



Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

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LPRCA MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 29, 2023 – 10:00 a.m.

Bi-Annual Meeting held at LPSNRD

1. Welcome / Introductions: David Potter welcomed everyone and thanked the members for attending the meeting. Corridor Alliance member representatives participating included: Larry Vrtiska-National Guard, Amanda Grint-PMRNRD, Ian Ghanavati-PMRNRD, Eric Williams-PMRNRD, Jim Swenson-NG&P, Kevin Holliday-NG&P, Bill Oligmueller-NG&P, Shuhai Zheng-NeDNR, Tyler Martin-NeDNR, Ryan Chapman-LPNNRD, Sean Elliott-LPNNRD, Drew ten Bensel-LPNNRD, Katie Hickle-NDEE, Jessica Russell-NDEE, Tara Anderson-NDEE, Dane Pauley-NDEE, Dan Ross-NDEE, Alesia Zaruba-UNL, Dick Ehrman-LPSNRD, Mike Sousek-LPSNRD, and David Potter-LPSNRD. Others present included: Dustin Wilcox-NARD, Jennifer Swanson-NARD, Matt Moser-USGS, Dave Rus-USGS, Jason Lambrecht-USGS, Gary Aldridge-LPSNRD Director, and Matt Pillard-HDR. Invites were sent out to at least two individuals from each of the eight members/agencies of the Alliance, including the person that was authorized to sign any documents. An alternate was recommended to participate if the two individuals could not attend. All eight Alliance members/agencies were represented at the meeting. The LPRCA meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. All those in attendance introduced themselves.
2. Agenda Review and Publication of Notice: A meeting notice was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on November 17, 2023. Potter displayed the Alliance website on the screen and reviewed the agenda.
3. Review of May 31, 2023, Meeting and Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the last meeting were distributed prior to the meeting, presented on the screen at the meeting, and are on the LPRCA website. There were no additions, corrections, or objections. Minutes were approved by consensus. Minutes from the bi-annual meetings will continue to serve as the LPRCA newsletters/correspondence.
4. Current Membership, Dues, December Invoices, and Website: Potter identified the current Corridor Alliance membership consisting of eight agencies. Each of the eight agencies will be invoiced \$1,000 for dues and for their share in the streamgage agreements with USGS in December. The dues are deposited into the administrative fund and pay for the costs of ESRI, the website, and memberships. Potter reviewed the FY2024 budget. The LPRCA website has been updated with current meeting information and member representatives.
5. Current LPRCA and Related Activities/Projects
 - A. Status of current USGS streamgages/monitors, reports from gages at Leshara and three Long-Term Sites: Matt Moser provided an update on the current Alliance-USGS streamgages. The agreements for the three long-term sites and Leshara will expire in June 2025. The three long-term sites have been jointly

funded by LPSNRD, PMRNRD and USGS. The Leshara gage is jointly and equally funded by LPSNRD, LPNNRD, PMRNRD, LWS, and MUD, and also by USGS. The joint funding agreements with each agency were also renewed in April 2022 and are set to expire December 31, 2024. Moser shared data being collected from the streamgages and when that information is being collected. Data from the gages at Leshara and the three long-term sites is collected April 1st through October 1st and that monitoring has not been interrupted. The data collected dates back several years (Leshara since 2016 and three long-term sites since 2007).

B. Discussion of Trend Analysis proposal at one or more LPRCA streamgage sites: Matt Moser, Dave Rus, and Jason Lambrecht with USGS walked through the most recent proposal and scope for the Trend Analysis and again identified the possible parameters of such analysis, including but not limited to nitrates and turbidity. Many of the members are interested. Potter reached out to MUD and Lincoln Water to see if they had any interest. LWS would be interested, and MUD is considering. Potter will work with USGS and send information out to the members and MUD and LWS. The goal would be to have ten participating agencies so the cost would be kept around \$10K each. The Alliance will plan to have this on the agenda for action at the next meeting.

C. Cameras and other USGS work in the Lower Platte Corridor: Lambrecht highlighted the success of the Lower Platte River Camera project. Cameras have been funded by LPSNRD, LPNNRD, PMRNRD, Dodge County, City of Fremont, and USGS. The timelapse cameras located on various bridges over the Platte and Elkhorn Rivers take photos every 15 minutes and help provide information on flows and ice jams. USGS coordinated the project and is conducting operations and maintenance. USGS has been working with PMRNRD and LPSNRD to possibly install another camera near Louisville.

