
UPPER PLATTE BASIN-WIDE PLAN ANNUAL MEETING

CENTRAL PLATTE NRD OFFICE

215 KAUFMAN AVE, GRAND ISLAND, NE 68803

MEETING ALSO CONDUCTED REMOTELY VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE

AUGUST 1, 2024, @ 1:00 P.M. (CT)

MINUTES

Attendance:

Lyndon Vogt, CPNRD	Jesse Mintken, CPNRD	Brandi Flyr, CPNRD
Kent Miller, TPNRD	Galen Wittrock, SPNRD	Ryan Reisdorff, SPNRD
Larry Rutt, SPNRD Director	Nolan Little, TBNRD	Larry Reynolds, TBNRD Director
Travis Preston, NPNRD	Ryan Kelly, NeDNR	Caitlin Kingsley, NeDNR
Paul Woodward, HDR	Julie Molacek, HDR	Kyle Liebig, NPPD
Jeff Shafer, NPPD	Randy Zach, NPPD	Scott Dicke, CNPPID
Mike Drain, CNPPID	Mike Archer, NGPC	Keith Koupal, NGPC
Brett Roberg, NGPC	Kevin Derry, SPNRD Producer	Jared Derry, SPNRD Producer
Arik Vossler, NeDNR	Kari Burgert, NeDNR	Margeaux Carter, NeDNR
Rodney Verhoeff, EA	Jim Roberts, USBR	Lawrence Osborne, USBR
Dustin Wilcox, NARD	Ann Smith, Southside Irrigation District	Judy Eggleston, Southside Irrigation District
Heath Kuntz, ARI		

*Shaded areas indicate online attendees.

1) Introductions

- a) Meeting called to order at 1:00 pm Central Time.

2) Review Agenda & Meeting Procedures

- a) There were no modifications to the agenda.
- b) Meeting minutes – August 3, 2023, Basin-Wide Plan Annual Meeting

Motion: to approve the August 3, 2023, meeting minutes.

Move: Lyndon Vogt

Second: Kent Miller

Motion passed unanimously.

3) Monitoring & Management Actions

- a) NeDNR Report: Caitlin Kingsley

Caitlin presented NeDNR's report on 2023 water use activities. In 2023, NeDNR issued ten (10) new surface water permits; eight (8) were temporary permits for excess flows, and two (2) were temporary permits for construction that did not result in a

new consumptive use. Caitlin also presented the results of the depletions and accretions analysis for 2023 NRD permitted activities, which showed a net positive effect (accretions) to the Platte River.

Finally, Caitlin presented project updates. NeDNR and the Upper Platte River NRDs completed the 2023 Robust Review and expect to complete the report and documentation by the end of 2024. The Upper Platte River Drought Contingency Plan development is well underway, and the plan is to finalize the plan by the end of 2024. The Drought Task Force stakeholder group met four times between 2022 and 2023 to help develop the plan, and the plan went through a stakeholder review period in early 2024. The next step is to submit the draft plan to USBR for their review. NeDNR continues to use the Decision Support System (DSS) for excess flow appropriations. The public dashboard shows the current status, open or closed, of existing appropriations. Since the 2023 basin-wide meeting, there have been three (3) excess flow events: September 26-28, 2023, February 2-12, 2024, and July 2-11, 2024. NeDNR continues to communicate with TPNRD and the Pipeline Operator for the Twin Platte NRD Streamflow Augmentation Pipeline. Augmentation data is available in NeDNR's Platte Water Accounting Program (PWAP) website.

b) NRD Reports

i) CPNRD: Jesse Mintken

Jesse stated that CPNRD ended 2023 with 1,018,290 total certified acres; 936,264 acres are groundwater irrigated, 5,238 acres surface water irrigated, and 76,788 commingled. CPNRD approved 107 groundwater transfers, resulting in 602 acres of new irrigated ground.

ii) NPNRD: Travis Preston

Travis stated that NPNRD had no new certifications and no approved transfers in 2023. A few variances on acres will be expiring in 2025. NPNRD issued a few well construction permits for replacement wells. Total water use in the overappropriated area totaled 105,200 AF on 174,834 certified acres. The EPIC program continued in 2023 but is on hold for 2024.

iii) SPNRD: Ryan Reisdorff

Ryan stated SPNRD approved a total of 6 transfers in 2023: two industrial transfers that required offset, one allocation transfer, and three transfers to convert from flood to pivot. SPNRD did not approve any new variances. SPNRD monitors 13 industries monthly that require offsets by certified acres or other offsets; those industries pumped 281 acre-feet in 2023. SPNRD has a total of 131,819 certified groundwater irrigated acres, and in 2023 an average of 8.2 inches per acre was applied. SPNRD monitors 15 different crops; corn accounts for 51% of crops grown in the District. No irrigated acres were retired

in 2023. SPNRD took advantage of two excess flow events in 2023, totaling 55 days.

