

Technical Memorandum 2.5

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Platte River Basin Water Plan

Technical Memorandum 2.5

SUBJECT: Platte River Basin Water Plan
Section 2.5 – Environmental Water Use

PREPARED BY: Trihydro Corporation

DATE: April 1, 2005

PURPOSE: The Platte River Basin Plan is a planning tool developed for the Wyoming Water Development Office. It presents estimated current and estimated future uses of water in Wyoming's Platte River Basin. The Plan is not used to determine compliance with or administration of state law, federal law, court decrees, interstate compacts, or interstate agreements.

2.5 ENVIRONMENTAL WATER USE

2.5.1 Introduction

This technical memorandum describes environmental water use within the Platte River Basin of Wyoming and considers water-related environmental practices in the basin, including Wyoming State Engineer's Office (SEO) instream flow filings, U.S. Forest Service instream bypasses, and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) minimum and voluntary reservoir releases. In addition, this memorandum includes the results of a survey of organizations having an interest in water-related basin environmental issues and a summary of information regarding the *Platte River Recovery Implementation Program* and *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*.

2.5.2 Water-related Environmental Practices

Environmental water use within the Platte River Basin includes maintenance of minimum stream flow rates and reservoir water levels to protect new and existing fisheries and wildlife habitat. Instream flow filings, instream bypasses, and minimum reservoir releases are three tools used by state and federal agencies to produce and protect fisheries habitat in the Platte River Basin that has been impacted by historical low flow conditions. Due to the non-consumptive nature of environmental water uses, water consumption attributed to environmental use is minimal and is due primarily to evaporative loss.

2.5.2.1 Wyoming State Engineer's Office Instream Flow Filings

In 1986 the Wyoming State Legislature passed House Bill No. 209 leading to the creation of Wyoming Statutes 41-3-1001 through 41-3-1014. These statutes recognize minimum instream flows to establish, maintain, or improve new and existing fisheries as a beneficial use of State

water. W.S. 41-3-1002(d)(ii) states that any person “may divert and appropriate, as provided by law, instream flow waters for any beneficial use other than for instream flows at the following places: within one (1) mile upstream from any point where the instream flow enters the main stem of the North Platte River.” Establishing instream flow as a beneficial use allows the SEO to grant direct flow and storage water rights to the State of Wyoming solely for the purpose of the creation, enhancement, and protection of fisheries. The Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC) has filed 93 applications with the SEO on behalf of the State for minimum instream flow rights state-wide. At the time of this writing, 34 instream flow water rights have been permitted.

An instream flow water right is established through a process involving the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGF), the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC), and the Wyoming State Engineer’s Office (SEO). WGF is responsible for initial identification of stream segments that need minimum instream flow protection. These stream segments may be presented annually by the WGF to the WWDC. The WWDC is required to file applications with the SEO for instream flow appropriation in stream segments recommended by the WGF. The WWDC is also responsible for evaluating the feasibility of each WGF request for instream flow protection and whether storage is needed to provide the discharge recommended by the WGF. The WWDC provides its findings regarding the feasibility of the appropriation of water for instream flow in a report to the SEO.

The SEO is responsible for reviewing the application and feasibility report and either permitting the instream flow water right requested by the WWDC or rejecting the application. The SEO may not issue an instream flow permit when the instream flow right would be included as part of the consumptive share of water allocated to Wyoming in an interstate decree or compact. In addition, the amount of water appropriated under an instream flow right may not result in more water leaving the state than would otherwise be allocated for downstream uses outside Wyoming.

As part of the instream flow permitting process, the SEO conducts a public hearing to present information regarding the instream flow application and to receive public comment. A 30-day comment period is normally allowed. If the SEO approves the instream flow permit application, the SEO may place a condition on the permit requiring review of continuation of the permit.

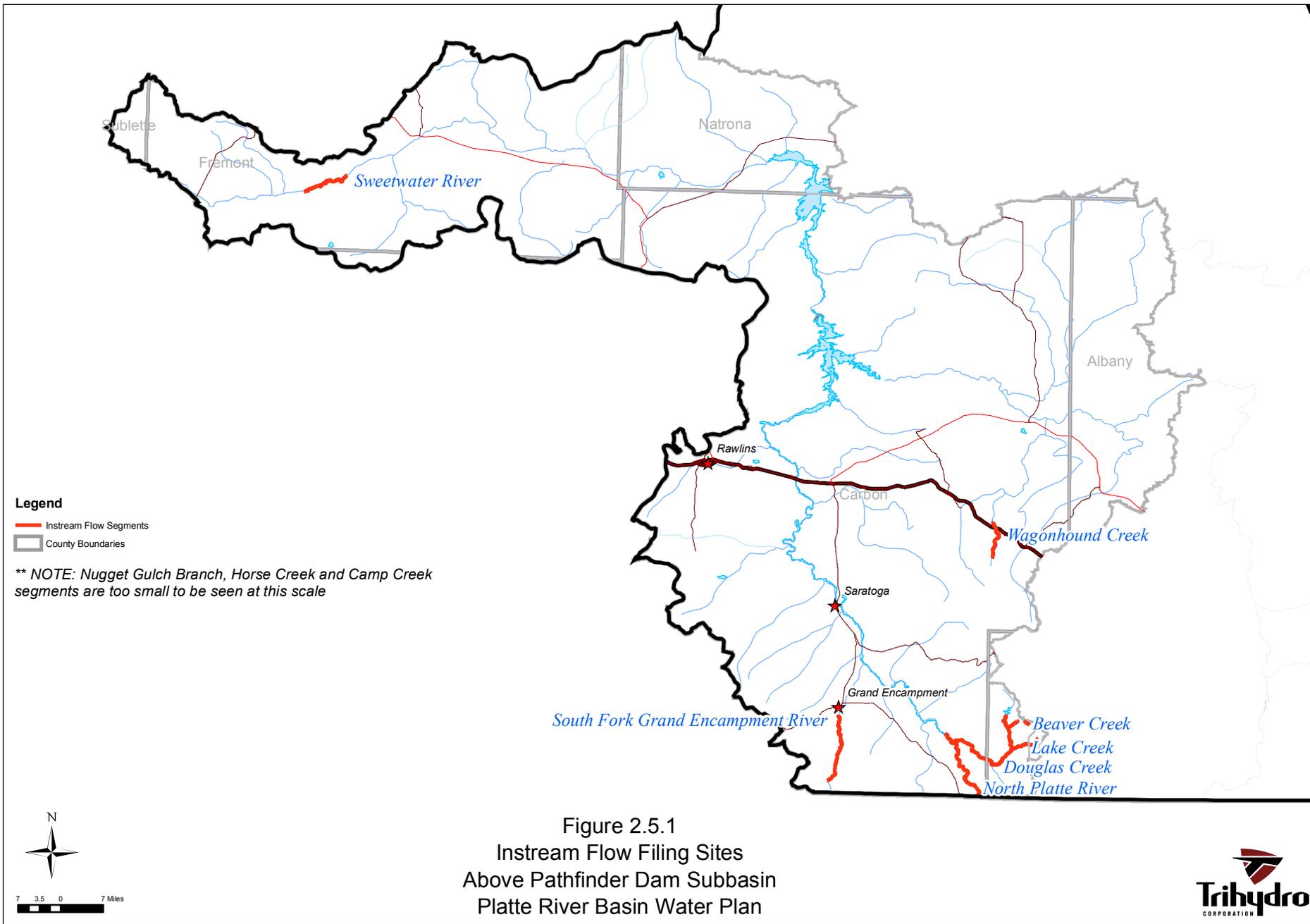
Instream flows permitted by the SEO are water rights held in the name of the State of Wyoming. Instream flow rights are administered similarly to other surface water rights granted by the SEO. After senior upstream water rights are satisfied, remaining stream flow is protected for instream purposes when water is available under an instream flow permit. Assuming natural flow is sufficient and senior upstream water rights are met, instream flows are typically satisfied. It is the responsibility of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGF) to recognize when a permitted minimum instream flow is not achieved due to diversions by appropriators with junior water rights. In this event, WGF reports the need for regulation for the benefit of the instream flow water right to the WWDC, who in turn requests (calls for) regulation by the SEO. The SEO will