D. Water Quality Management Plan – 319 Targeted Project(s): The only 319 project in the corridor currently underway is with PMRNRD. The Southern Sarpy/City of Springfield Water Quality Enhancement Project was approved by EPA in March 2023. The project is focused on a concentrated area around Springfield and does not involve any construction activities. Ghanavati provided an update on their project. PMRNRD is now working with NDEE to revise the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) to focus more on urban BMPs and less on agricultural BMPs due to the land transition in South Sarpy County.

6. Member Updates and Reports on Related Lower Platte River Corridor Activities and Projects

A. NeDNR Updates: Shuhai Zheng reported that NeDNR is currently working with USACE and adjacent states on a \$7 million study updating hydrology (completed), updating hydraulic models (on-going), and developing a system plan for Lower Missouri River flood risk reduction and resiliency.

B. National Guard and Camp Ashland: Larry Vrtiska with the Nebraska National Guard provided an update on the activities and projects at Camp Ashland. The flood repair project is complete. Vrtiska also stated the Guard is still working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to figure out the drainage issue and culvert height with Turner Lake.

C. PMRNRD updates:

i. Hwy 34 River Bridge Trail: Williams provided an update on the status of the Platte River Bridge Trail project that is Federally funded with 20% local match and PMRNRD, LPSNRD, Sarpy County, Cass

County, Plattsmouth, Bellevue and others participating in the project. The trail portion will be constructed on the east side of the Hwy 34 bridge. The south terminus for this trail segment will be Beach Road with possible plans to connect to Plattsmouth and, on the north, it will be the levee. Construction is expected to be completed in Fall 2024.

ii. Platte River Railroad Obstruction: Grint updated the group on the Railroad obstruction issue in the Platte River. Back in 2019 the railroads constructed a causeway to make repairs from the flooding. The rock and soil, and now plant material, left in that location west of the Highway 34/75 bridge has caused an obstruction and the river to shift. PMRNRD, LPSNRD, Sarpy County and Cass County all have an interest in getting this corrected before major problems arise. There have been meetings with the railroads and removal of the obstruction has been discussed. An application was submitted to Nebraska Economic Development for Community Development Block Grant to assist in the removal.

D. Updates from UNL: Alesia Zaruba identified the University's work with LPSNRD, City of Lincoln, and USACE on the Deadmans Run project. She also discussed UNL's involvement in the Water Resources Advisory Panel (WRAP) that was created in 2006, the release of a user-friendly app for nitrogen management, and the work on the USDA National Center for Resilient and Regenerative Precision Agriculture at Innovation Campus. Alesia shared that UNL is in the early stages of discussing the idea of a botanical garden/ tertiary wetlands/ urban watershed in the southeast corner of East Campus. This is a collaboration with multiple UNL departments and the leaders of the Lincoln Botanical Gardens and Conservatory planning team for educating the public on sustainability and research.

E. Lower Platte South NRD updates:

i. MoPac Connector: Mike Sousek discussed the status of the MoPac connector project, work with the MoPac Alliance, and the funds (\$8.3 million) provided by the Nebraska Legislature to Nebraska Game and Parks (NG&P) for the trail connection. The NRD hired JEO Consulting Group in October to conduct public meetings, examine alternative routes, analyze costs, and determine engineering needs for the trail connection.

ii. Recent LPSNRD Airboat Tour of projects: Potter informed the group that LPSNRD held a two-hour airboat tour on September 15th. Participants included Senator Hughes, 11 LPSNRD directors, three LPSNRD staff, Eric Williams and Philip Paitz with PMRNRD, and Matt Moser with USGS. The tour started at Louisville State Rec Area. The boats went upstream to Camp Ashland then down the entire stretch to the Hwy 34 bridge and then back to Louisville.

