

# Water Funding Task Force Meeting

October 10, 2013 | Knight Museum and Sandhills Center; Alliance, Nebraska

## CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. at the Knight Museum and Sandhills Center; Alliance, NE. Roll call was taken.

## Task Force members in attendance were:

### ***Voting Members:***

Clint Johannes, **Chairman**, *NRC*  
Garry Anderson, *NRC*  
Joel Christensen, *MUD*  
Dave Deines, *NRC*  
Kevin Fornoff, *NRC*  
Joseph Hergott, *NRC*  
Thomas Knutson, *NRC*  
Michael Reynolds, *NRC*  
Scott Smathers, *Outdoor Recreation Users*  
Dennis Strauch, *Irrigation Districts*

Roric Paulman, **Co-Chairman**, *Agriculture*  
Brian Barels, *Public Power*  
Beverly Donaldson, *NRC*  
John Heaston, *Wildlife Conservation*  
David Kadlecsek, *NRC*  
Dick Mercer, *NRC*  
Rex Peterson, *Livestock Producers*  
Keith Rexroth, *NRC*  
Jeff Steffen, *NRC*

### ***Non-Voting Members:***

Senator Tom Carlson  
Senator Al Davis  
Senator Ken Schilz

Senator Mark Christensen  
Brian Dunnigan, *DNR*

The following attended as alternates: Richard Padowicz was an alternate for Lennie Adams.

The following members were absent: Lennie Adams, Stan Clouse, Richard Hadenfeldt, Tim Luchsinger, Chandler Mazour, Darrell Rains, Gerry Dale Sheets, Steven Sugden, Senator Rick Kolowski, Senator Dan Watermeier.

## NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice of the meeting was published on the Department of Natural Resources web site ([www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517](http://www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517)).

## INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

The following informational materials were distributed for the Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> session:

- Agenda
- Nebraska Water Funding Task Force Work Plan
- Water Funding Expenditure State Structure
- Nebraska Water Funding
- Water Funding Needs & Costs
- Wyoming Water Development Program

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Clint Johannes stated that notice of the meeting was published on the Department of Natural Resources web site ([www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517](http://www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517)). A copy of Nebraska's public meeting statutes was available in the room.

Mr. Johannes requested that anyone wishing to provide public comment at today's meeting please sign the "Speaker" sign-in sheet at the sign-in table.

#### **EDUCATION SESSION - Morning**

- Harry LaBonde-Director of the Wyoming Water Development Commission. Discussion followed. The presentation is available on the DNR website ([www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517](http://www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517)).

#### **Break**

#### **TASK FORCE WORKING SESSION: Funding and Administration**

##### **Presentation of Current Water Funding by Nebraska and Surrounding State Agencies**

Karen Griffin, Project Manager with Olsson Associates presented a summary of Current State Expenditures on water related projects, reviewed the current state of funding priorities based on projects approved and compared Nebraska State expenditures to surrounding states for comparison. The information from other states was preliminary in nature and the following comments made:

- North Dakota and Minnesota were actually two year budgets and therefore the annual amounts were actually half of what was shown in the presentation.
- The Wyoming number differed from what was included in Mr. LaBonde's presentation. The team will clarify the numbers for next time.
- The Nebraska number did not reflect money being spent by the NRDs since it was a reflection of State spending only. This understates the amount really being spent on water projects in Nebraska.

The project team is continuing to collect information related to existing project funding and future funding needs across the state and will present updates as they are available at future sessions. The presentation is available on the DNR website ([www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517](http://www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517)).

##### **Presentation of Program Administration Alternative Ideas**

Karen Griffin reviewed discussion from the Grand Island meeting relative to program administration. Four structure alternatives were presented and discussed by Task Force members with the following comments:

- Any program administration concept must have sustainability at its core. How sustainability is reached may be different across the state. IMPs are the recognized source for sustainability goals within the NRD system, however all NRDs are not required to have them. Perhaps they should be. The IMP recommendations need to be collected into a statewide approach to sustainability.
- The Wyoming practice of having the legislature involved throughout the process as a "Select Committee" is a good one and seems to ease conflicts and changes as projects move through the decision-making process.
- There continues to be general support for the system in place through the DNR and NRC, however some "tweaks" are desirable. One tweak is making sure all stakeholders are appropriately represented on the NRC. Current NRC members were encouraged to remain open to change based on the LB517 mandate.
- There was a comment that monitoring progress towards the goal of sustainability needs to be incorporated into the plan.