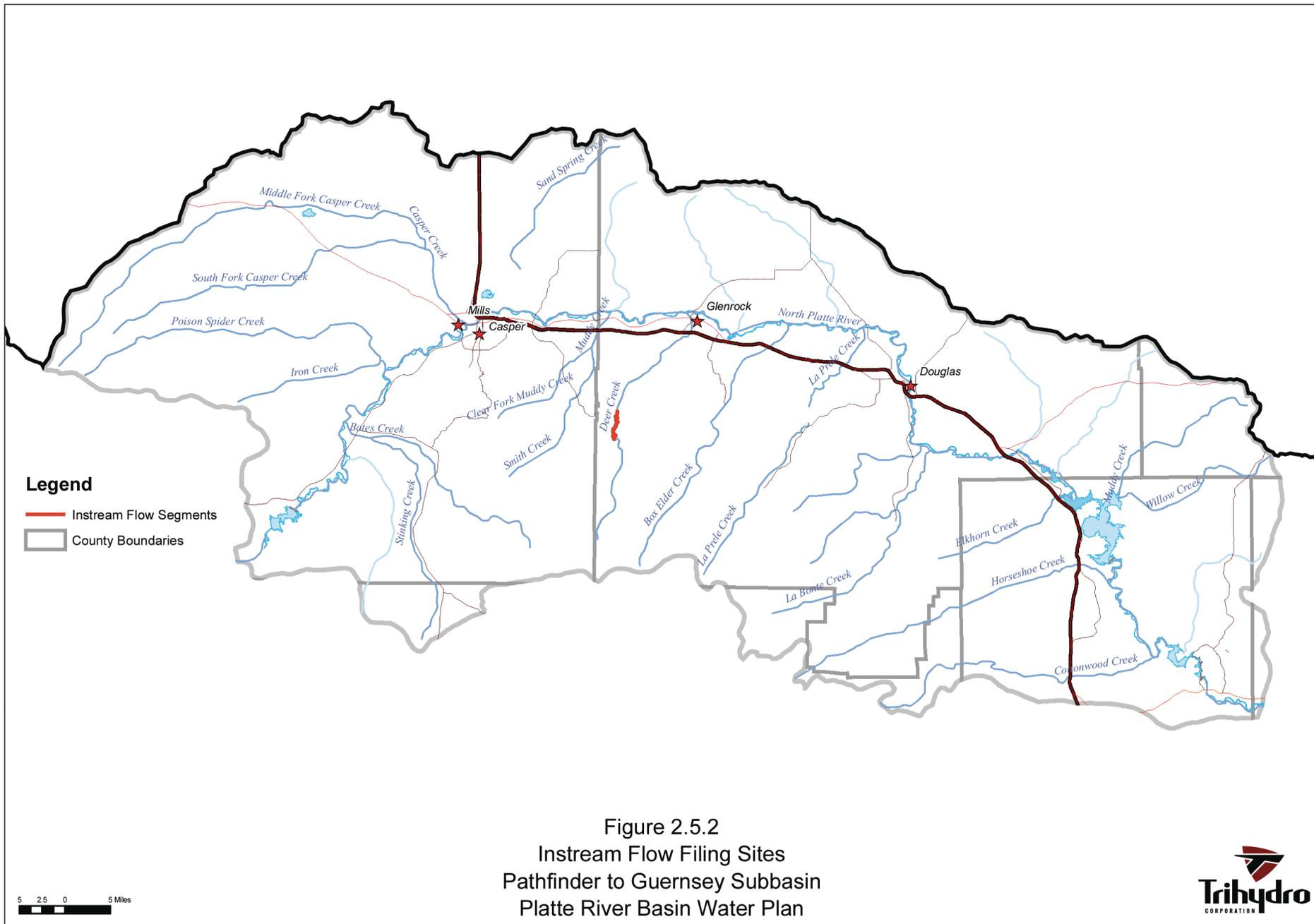
then evaluate whether the call for regulation is valid and, if so, will administer the water rights to provide the permitted instream flow.

The recommended instream flow may, in some instances, vary by time and season of the year, based on studies completed by the WGF. The basis for recommended minimum flows is described in WGF reports that are attached to instream flow applications that are submitted to the WWDC by WGF. Currently, 12 instream flow filings for stream reaches located within the Platte River Basin have been submitted to the SEO. Information regarding these 12 filings is summarized in Table 2.5.1, and the locations of these 12 stream reaches are shown on Figures 2.5.1, 2.5.2, and 2.5.3. To date, none of the 12 Platte River Basin instream flow application filings have been permitted by the SEO.

Table 2.5.1 Summary - Wyoming State Engineer's Office (SEO) instream flow filings in Wyoming's Platte River Basin

<u>No.</u>	<u>Stream segment</u>	<u>Hearing held</u>	<u>Stream reach length (miles)</u>	<u>Minimum flow (cubic feet per second)</u>	<u>Point of beginning of minimum instream flow (Section, Township, Range)</u>	<u>Point of ending of minimum instream flow (Section, Township, Range)</u>
1	South Fork of the Grand Encampment River	yes	13.60	54	10-12-84	13-14-84
2	North Platte River	yes	16.00	163	23-12-80	26-14-81
3	Sweetwater River	yes	10.20	16-80	17-28-98	34-29-97
4	Lake Creek	yes	5.80	0.5	33-14-78	11-13-79
5	Horse Creek	yes	0.10	0.2	16-14-79	16-14-79
6	Nugget Gulch Branch	yes	0.10	0.2	14-14-79	14-14-79
7	Beaver Creek	yes	1.90	0.35	14-14-79	22-14-79
8	Camp Creek	yes	1.20	0.2	13-14-79	19-14-78
9	Douglas Creek	yes	22.30	5.5	9-14-79	6-13-80
10	Wagonhound Creek	no	8.50	1.2-545	31-19-79	6-19-79
Pathfinder to Guernsey subbasin						
11	Deer Creek	yes	5.00	10-30	11-31-77	T110A-32-77
Upper Laramie subbasin						
12	Laramie River	yes	3.94	50-100	26-13-77	10-13-77
Source: Wyoming State Engineer's Office, February 17, 2005 e-mail						





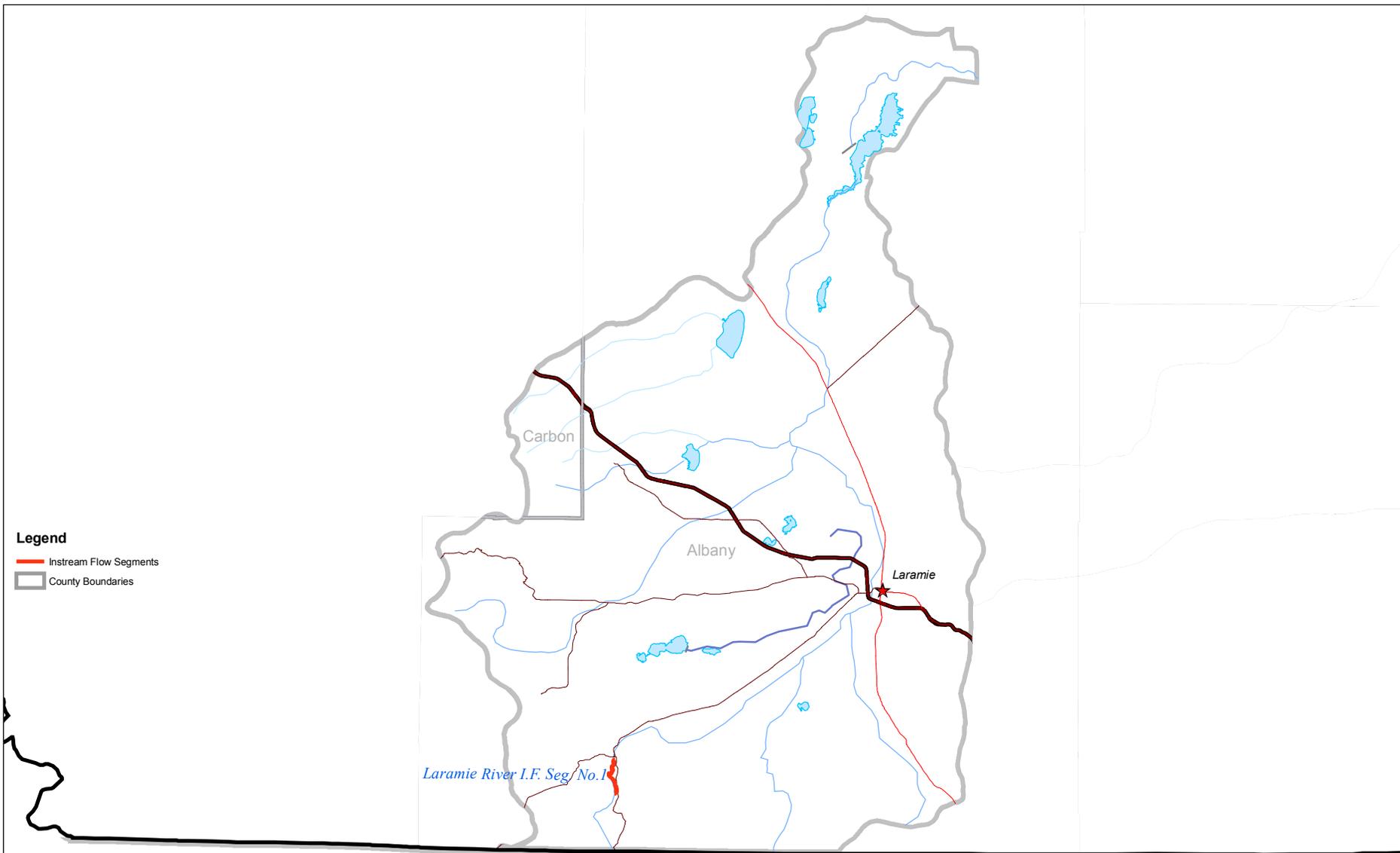


Figure 2.5.3
Instream Flow Filing Sites
Upper Laramie Subbasin
Platte River Basin Water Plan



