to arrange a meeting of the Committee. Given the status of PBHEP funding, future collaboration with PRRIP may be more linked to Platte Basin Water Management Action Initiative (Initiative) activities than PBHEP activities.

DNR Ground Water Recharge Demonstration Projects – Bradley reported on the spring 2012 implementation of the Project. Given construction and maintenance activities on various previously participating canals, only the Orchard-Alfalfa irrigation district participated in the spring 2012 Project implementation and only for a shortened duration. A fall 2012 implementation is being considered, but will be dependent on river discharge. If a fall 2012 implementation occurs, new temporary permits will be required. The group discussed plans to update the participating irrigation districts on Project details, similar to discussions held in 2011. Tom Hayden (DNR) will be asked to coordinate and schedule such meetings, possibly in June. Those discussions will explore the possibility of five-year “umbrella” conjunctive management contracts rather than the single-year agreements used in the past. The group discussed the need to engage the PRRIP in future such projects as they realize water benefits from them and may be able to assist with funding.

Cozad and Thirty-Mile Canal Rehabilitation Projects Update – Bishop provided a status report on the two canal rehabilitation projects. Phase 1 of the Cozad Canal rehabilitation is nearing completion. The remaining phases of the Project are scheduled for bidding this summer and work will resume this fall and winter. Work on the initial clearing portion of the Thirty-Mile Canal rehabilitation is also wrapping up and will also resume this fall. Optimistically, Bishop noted both projects could be completed by April 2013, but realistically, it could take a year beyond that. The administrators agreed that as long as Project costs remain within previously documented estimates, there would not be a need to take formal action on cost reimbursements as they come in over that timeframe.

The DNR will work with Central Platte NRD to develop a Project Agreement for both projects similar to the Agreement recently executed with Tri-Basin NRD for the North Dry Creek Augmentation Project. The agreements are required to be in place prior to DNR reimbursements for projects under PBHEP.

Next Meetings - The meetings previously scheduled for July 11 and November 14, 2012, were changed to July 13 and November 29, 2012, respectively. Plans are to hold future PBHEP meetings on the same days as POAC meetings and Initiative meetings. The order of the meetings is yet to be determined, but the first of those meetings will start at 10:30 a.m. Central time and all are planned to take place at the offices of Twin Platte NRD in North Platte.

Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.