F. Game & Parks projects/updates: Swenson and Oligmueller gave an update on the parks in the corridor, including Schramm, Mahoney, Louisville, and Platte River State Parks. Overall, the parks experienced very good attendance but reduced many services due to staffing challenges. Construction is ongoing at Schramm State Recreation Area on the treehouse educational classroom project, kayak launch, river trail, and construction began on the canyon ponds renovation project. There is also a lot of work going on at the Louisville State Recreation Area with lake renovations and fishing access improvements. Updates beyond the corridor: On top of the "Star Wars" projects in Knox and Keith counties, NGPC was assigned new projects during the recent legislative session; improvements at Fort Robinson, acquisition, and rehabilitation of the Mayhew cabin site in Nebraska City, and development of a Chief Standing Bear

Museum. These assignments will be subject to further discussion and hopefully funded in the 2024 session.

G. Lower Platte North NRD updates: Ryan Chapman reported on a few of Lower Platte North's projects, including: nine flood reduction structures being built in the Wahoo Creek Headwaters watershed; plans to hire a SWP/NWQI position to focus on implementing e. coli and atrazine BMPs in selected HUCs of Wahoo Creek watershed and source water BMPs in SWP areas district wide; initiation of the NRCS WFPO process in Skull & Bone watersheds to reduce flooding; assisting Leshara with a drainage improvement project; and working with Dodge County and City of Fremont on East Fremont Drainage Project, West Fremont flood mitigation project, and Rawhide Creek flood reduction WFPO project.

H. Updates from NDEE: Ross provided updates on various NDEE projects, activities, and staffing. The Department has hired Katie Hickle as the Section 319 Coordinator. NDEE's surface water monitoring has been recently completed in the North Platte, South Platte, and White Hat basins. There was also discussion about EQC approving proposed changes to T117, which most notably included the designation of an additional 870 stream segments as having the primary contact recreation designation.

I. Other: No additional reports were given.

7. Future Projects/Studies:

A. LPRCA Water Quality Management Plan 5-Yr Update: Potter stated the LPRCA Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) is due for its five-year update in 2024. The LPRCA WQMP was funded by the three NRDs and a Section 319 grant. Since priority areas will not change much and there hasn't been a lot of projects or required changes, NDEE has suggested an update could be simplified and accomplished through an addendum done in-house. LPSNRD, LPNNRD, and PMRNRD met with NDEE to discuss the update process. PMRNRD will take the lead on the update, and it was approved by consensus for the three NRDs to update the LPRCA WQMP in-house with no cost to the LPRCA. LPNNRD will assist in the technical sections and LPSNRD will administer the update through their Board on behalf of the LPRCA. The update is planned to be completed and submitted to the NDEE before the next LPRCA meeting. The prepared WQMP Update will be on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

B. Lower Platte River Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Comprehensive Study – Update/Status: Sousek again briefly discussed the possible Restoration Comprehensive Study and its current status. This congressional study dates back several years. There has been no activity with the potential study since a letter of intent and continued interest was sent to USACE on March 10, 2023. An Appropriations request was also sent to Senator Fischer's office on March 17, 2023. This is estimated to be a three-million-dollar study with \$1.5 million local and \$1.5 million USACE.

C. Discussion of any other possible projects for LPRCA: Potter thanked the agencies for attending the meeting and acknowledged the benefit of continuing the Alliance for any upcoming issues or additional projects. He asked the group to identify and consider any other projects for the LPRCA. Williams mentioned that PMRNRD was awarded State TAP funding for the Elkhorn River Trail Bridge which is planned to connect the West Maple Elkhorn River Rec Area across to the existing trails in Waterloo. Contracts for preliminary engineering and NEPA services are being discussed. PMRNRD has also been evaluating a recreation access location in Arlington on the Elkhorn River. While this isn't on the Platte

directly, it is expected that people may launch from Arlington and continue down past the confluence and to Platte River locations. This location was identified in a conceptual study about 20 years ago, and there is now renewed interest from the Village of Arlington.

8. Schedule Next Meeting: The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 2024. A doodle poll will likely be sent to the members to determine the best date to have a meeting. A suggestion was made to have a future meeting at Camp Ashland.
9. Comments, Questions, General Discussion, Adjournment: With no further questions or comments, the meeting ended at approximately 12:00 p.m.

Submitted by: David Potter, Assistant General Manager LPSNRD and Interim LPRCA Coordinator