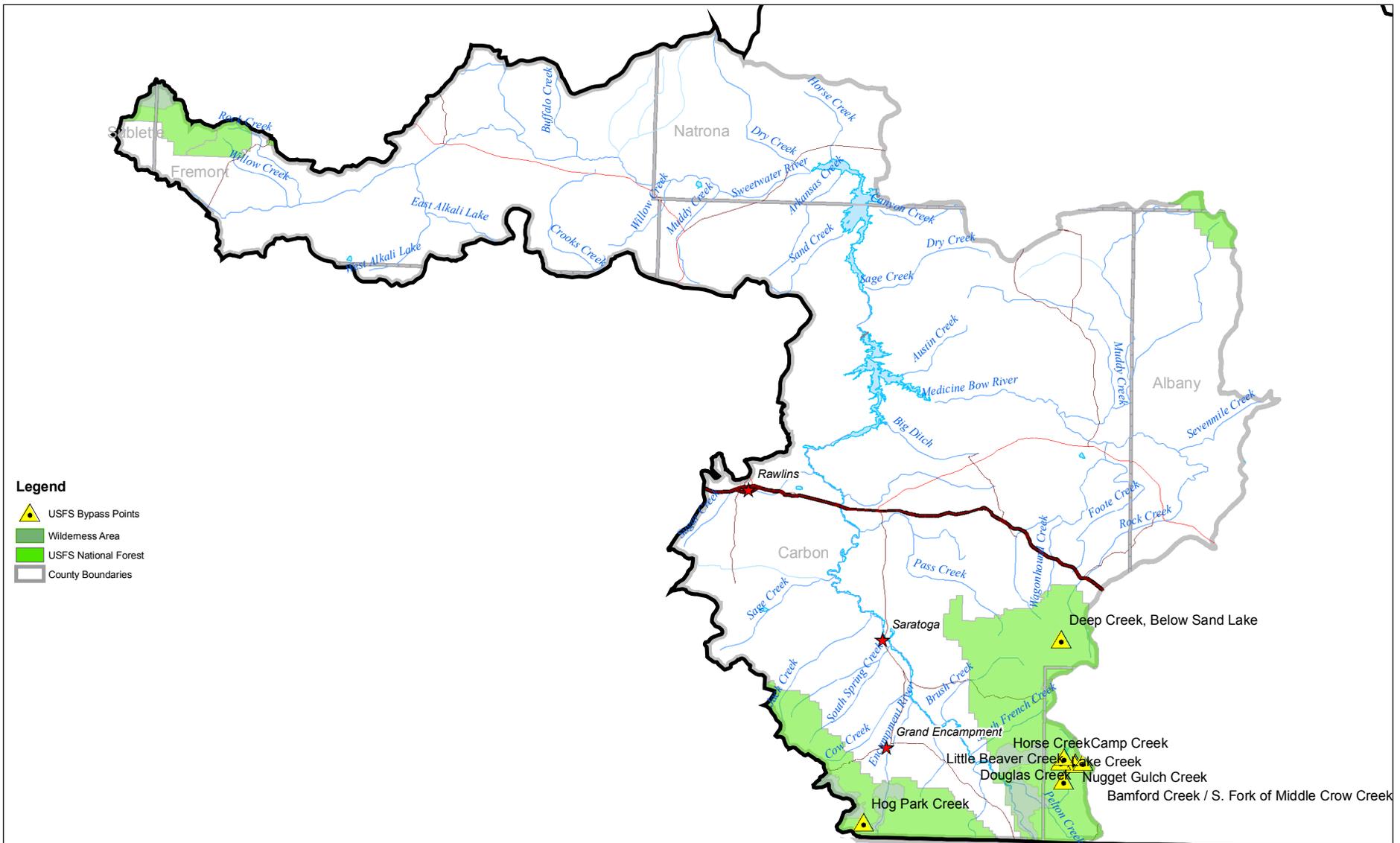
2.5.2.2 U.S. Forest Service Instream Bypasses

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has required instream bypasses as conditions on certain USFS land use authorizations at several locations in the Platte River Basin. Instream bypasses are measures intended to reduce impacts on the environment resulting from the diversion of water from streams located on USFS lands. Instream bypasses are defined on the basis of the terms and conditions of certain land use authorizations (e.g. easements or special use permits) issued by the USFS for USFS land. The USFS has regulatory authority for the administration of USFS land use authorizations and associated terms or conditions. Though streams with USFS instream bypass protection and stream reaches for which minimum instream flow permit applications have been submitted to the Wyoming State Engineer's Office (SEO) often overlap, USFS instream bypasses are not related to permitting and administration of minimum instream flows by the SEO.

A USFS instream bypass is intended to provide a minimum rate of stream flow to be maintained at a specified bypass point located on land subject to a USFS land use authorization. Because a USFS instream bypass applies to a single point of regulation, USFS instream bypasses do not afford protection to reaches of streams as do minimum instream flows granted by the SEO. USFS instream bypasses are not water appropriations under Wyoming state law and therefore are not administered or recognized by the SEO. Currently the USFS has instream bypass points located on nine streams within Wyoming's Platte River Basin. Information regarding these nine USFS Platte River Basin instream bypasses is summarized in Table 2.5.2, and the locations of the instream bypasses are shown on Figures 2.5.4 and 2.5.5.

Table 2.5.2 Summary - U.S. Forest Service (USFS) instream bypasses

<u>Stream</u>	<u>Minimum flow (cubic feet per second)</u>	<u>Flushing flow (cubic feet per second)</u>	<u>Bypass point</u>
Above Pathfinder subbsin			
Nugget Gulch Creek	0.2	4.5	T14N R79W Sec14
Little Beaver Creek	0.35	7	T14N R79W Sec14
Camp Creek	0.2	2	T14N R79W Sec13
Lake Creek	0.5	8.5	T14N R78W Sec33
Horse Creek	0.2	N/A	T14N R79W Sec16
Douglas Creek	5.5	130	T14N R79W Sec9
Hog Park Creek	15	200 (maximum release permitted)	T12N R84W Sec5
Deep Creek, below Sand Lake	0.8		T17N R79W Sec9
South Platte subbasin			
Middle Crow Creek	N/A	2 (maximum release permitted)	T14N R71W Sec27
Source: Mr. David Gloss, Hydrologist, Medicine Bow Routt National Forests, Saratoga, WY, June 2004			



Legend

-  USFS Bypass Points
-  Wilderness Area
-  USFS National Forest
-  County Boundaries

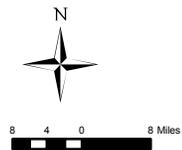


Figure 2.5.4
 Instream Bypass Sites
 Above Pathfinder Dam Subbasin
 Platte River Basin Water Plan

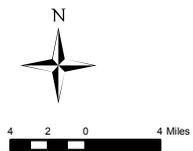
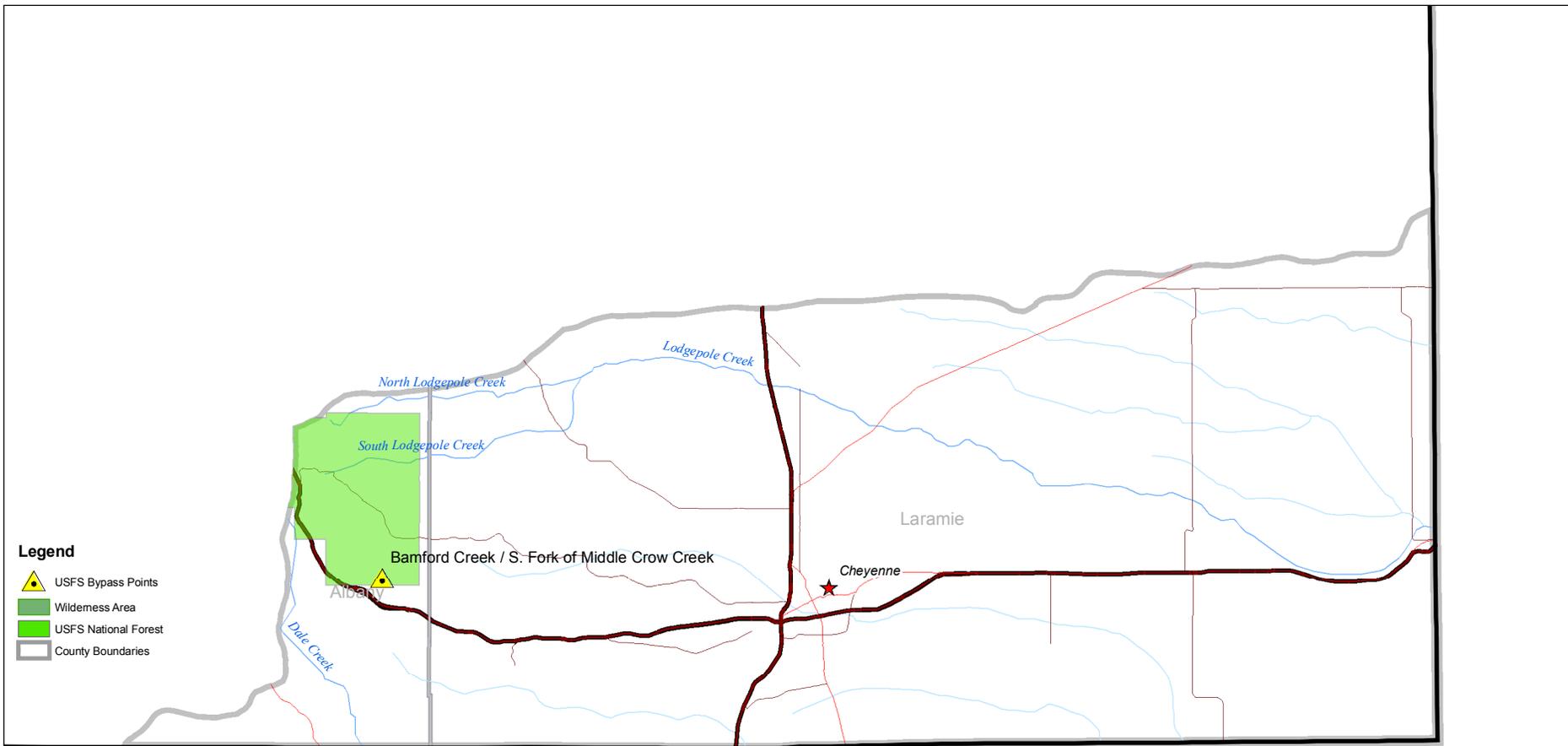