iv) TBNRD: Nolan Little

Nolan stated TBNRD has a total of 298,955 certified acres in the Platte Basin. In 2023, TBNRD approved 7 certified acre transfers, 13 replacement wells, and one new commercial/industrial well. Twenty percent of wells in the Platte Basin have flow meters installed, and those meters averaged 10-acre inches. TBNRD received one new application for a Water Conservation Incentive Program (WCIP) contract totaling 136 acres. TBNRD operates eight streamflow augmentation wells for PRRIP, and those augmentation wells have returned 2,771.25 acre-feet to the river. Groundwater level monitoring indicates levels are down over a foot throughout the district.

v) TPNRD: Kent Miller

Kent shared that TPNRD has a total of 316,161 certified acres. In 2023, TPNRD approved 10 transfers totaling 179.5 acres with no net increase in stream depletions. TPNRD also issued 13 replacement well permits and 8 new well permits. TPNRD continues its Water Data Program (WDP), which sees 100% voluntary reporting from growers. TPNRD is piloting Arable devices to report precipitation and ET as part of the WDP. The pilot is starting with 200 devices, and the hope is to eventually provide the devices district-wide. TPNRD obtained an NRCS grant to do a field based arable sensor feasibility study.

c) Data, Information, Studies

i) Annual Review of Progress Toward Increment Goals

Caitlin brought the “Impacts of 2023 Permitted Activities on Streamflow” chart from NeDNR’s presentation, slide 9, back up to satisfy this requirement. 2023 permitted activities resulted in a net positive impact (accretions) to the Platte River.

ii) 2023 Robust Review Report

Ryan Kelly (NeDNR) presented the results of the 2023 Robust Review. Ryan addressed why we did a “Robust Review,” the updates to models and datasets since the 2019 Robust Review, and shared results for each NRD and each river reach. Basin-wide projected streamflow impacts indicate that the Upper Platte River NRDs have exceeded their post-1997 mitigation targets; therefore, no regulatory actions are required. Next steps include finalizing documentation of models and analyses, completing the 2023 Robust Review report, updating IMPs as needed, and preparing for the 2027 Robust Review. Jeff Shafer (NPPD) asked for clarification regarding the statement, “no regulatory actions are required.” Ryan Kelly clarified that no *new* regulatory

actions are required, but the NRDs should continue their current projects and practices.

iii) Upper Platte River Drought Contingency Plan

Paul Woodward (HDR) presented updates regarding the Upper Platte River Drought Contingency Plan (Plan). Paul reviewed the Plan development process, including the Drought Task Force, POAC review period, and stakeholder review period. The Plan satisfies the requirements of the USBR WaterSMART grant as well as the Basin-Wide Plan. As required by the Basin-Wide Plan, the Plan is meant to provide a template to each of the NRDs as they develop individual drought plans. The main activities associated with the Plan are drought monitoring and communication and outreach activities.

The next steps for the Plan are to submit to USBR for their review in August and make revisions as requested. After addressing USBR revisions, POAC will need to discuss and agree to final submission and adoption of the Plan.

d) Project Updates

Caitlin stated NeDNR's project updates were covered in the earlier presentation. There were no additional project updates from the group.

4) Review of Revisions to the Basin-Wide Plan or to Individual IMPs

a) Revisions to the Central Platte NRD IMP

b) Revisions to the Twin Platte NRD IMP

Ryan Kelly presented on revisions to the Central Platte and Twin Platte NRD IMPs. Anticipated changes to the IMPs include:

- Addition of 2023 Robust Review results (to supersede 2019 Robust Review results).
- Updates to Science and Methods to include information about updated models.
- Addition of management actions and other accomplishments through the 2023 Robust Review.
- Updates to Goals and Objectives related to depletions and accretions.
- Updates to municipal and industrial accounting in anticipation of changes to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-740.
- Updates to the language to reflect upcoming changes to the NeDNR surface water permit application process.
- Addition of language regarding the basin-wide drought plan.

Once NeDNR and the NRDs agree on language, stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback on the language.

5) Written Requests for Revisions to the Basin-Wide Plan or to Individual IMPs or Disputes

Neither NeDNR nor the Upper Platte River NRDs received written requests for revisions to the Basin-Wide Plan or IMPs.

6) Public Comment Period

Mike Drain (CNPPID) reminded the group that there are draft 2023 meeting minutes in the meeting packet that were skipped over. The group returned to agenda item 2) Review Agenda & Meeting Procedures to approve the 2023 meeting minutes. Mike also mentioned that CNPPID appreciates the level of collaboration and transparency in the Upper Platte Basin.

7) Meeting Summary

a) Action Items

- NeDNR and the Upper Platte River NRDs shall finalize their annual reports within two weeks of this meeting.

b) Schedule Next Annual Meeting

The next meeting will occur on August 7, 2025, at the TBNRD office in Holdrege.