The project team will present a refined program administration concept at the next meeting for further review and comment. The presentation is available on the DNR website ([www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517](http://www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517)).

## Lunch

### TASK FORCE WORKING SESSION: CRITERIA AND PROJECT RANKING

#### Results and Discussion of Criteria Evaluation Round Two

Mike Sotak with FYRA Engineering presented the results of the round two testing of the criteria and project ranking effort. Eight people, four of them Task Force members participated in the test. Generally speaking, the criteria were found to work well especially as a mechanism to prescreen projects. Some refinements and needs for companion information were also recognized through the process:

- There is a need for further definition or clarification of the criteria, perhaps in an accompanying document, to better define the terminology used in the criteria.
- Subjectivity needs to be used appropriately and more specific “scales” developed in some cases to improve consistency of rankings.
- Guidance on how the outputs should be scored

The Task Force members concurred that the project team should finalize the criteria in accordance with the recommendations and comments for review at the next meeting. The presentation is available on the DNR website ([www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517](http://www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517)).

#### Presentation on Additional Funding Ideas and Information Progress

Karen Griffin, Project Manager with Olsson Associates presented progress on the funding alternatives analysis being completed by Laurie Lage. Discussion followed. The full analysis will be presented at the next meeting.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Karen Griffin requested that anyone who signed-in please come forward to provide public comment. No individuals signed in to provide comment. The Task Force has received three written comments and these have been forwarded to the members, however have not been reflected in the minutes to date. From now on they will be included as attachments to the minutes so they are available to the public and the three received to date are attachments to these minutes.

Individuals from the community present during the meeting included:

- Rod Horn, *South Platte NRD*
- Dennis Schweth, *UENRD*
- Jeff Buettner, *CNPPID*
- Terry Julesgard, *LNNRD*
- Ryan Reiber, *PREMA*
- Fred Knapp, *NET*
- Jerry Kenny, *PRRIP*
- Rachel Herpel, *University of Nebraska*
- Pat O'Brien, *UNWNRD*
- Sheri Daniels, *UNWNRD*
- Lynn Webster, *UNWNRD*
- Mike Murphy, *MNNRD*
- John Thomas, *UNL*
- Tim Horn, *NE Farm Bureau*

**Meeting recessed for the day at 3:35 PM**

## **The Water Funding Task Force reconvened at 8:00 AM on Friday, October 11, 2013 at the Knights Museum and Sandhills Center; Alliance, Nebraska.**

### **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. at the Knight Museum and Sandhills Center; Alliance, NE. Roll call was taken.

#### **Task Force members in attendance were:**

##### ***Voting Members:***

Clint Johannes, **Chairman**, *NRC*  
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Jeff Steffen, *NRC*

##### ***Non-Voting Members:***

Senator Tom Carlson  
Senator Al Davis  
Senator Ken Schilz

Senator Mark Christensen  
Brian Dunnigan, *DNR*

There were no alternates present.

The following members were absent: Lennie Adams, Stan Clouse, Richard Hadenfeldt, Tim Luchsinger, Chandler Mazour, Dick Mercer, Darrell Rains, Michael Reynolds, Gerry Dale Sheets, Steven Sugden, Senator Rick Kolowski, and Senator Dan Watermeier.

### **EDUCATION SESSION - Morning**

- John Berge, General Manager of the North Platte Natural Resources District presented an Overview of the North Platte NRD. Discussion followed. The presentation is available on the DNR website ([www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517](http://www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517)).
- Pat, O'Brien, General Manager of the Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District. Discussion followed. The presentation is available on the DNR website ([www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517](http://www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517)).
- Steve Sibray, University of Nebraska presented Groundwater Management Challenges in the High Plains Aquifer. Discussion followed. The presentation is available on the DNR website ([www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517](http://www.dnr.ne.gov/lb517)).

Clint Johannes requested that anyone who signed-in to please come forward to provide public comment. No individuals signed up for public comment.

Individuals from the community present during the meeting included:

- Dennis Schweth, *UENRD*
- Rachel Herpel, *University of Nebraska*
- Jeff Buettner, *CNPPID*
- Bill Wilson
- John Thomas, *UNL*

**Meeting adjourned at 9:42 a.m.**

# **Attachment 1**

**Public Comments Submitted in Writing to the Water Funding Task Force as of October 11, 2013**