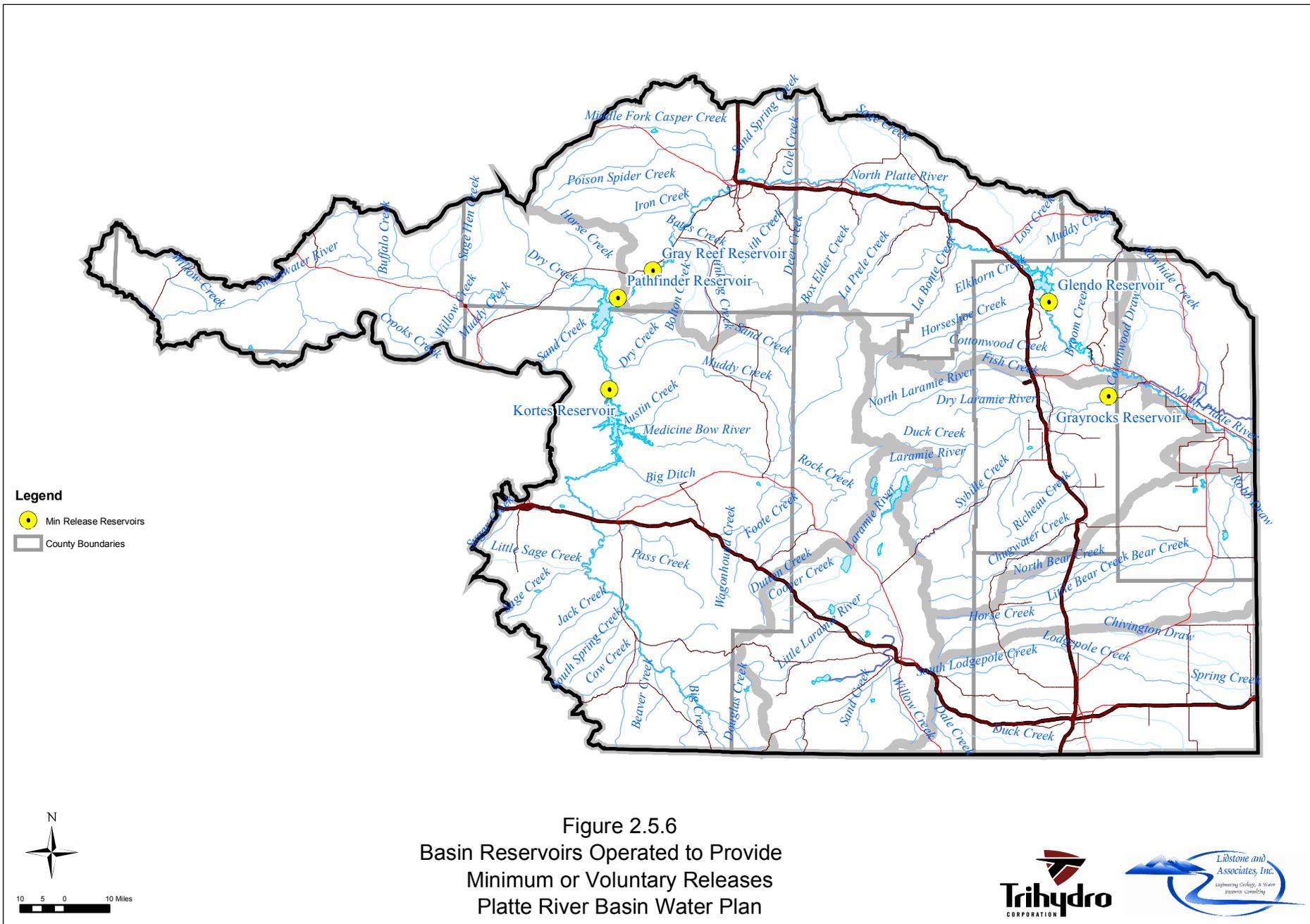
Figure 2.5.5
 Instream Bypass Sites
 South Platte Subbasin
 Platte River Basin Water Plan

2.5.2.3 Minimum Reservoir Releases

Reservoirs and their associated dams affect aquatic and riparian environments in and along their tail waters. Variable flows, low flows and the loss of spring-time flushing flows can have negative effects on aquatic environments below reservoirs. Minimum reservoir releases below Grayrocks and certain USBR dams within the Platte River Basin have resulted in benefits to downstream aquatic and riparian habitats. Within Wyoming's Platte River Basin, minimum release requirements have been placed on three reservoirs. Two of these dams, including Kortes and Gray Reef, are owned and operated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). Information regarding these minimum releases is summarized in Table 2.5.3. The third dam, Grayrocks, is owned and operated by Basin Electric Power Cooperative. In addition, the USBR also provides voluntary continuous low flow releases below Pathfinder and Glendo Dams. The locations of the five basin dams operated to provide minimum releases are shown on Figure 2.5.6.

Table 2.5.3 Summary - minimum reservoir releases

<u>Name</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Minimum reservoir release (cubic feet per second)</u>	<u>Applicable regulation</u>		
Above Pathfinder subbasin					
Kortes Dam	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	500	U.S. Public Law 92-146 (85 Statute 414), Missouri Basin project.		
Pathfinder to Guernsey subbasin					
Pathfinder Dam	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	75	Voluntary low flow release for trout fisheries		
Gray Reef Dam	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	330	U.S. Public Law 85-695 (72 Statute 687), Missouri Basin Project		
Glendo Dam	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	Voluntary low flow release for fisheries + wetlands		
Lower Laramie subbasin					
<u>Name</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Minimum reservoir release (cubic feet per second)</u>			
Grayrocks Dam	Basin Electric Power Cooperative	Reference: 1978 Agreement of Settlement and Compromise and the Modified North Platte Decree, Exhibit 3 Whenever there is less than 29,575 cubic feet per second of natural flow at the gage above Grayrocks Reservoir.	Natural flow is measured at the gage above Grayrocks Reservoir. Senior rights downstream of Grayrocks Reservoir total 24.69 cfs.		
			<u>As measured at the gage below Grayrocks Reservoir.</u>		
			When storage in Grayrocks Reservoir is at least 50,000 acre-feet	October 1 to March 31 - 40 cubic feet per second	
				April 1 to April 30 - 50 cubic feet per second	
				May 1 to September 30 - minimum flow of whichever is greater: 40 cubic feet per second or 75 percent of natural flow at the gage above Grayrocks Reservoir, after all rights have been filled except the Grayrocks Reservoir storage right and the direct flow right for the Laramie River Station power plant; release rates are not to exceed 200 cubic feet per second	
			When storage in Grayrocks Reservoir is less than 50,000 acre-feet	No minimum release	
			<u>As measured at the Ft. Laramie Gauge.</u>		
			When storage in Grayrocks Reservoir is at least 50,000 acre/feet	October 1 to March 31 - 40 cubic feet per second	
				April 1 to April 30 - 50 cubic feet per second	
				May 1 to September 30 - minimum flow of which ever is greater: 40 cubic feet per second or 75 percent of natural flow at the gage above Grayrocks Reservoir after all rights have been filled except the Grayrocks Reservoir storage right and the direct flow right for the Laramie River Station power plant; release rates are not to exceed 200 cubic feet per second	
When storage in Grayrocks Reservoir is less than 50,000 acre-feet	October 1 to March 31 - 20 cubic feet per second				
	April 1 to September 30 - 40 cubic feet per second				



2.5.2.4 Water Appropriations for Fish and Wildlife

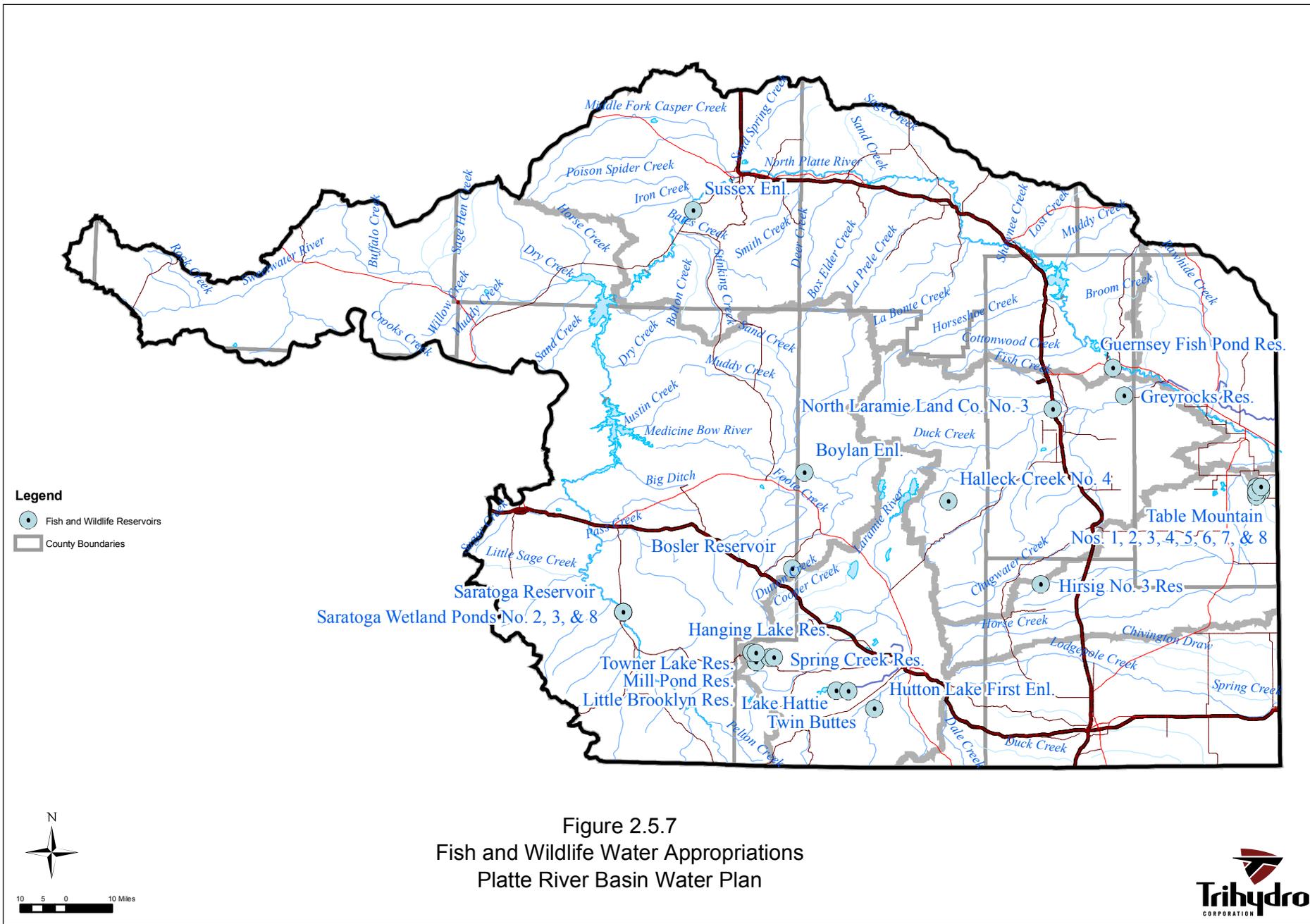
Numerous water right permits have been issued by the Wyoming State Engineer's Office (SEO) for the benefit of fish and wildlife. These permits are held by various entities for maintaining fisheries and wildlife habitat. A complete listing of waters appropriated for environmental benefit would be too extensive to compile. A list of permits for fish and wildlife uses in Wyoming's Platte River Basin is included as Table 2.5.4. The locations of these structures are shown on Figure 2.5.7.

Table 2.5.4 Summary - water appropriations in the Platte River basin for fish and wildlife use

Subbasin	Name	Permit No.	Appropriation	Source	Appropriator(s)	Location (S, T, R)	Beneficial use(s)
Above Pathfinder	Saratoga Reservoir (1)	5706R	810.51 acre-feet	North Platte River	Town of Saratoga, Wyoming Game and Fish Commission	1-17-84	municipal, recreation, stock, fish
	Enlarged Saratoga Reservoir (1)	7297R	748.89 acre-feet		Town of Saratoga, Wyoming Game and Fish Commission	1-17-84	recreation
	Enlarged Saratoga Supply (1)	6354E	--		Town of Saratoga, Wyoming Game and Fish Commission	12-17-84	supply ditch
	Saratoga Wetland Pond No. 2 (1)	9661R	storage of standing water caused by the historic discharge from or seepage out of Saratoga Lake Reservoir, Permit No. 7297R		Wyoming Department of Game and Fish	1/17/1984	fish, stock, wildlife
	Saratoga Wetland Pond No. 3 (1)	9662R					
	Saratoga Wetland Pond No. 8 (1)	9663R					
	First Enlargement Boylan Ditch (2)	5134E	2.31 cubic feet per second		--	Wyoming Game and Fish	34-23-77
Pathfinder to Guernsey	Enlarged Sussex (2)	5966E	11.00 cubic feet per second	--	Wyoming Game and Fish Department	15-32-81	fish
	Enlarged Sussex (2)	6451E	5.47 cubic feet per second	--	Wyoming Game and Fish Department	15-32-81	domestic, fish, irrigation
	Guernsey Fish Pond Reservoir (2)	5514R	87.90 acre-feet	--	Town of Guernsey	2-26-66	fish
Upper Laramie	Lake Hattie Canal No. 1 (1)	24888	300 acre-feet	Laramie River	Wyoming Game and Fish Commission	26-15-76	fish, recreation
	Lake Hattie Reservoir (1)	1372R					
	Spring Creek Reservoir (2)	4906R	2.74 acre-feet	--	U.S. Forest Service	21-16-78	domestic, recreation, stock, fish
	Little Brooklyn Reservoir (1)	4852R	28.41 acre-feet	Nash Fork	U.S. Forest Service	11-16-79	domestic, irrigation, stock, fish, recreation, power, flood control
	Hanging Lake Reservoir (1)	4924R	12.27 acre-feet	Nash Fork	U.S. Forest Service	20-16-78	domestic, recreation, stock, fish
	Towner Lake Reservoir (2)	4885R	30.6 acre-feet	--	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	15-16-79	domestic, recreation, stock, fish
	Mill Pond Reservoir (2)	4887R	13.26 acre-feet	--	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	14-16-79	domestic, recreation, stock, fish
	Twin Buttes Reservoir (2)	7435R	3912.30 acre-feet	--	Wyoming Game and Fish Commission	30-15-75	fish, recreation
	First Enlargement Hutton Lake (2)	5212E	1.6 cubic feet per second	Sand Creek	U.S. Biological Survey	18-14-74	irrigation, wildlife

Table 2.5.4 Summary - water appropriations in the Platte River basin for fish and wildlife use (cont)

Subbasin	Name	Permit No.	Appropriation	Source	Appropriator(s)	Location (S, T, R)	Beneficial use(s)
Lower Laramie	Grayrocks Reservoir (1)	7649R	15,000 acre-feet	Laramie River	Basin Electric Power Cooperative	5-25-65	fish, irrigation, industrial, recreation, wildlife
		31837	--				fish, wildlife
	North Laramie Land Company No. 3 Reservoir (1)	1517R	3156.84 acre-feet	North Laramie River	Wyoming Game and Fish Department	22-25-68	fish, recreation
Horse Creek	Table Mountain No. 1 Reservoir (1)	6676R	144.96 acre-feet	Dry Creek, Horse Creek	Wyoming Game and Fish Commission, U.S. Bureau of Land Management	24-22-61	fish, wildlife
	Table Mountain No. 2 Reservoir (1)	6677R	44.86 acre-feet	Dry Creek, Horse Creek	Wyoming Game and Fish Commission, U.S. Bureau of Land Management	24-22-61	fish, wildlife
	Table Mountain No. 3 Reservoir (1)	6790R	32.00 acre-feet	Dry Creek, Horse Creek	State Game and Fish Commission	25-22-61	wildlife
	Table Mountain No. 4 Reservoir (1)	6918R	11.92 acre-feet	Sec. 19-Seep Creek, in drainage of Horse Creek	State Game and Fish Commission, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	19-22-60	waterfowl, nesting, hunting
	Table Mountain No. 5 Reservoir (1)	7321R	63.72 acre-feet	Seep Creek, Horse Creek	Wyoming Game and Fish Commission	13-22-61	fish
	Table Mountain No. 6 Reservoir (1)	7534R	76.37 acre-feet	Dry Creek, Horse Creek	State Game and Fish Commission, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	24-22-61	fish, recreation, wildlife
	Table Mountain No. 7 Reservoir (1)	7535R	15.30 acre-feet	Dry Creek, Horse Creek	State Game and Fish Commission, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	18-22-60	wildlife
	Table Mountain No. 8 Reservoir (1)	7536R	28.80 acre-feet	Dry Creek, Horse Creek	State Game and Fish Commission, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	18-22-60	fish, recreation, wildlife
	Hirsig No. 3 Reservoir (2)	7671R	141.8 acre-feet	--	State Board of Land Commissioners, Hirsig Ranch Inc.	31-19-68	flood control, recreation, fish
Notes:							
(1) Information provided by Wyoming Game and Fish Department, checked in SEO TAB book							
(2) Information shown as provided by Wyoming Game and Fish Department							
(3) Only "environmental uses" (fish, wildlife, recreation) are listed in this table; individual water rights may have other permitted beneficial uses							



Legend

- Fish and Wildlife Reservoirs
- County Boundaries

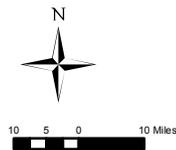


Figure 2.5.7
Fish and Wildlife Water Appropriations
Platte River Basin Water Plan

2.5.3 Environmental Survey

During this study, a draft survey was developed to identify water-related environmental issues in the Platte River Basin. A contact list of environmental groups and interested organizations which are located or have interests in Wyoming's Platte River Basin was compiled, provided to the Platte River Basin Advisory Group (BAG) for review, and expanded based on BAG comments. The survey was then distributed to the organizations and groups on the contact list following telephone contact with a representative of each organization and determination that the groups were interested in contributing to this component of the Platte River Basin Plan. Not all groups that were listed and contacted completed or returned the environmental survey.

2.5.3.1 Survey distribution

The four question survey was submitted to locally and nationally active organizations with water-oriented interests within Wyoming's Platte River Basin. An attempt was made to contact 26 organizations operating within the Platte River Basin. Of these 26 organizations, 25 were contacted and expressed interest in completing the survey. Thirteen of the 25 surveys sent to interested organizations were completed and returned. Organization names, contact information and survey status are listed in Table 2.5.5.

Table 2.5.5 Summary - surveyed environmental organizations

Organization	Contact	Date survey returned
Nature Conservancy	Dr. Joni Ward	10/20/04
Ducks Unlimited	Bob Sanders	7/12/06
Wyoming Council of Trout Unlimited	Kathy Buchner	8/4/04
Sierra Club – Wyoming Chapter	Kirk Koepsel	8/18/04
Wyoming Outdoor Council	Steve Jones	No Response
Wyoming Wildlife Federation	Mark Winland	8/13/04
U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - Wyoming	Vicky Herren	8/4/04
Upper North Platte Water Users Association	Joe Glode	7/10/04
Platte River Cooperative	Clayton Derby	7/30/04
Natural Resources	Harold Bergman	No Response
University of Wyoming Department of Renewable Resources	Tom Thurow	No Response
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts	Bobbi Frank	No Response
Natrona County Conservation District	Jamie George	No Response
Converse County Conservation District	Radonna Vore	7/21/04
Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District	Buck Buchanan	8/13/04
Niobrara Conservation District	Lisa Shaw	7/6/04
Medicine Bow Conservation District	Brad Holliday	9/28/04
Laramie Rivers Conservation District	Tony Hoch	7/27/04
Platte County Resource District	Brian Artery	No Response
Lingle-Ft. Laramie Conservation District		
North Platte Valley Conservation District		
South Goshen Conservation District	Nancy Borton	No Response
Laramie County Conservation District	Jim Cochran	7/12/04
Wyoming Water Association	John Shields	No Response
Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife	Bob Wharff	No Response
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation	John Gram	No Response

2.5.3.2 Survey responses

Survey forms that were returned voiced concerns and suggestions on a number of basin environmental issues. Subjects which were addressed by several respondents included land management practices in regard to forestry and vegetation and potential effects these practices might have on water yield and quality, endangered species and interstate agreements, water conservation and pertinent State guidance, shifts from agriculture to municipal uses of basin water, and water quality.

Information gathered from the 13 organizations which returned completed surveys is summarized below. Survey responses have been edited for spelling and grammar. In the event a respondent did not answer one or more of the four survey questions an “NR” (no response) has been inserted.

Question 1

Please list and briefly describe current Wyoming Platte River Basin surface and/or groundwater related environmental issues (water quality, water availability, wildlife habitat, etc.) that your organization has identified and about which your organization is concerned.

Sierra Club: Kirk Koepsel, Senior Regional Representative

Water quality and quantity concerns are very important to the Sierra Club. These issues are particularly important with regard to recreational use of the river and wildlife habitat. We are not only concerned about wildlife habitat here in Wyoming, but also habitat downstream in Nebraska. The habitat concerns in Nebraska center on species of concern such as the Sand Hill Cranes and endangered species such as the whooping crane, pallid sturgeon, piping plover, and least tern.

Wyoming Wildlife Federation: Mark Winland, President

We are primarily concerned with recreation/fisheries and wildlife habitat issues, both in Wyoming and downstream (downstream issues include endangered species issues).

Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District: Buck Buchanan, District Coordinator

Water availability is our chief concern here at the district. The proposed Pathfinder addition we believe will place further calls upon the upper basin of the watershed. This will result in a loss of meadows that have been created over the years and a reduction of important hay resources for local producers along with a reduction of high quality wildlife habitat.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Vicki Herren, Fire Ecologist

For wild land fire and fuels management, water availability for both fire suppression and prescribed fire activities is our concern. We have completed a programmatic consultation with the (U.S.) Fish and Wildlife Service for depletions although our use levels are quite low.

Wyoming Council of Trout Unlimited: Kathy Buchner, Part Time Director

The Wyoming Council of Trout Unlimited (WYTU) is dedicated to conserving, protecting, and restoring coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. Water quality is a concern and is

impacted by natural and human-caused factors, i.e., temperature fluctuations, drought conditions, logging, grazing, roads, agriculture, domestic, and industrial pollution.

Water availability is obviously a concern as fish need water every day. It is a well known fact that some of the dams on the Platte River have created some world class coldwater fisheries in places where trout were not historically found. But, in order to maintain these fisheries, dam releases and water management are crucial – timing and quantity have profound effects on trout spawning success. And, in the headwater streams in the drainage, water availability is also important on a year-round basis.

Fisheries habitat is always a concern also, and WYTU is interested in preserving what good habitat remains and in helping restore habitat that has been degraded for whatever reason.

Invasive, non-native aquatic species, such as zebra mussels, New Zealand mud snails, Whirling Disease, etc., are also a concern.

Platte River Cooperative Agreement: Clayton Derby, Platte River Cooperative Agreement Assistant Executive Director

One overall purpose of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program, being developed during this Cooperative Agreement period, is to "provide ESA (Endangered Species Act) compliance for existing and new water related activities in the Platte River Basin." To accomplish this, several specific goals and objectives are identified. I will briefly show the ones with specific relevance to this questionnaire, but encourage you to review the entire document for the complete answers.

Future Depletions - The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program will replace depletions to the North, South, and Platte Rivers according to each State's (Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska) and federal government's future depletions plans (see draft Platte River Recovery Implementation Program Document and Attachment 5 of the Program Document).

Water Conservation/Supply/Re-regulation - The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program has as a first increment (13 year) objective "improving the occurrence of Platte River flows in the central Platte associated habitats relative to the present occurrence of species and annual pulse target flows by an average of 130,000-150,000 acre-feet per year at Grand Island, through re-regulation and water conservation/supply project." There is a reconnaissance level report describing potential projects to achieve this first increment objective and a process to develop other projects as needed (see draft Platte River Recovery Implementation Program Document and Attachment 5).

NOTE: All acquisitions of water and land interests under the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program will be achieved through willing sellers/participants.

Laramie Rivers Conservation District: Anthony Hoch, District Manager

- Water availability and storage in the Laramie basin.
- Fecal bacteria runoff from agricultural operations.
- Restrictions and loss of irrigation water rights due to [the] Platte River agreement.
- New development in areas where fresh water is lacking or absent.

Laramie County Conservation District: Jim Cochran District Manager

- a) Declining Ogallala aquifer/groundwater supply in SE Wyoming.
- b) Fecal coliform levels in Crow Creek (listed as an impaired water body).
- c) Current drought conditions and effects on water quantity and quality.
- d) Effect of improvements in irrigation efficiencies to riparian areas and wetlands supported from irrigation run-off.

Medicine Bow Conservation District: Brad Holliday

Continuing to sample water quality, water rights & allocations, Platte River Draft EIS, Coal Bed Methane.

Converse County Conservation District

- Availability of water.
- Volume of water (instream flow).
- Water development.
- Effects of [the] Endangered Species Act on water usage.

Niobrara Conservation District: Lisa Shaw, Manager as Board Directed

None identified at this time.

Upper North Platte Water Users Association: Joe Glode

1. USFW [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service] requirements for additional and timing flows of water to the target area in Nebraska for the whooping crane and other threatened species. Our primary concern is a lack of identification of impacts within the North Platte Basin particularly above Pathfinder Reservoir.
2. The whole question of minimum or instream flow. Again our concern is proper identification of impacts to current water rights holders in a river system already over appropriated.

Ducks Unlimited Inc.: Robert Sanders

Ducks Unlimited's primary concern in the WPRB [Wyoming Platte River Basin] is the availability of wetland habitat for waterfowl and other wetland wildlife. Large blocks or complexes of wetlands of varying types are especially important

Wyoming Chapter of The Nature Conservancy: Joni Ward, PhD. Director of Science

- Protection of priority conservation areas identified through the Wyoming Basins Ecoregional Plan (drafted by The Nature Conservancy - available from the Wyoming Field Office in Lander).
- In-stream flow.
- Coalbed methane.

Question 2

Does your organization have positions regarding recommended actions or remedies for addressing any or all of the water-related environmental issues in Wyoming's Platte River Basin that you have listed above? If so, please describe.

Sierra Club: Kirk Koepsel, Senior Regional Representative

The Sierra Club is very concerned with additional water withdrawals, including groundwater in the Basin as well as the water quality concerns related to energy development. Thus, we would like to see the State of Wyoming implement greater authority [regarding] water withdrawals and contamination. We also support implementation of a comprehensive water conservation program for the Basin.

Wyoming Wildlife Federation: Mark Winland, President

We are generally supportive of the measures outlined in the new multi-state Platte River Plan, including increasing storage in Pathfinder Reservoir in order to help restore more historic flow regimes on the lower Platte.

Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District: Buck Buchanan, District Coordinator

At this time it appears to us that all of the remedies being proposed center around capturing more water in the reservoir systems. We have seen no proposal concerning the conservation of water from the down stream users. For example, the City of Casper has placed no limitations on subdivision use of highly water dependent [vegetation] species i.e. blue grass in new developments. There has also been no (to our knowledge) requirements for irrigators in the major cropping areas to adopt more irrigation efficient practices. The State of Wyoming needs to mandate flow meters, drop nozzles etc. on center pivots.

BLM Wyoming State: Vicki Herren, Fire Ecologist

We are bound [in regard to regulation] by the eventual decision from the Platte River Recovery Implementation Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Wyoming Council of Trout Unlimited: Kathy Buchner, Part Time Director

WYTU believes that any water related activities, planning, or development, should result in no further degradation or exacerbation of those issues discussed above. Conserving, protecting, and restoring coldwater fisheries would be our position. We would make ourselves available to help in any way possible so that future water activities in the State maintain and enhance the integrity of our wonderful fisheries.

Platte River Cooperative Agreement: Clayton Derby, Platte River Cooperative Agreement Assistant Executive Director

See answer to #1 - the depletions plans and water plans are meant to address the problems identified.

Laramie Rivers Conservation District: Anthony Hoch, District Manager

- Would like to see experimentation with cloud seeding to enhance precipitation.
- Interested in tailoring forestry practices to increase water yield from national forest.

Laramie County Conservation District: Jim Cochran District Manager

- a) We do have an irrigation efficiency program especially for irrigators that draw water from the Ogallala aquifer.
- b) We have a water quality monitoring program and have been working on implementing [Best Management Practices] that were developed as part of the Crow Creek Watershed Plan.
- c) Encourage alternative farming practices such as reduced till or no till farming.

Medicine Bow Conservation District: Brad Holliday

Water Resources

The Medicine Bow Conservation District is charged with the protection of our water resources as defined in Wyoming State Statute 11-16-103 Legislative declarations and policy.

Water Quality –Quantity

Our goal is to adequately monitor and analyze the surface waters within the district using the most accurate credible water quality data available. We will work with the residents within our district to educate them on the importance of a healthy, properly functioning water cycle within our watersheds and to see that the available water resources are put to best beneficial use to maintain a viable agricultural community through sound management of irrigation practices, to maintain healthy riparian areas that provide excellent fisheries and habitat for domestic and wildlife species and provide for adequate domestic water supplies of the highest possible quality.

The objectives we will implement to achieve our overall goal are as follows:

- Complete the analyses and interpretation of the data collected since 1999.
- Complete a final water quality report for all three of our watersheds.
- Develop a maintenance water quality sampling and analyses program that will address any target areas identified and ensure water quality is sufficient to achieve the designated and beneficial uses assigned to those waters.
- Ensure the streams within our watersheds are classified correctly according to Chapter 1 of Wyoming Water Quality Rules and Regulations.
- Address new standards regarding water quality.
- Educate and inform landowners regarding existing and proposed AFO/CAFO [Animal Feeding Operations/Confined Animal Feeding Operations] regulations.
- Assist in reducing the occurrence of non-point source pollution within the district boundaries.

- Promote Best Management Practices to reduce non-point source pollution by promoting irrigation water management, water erosion control, pesticide and fertilizer management, riparian management and other conservation practices.
- Work to see that all water rights are being utilized to their fullest extent.
- Educate and inform cooperators regarding Wyoming Water Laws.
- Work with cooperators and local, state and federal agencies on watershed-based water quality and quantity programs.
- Seek additional water storage as per the North Platte Decree as allowed.
- Promote projects that create water energy development within the district.
- Support and promote any and all waste cleanup programs and projects.
- Provide our residents with the informational resources regarding proper sewage design and installation.

Converse County Conservation District

Developing water sources would make water available to more and improve quality.

Niobrara Conservation District: Lisa Shaw, Manager as Board Directed

Back all decisions with scientific data – we are collecting data at this time.

Upper North Platte Water Users Association: Joe Glode

Yes, the water users maintain that they have a property right in their appropriated water. Any re-regulation of water for environmental concerns must consider the effects on those property rights. At a minimum, either avoiding impacts or just compensation must be included in any solution proposal.

Ducks Unlimited Inc.: Robert Sanders

Currently, DU's efforts in WY's PRB [Platte River Basin] have been related to select projects. We are currently developing a DU Wyoming Plan which will narrow that focus to high priority sites in the State.

Wyoming Chapter of The Nature Conservancy: Joni Ward, PhD. Director of Science

We would recommend that the information provided in the Wyoming Basins Ecoregional Plan be considered along with other data when land-use decisions are made. We would be pleased to provide a copy of the ecoregional plan to the Platt River Basin Advisory Group.

Question 3

What new water-related environmental issues in Wyoming's Platte River Basin does your organization believe may emerge during the next 20 to 30 years?

Sierra Club: Kirk Koepsel, Senior Regional Representative

- Coal-bed Methane development.
- Converting agricultural water uses to more industrial and municipal uses.
- More acquisition of riparian lands and water rights for instream flow and wildlife purposes.

- Conversion of agricultural lands and associated water rights to residential uses through subdivision on lands particularly near the river.

Wyoming Wildlife Federation: Mark Winland, President

Water quantity/flow regimes will always be an issue, especially in relation to downstream State endangered/sensitive species issues. Though difficult to foretell, endangered species issues may emerge in Wyoming as well.

Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District: Buck Buchanan, District Coordinator

Water quantity will continue to be the dominant issue.

BLM Wyoming State: Vicki Herren, Fire Ecologist

As wild land fuels build up and if drought continues, there could be an increase in wild land fire suppression efforts; water availability would be a concern.

Wyoming Council of Trout Unlimited: Kathy Buchner, Part Time Director

New, potential issues that could negatively impact our coldwater fisheries would be more storage facilities, and/or “selling” our water downstream. Urbanization, population growth and development, will also be concerns.

Platte River Cooperative Agreement: Clayton Derby, Platte River Cooperative Agreement Assistant Executive Director

You would need to speak with the individual parties.

Laramie Rivers Conservation District: Anthony Hoch, District Manager

- Salts in surface water, ground water, and soils.
- Increased domestic demand from an over-appropriated system – municipal as well as from small acreages created by agricultural land subdivision.
- Increased demands from downstream users (NE) and upstream diverters (CO).

Laramie County Conservation District: Jim Cochran District Manager

- a) Change of use from agricultural water to municipal water.
- b) More emphasis put on groundwater rights and quality.
- c) Instream flow issues.

Medicine Bow Conservation District: Brad Holliday

- Water storage and change of use.
- Endangered species.
- Change of demand on current water supply.

Converse County Conservation District

- CBM and industry effects/usage.
- Endangered Species Act.

- Water quality.
- Water development for subdivisions.
- Conveyance of water.

Niobrara Conservation District: Lisa Shaw, Manager as Board Directed

Coal bed methane – cumulative decline in well water – overuse.

Upper North Platte Water Users Association: Joe Glode

The big question that nobody seems to want to address is water yield on the National Forests. Vegetation management on the Forest has a direct impact on the water yield in the river drainage. Political and resulting environmental issues have made scientific consideration of vegetation and water relationships difficult to pursue. The water users see decline of water yields as the major long-term water issue in the Platte River Basin.

Ducks Unlimited Inc.: Robert Sanders

Down stream issues with Nebraska will likely become increasingly important. Threatened and endangered species in WY, CO and NE will increase in priority for many organizations and agencies.

Wyoming Chapter of The Nature Conservancy: Joni Ward, PhD. Director of Science

None at this time.

Question 4

Please provide additional comments, if you wish, regarding current or potential future water-related environmental issues in Wyoming's Platte River Basin.

Sierra Club: Kirk Koepsel, Senior Regional Representative

NR

Wyoming Wildlife Federation: Mark Winland, President

NR

Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District: Buck Buchanan, District Coordinator

NR

U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Vicki Herren, Fire Ecologist

Another issue that currently affects fire and fuels operations is the potential spread of aquatic exotics and diseases (such as whirling disease) from infected waters to uninfected waters. This has the potential to become a much bigger issue in the future.

Wyoming Council of Trout Unlimited: Kathy Buchner, Part Time Director

WYTU, with its 1200 members statewide, will always be available to consult and advise in issues affecting our coldwater fisheries. We thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment.

Platte River Cooperative Agreement: Clayton Derby, Platte River Cooperative Agreement Assistant Executive Director

NR

Laramie Rivers Conservation District: Anthony Hoch, District Manager

No additional comments.

Laramie County Conservation District: Jim Cochran District Manager

NR

Medicine Bow Conservation District: Brad Holliday

Is it possible to increase storage within our district area to hold water allocated to irrigators, and compensate for siltation?

Converse County Conservation District

The Platte River Basin cannot ignore the possible impacts that CBM development could place on the area in the future.

Niobrara Conservation District: Lisa Shaw, Manager as Board Directed

The district is involved in baseline data collection in Goshen, Converse & Niobrara counties. This data is on the following water bodies: Rawhide, Muskrat, Duck, Old Woman, Lightning, Lanci, Cheyenne, Antelope, Little Thunder, Etc. Included is our data policy.

Upper North Platte Water Users Association: Joe Glode

NR

Ducks Unlimited Inc.: Robert Sanders

Thank you for soliciting comments from us. I look forward to hearing about progress that is made.

Wyoming Chapter of The Nature Conservancy: Joni Ward, PhD. Director of Science

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide input.

2.5.4 Cooperative Agreement and Draft Environmental Impact Statement

2.5.4.1 Cooperative Agreement

In 1997, the States of Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska and the U.S. Department of the Interior signed the *Cooperative Agreement for Platte River Research and Other Efforts Relating to Endangered Species Habitat Along the Central Platte River, Nebraska* (Cooperative Agreement). The purpose of the Cooperative Agreement is to implement certain aspects of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) recovery plans for target species (piping plover, least interior tern, whooping crane and pallid sturgeon) that relate to the habitats of these species by providing for the following during the term of the Cooperative Agreement:

- implementation of research, analysis and other measures that will benefit the target species and their associated habitats;
- implementation of efforts to acquire, restore, and manage land or interests in land so as to provide and improve associated habitats for the target species;
- development and implementation of certain water management, conservation and supply measures;
- development of a basin-wide program, the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP), to be implemented following evaluation of the Proposed Alternative and a range of reasonable alternatives in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the intents of which are to:
 - (1) secure defined benefits for the target species and their associated habitats to assist in their conservation and recovery through a basin-wide cooperative approach that can be agreed to by the three states and U.S. Department of the Interior;
 - (2) serve as the reasonable and prudent alternative to offset the effects of existing and new water-related activities in the Platte River Basin that, in the absence of the PRRIP, would be found by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to be likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the target species or adversely modify designated critical habitat;
 - (3) help prevent the need to list more basin associated species pursuant to the ESA; and
 - (4) mitigate new water-related activities in a state in a manner that will not increase the mitigation responsibilities of other signatory states, with the intent that mitigation will be implemented in the state where the activity occurs; and
- establishment of a governance structure that will ensure appropriate state government and stakeholder involvement in the completion of NEPA compliance tasks, in the implementation of research and other projects beneficial to the target species and their associated habitats, and in the development of the PRRIP (Cooperative Agreement, 1997).

The Cooperative Agreement led to the creation of a Governance Committee composed of member representatives from the three signatory states, the federal government, environmental groups, and basin water users. The Governance Committee was charged with developing details of the first 13-year long increment of the PRRIP. In the absence of the PRRIP, individual water projects and activities in the Platte River Basin with a federal nexus will be required to address and comply with federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations individually, a process that

could require existing and new water-depletive projects requiring federal actions and approvals to replace their depletions, which could severely impact the states and their water users.

The Cooperative Agreement and the PRRIP were necessary as a result of Congressional approval of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973. Since then, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has issued “jeopardy biological opinions” for virtually all existing and new water-depletive projects requiring federal actions and approvals. One such “biological opinion” cites depletions from Platte River Basin water projects as contributing factors in jeopardizing the continued existence of the target endangered species and adversely affecting their federally designated critical habitat along and within the Platte River in central Nebraska. The Cooperative Agreement is intended to provide an “efficient, effective, and equitable way to create improvements in the habitat” of the four Platte River target species while allowing numerous existing and some proposed Platte River water projects and activities to continue and to meet the requirements of the ESA. (USFWS, 2004)

The Governance Committee prepared and submitted a draft PRRIP to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) for review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and for use in preparing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). When submitted, the components of the draft PRRIP were at various stages of development and completion (PRESP, 2004). Following NEPA review, the DOI will issue a Record of Decision. Following issuance of the Record of Decision, the governors of Wyoming, Nebraska, and Colorado and the U.S. Secretary of the Interior may enter into a PRRIP, which is anticipated to occur in 2006. Governance Committee goals for the first 13 year increment of the PRRIP include:

- Land habitat restoration:
Protecting and/or restoring 10,000 acres of habitat in the Central Platte area in Nebraska
- Program target river flows:
Improving achievement of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Platte River flow targets by an average of 130,000 acre-feet to 150,000 acre-feet annually by changing the timing, magnitude, and duration of flows
- Pallid sturgeon habitat:
Testing the assumption that managing Central Platte River flows will also improve Lower Platte River pallid sturgeon habitat

2.5.4.2 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) jointly prepared a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the first 13-year increment of the Governance Committee’s Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP). The DEIS assesses the environmental consequences of the PRRIP, as required by NEPA. USBR and USFWS released the DEIS for public comment in January 2004. The DEIS is the precursor to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Two related documents that are being and have been prepared in conjunction with the DEIS are a USFWS Biological Opinion and a National Research Council report reviewing the science of the Platte River. The National Research Council report is commonly referred to by the Cooperative Agreement participants as the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) or NAS report. The Biological Opinion will assess conformance of the PRRIP with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Biological Opinion has not been completed at the time of preparation of this technical memorandum. The National Research Council of the National Academies was asked to “evaluate the science regarding the central Platte River habitat needs and flow recommendations for the federally listed whooping crane, piping plover, interior least tern, and the pallid sturgeon.” (PRESF, 2004) The draft NAS report *Endangered and Threatened Species of the Platte River* was released for public review in April 2004.

The DEIS study area encompasses the main stem, tributaries, and water projects on the Platte River in Nebraska; the South Platte River and its tributaries in Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming; and the North Platte River and its tributaries in Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming. The DEIS evaluates the effects of the Governance Committee’s draft PRRIP and three other alternatives for a cooperative recovery program. The DEIS focuses on effects that a program may have on Platte River basin hydrology, water quality, land, target species and their habitat, other species, hydropower, recreation, economics, social resources, and cultural resources. The DEIS does so by analyzing a “no action” alternative and the effects of four alternative approaches to implementing a program, including:

- Governance Committee alternative,
- Water leasing alternative,
- Wet meadow alternative, and
- Water emphasis alternative.

The four alternatives use the “same general habitat objectives” for land habit restoration, target river flows, and pallid sturgeon habitat. The alternatives differ in the level of emphasis that is placed on land habitat and water. In addition, each alternative incorporates the following principles:

- Willing buyer, willing seller/lessor:
No condemnation of land or water rights will occur. The PRRIP will obtain land and/or water interests only through arrangements with willing sellers or lessors.
- Incremental approach:
The PRRIP will be implemented incrementally, with only the first 13-year implementation period currently under review.
- Adaptive management:
The PRRIP will use knowledge gained during early stages of implementation to adjust and improve implementation during later stages. (UWFWS, 2004)
- Water sources:
The three initial State Projects, including the Pathfinder Modification, Lake McConaughy EA (Environmental Account), and Tamarack Project, Phase I, are considered “basic water supplies” and will provide approximately 80,000 acre-feet of the average 130,000

acre-feet to 150,000 acre-feet additional river flow sought during implementation of the first 13 years of the PRRIP.

- Water protection, tracking, and accounting:
Each state will provide appropriate legal and institutional protections for water flowing to and through the Central Platte habitat reach that runs between Lexington and Chapman, Nebraska.
- New depletion management:
Each state and the Federal Government will develop methods to track and offset effects of new or expanded water-related activities that would “cause depletions to species and annual pulse flow targets.”
- Water management:
Water developed by the PRRIP will be managed to improve habitat for the four target species.
- Land management:
Land will be acquired and managed to approximate characteristics of the habitat of the target species.
- Pallid sturgeon:
The assumption that managing Central Platte River flows will also improve Lower Platte River pallid sturgeon habitat will be tested.
- Institutional framework:
Organizational structures will be established to oversee and coordinate implementation of the PRRIP.
- Integrated monitoring and research plan (IMRP):
Systematic monitoring and research will be conducted to track and evaluate the effects of actions taken during the first 13-year period of PRRIP implementation.
- Cost sharing:
The Federal Government will pay for 50 percent of PRRIP implementation costs, and the states will share the remaining 50 percent of the costs.
- Good neighbor policy:
PRRIP implementation will be conducted so that residents of central Nebraska will view the program as a “good neighbor.”

Differences among the four alternatives that are considered in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) are complex. A very simplified explanation of those differences follows:

- Governance Committee alternative:
This alternative seeks to improve the occurrence of the target species and annual pulse river flows (also referred to as “target flows”) by at least 130,000 acre-feet on an average annual basis. In addition, this alternative includes protecting, restoring as required, and maintaining at least 10,000 acres of habitat for the target species along the Central Platte River between Lexington and Chapman, Nebraska.
- Water leasing alternative:

- The water leasing alternative is similar to the Governance Committee alternative and emphasizes water leasing to improve achievement of the target flows, thereby addressing program water goals.
- Wet meadow alternative:
This alternative focuses on increasing the amount of wet meadow areas near the Platte River in the habitat area in central Nebraska by shifting some program resources away from water management and to land management.
 - Water emphasis alternative:
This alternative focuses on acquiring additional water for the program and includes less emphasis on habitat management than does the Governance Committee alternative. The water emphasis alternative is based on improving achievement of target flows in the habitat area by 185,000 acre-feet on an average annual basis but improving only about 6,200 acres of habitat.

2.5.5 Conclusion

This technical memorandum has briefly addressed environmental water use in Wyoming's Platte River Basin by considering various types of environmental water regulation, by surveying parties having an interest in water-related environmental issues in the basin, and by summarizing the development and contents of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP) and the associated Draft Platte River Environmental Impact Statement. Environmental water policies, including permitted instream flow Wyoming State Engineer's Office water rights, U.S. Forest Service instream bypasses, and minimum and voluntary reservoir releases are in the process of implementation. These measures seek to maintain or improve fishery habitat in the basin. Interest in water-related basin environmental issues is apparently strong, and opinions vary. Finally, the long and complex PRRIP process indicates the complexity of basin water-related environmental issues and promises to stimulate dialog regarding water-related basin environmental issues for years into the future.

2.5.6 References

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