



## Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

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### **LPRCA MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, May 25, 2022 – 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: Eric Williams-PMRNRD, Paul Woodward-PMRNRD, Bill Oligmueller-NGP, Tom Riley-NeDNR, Andy Kahle-NDEE, Ryan Chapman-NDEE, Tara Anderson-NDEE, Brandon Beethe-NDEE, Ron Yoder-UNL, Paul Zillig-LPSNRD, Tracy Zayac-LPSNRD, Will Inselmann-LPSNRD, and David Potter-LPSNRD. Others present included: Tom Mountford-LPNRD, Dustin Wilcox-NARD, John Engel-HDR, Matt Pillard-HDR, Matt Moser-USGS, Steve Peterson-USGS, Susan Seacrest-LPSNRD Director, Gary Hellerich-LPSNRD Director, and Gary Aldridge-LPSNRD Director. 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. Alternates were recommended to participate if the two individuals could not attend. Six of the eight Alliance members/agencies were represented at the meeting. The LPRCA meeting was called to order at 10:05 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 May 12, 2022. Potter displayed the Alliance website on the screen and reviewed the agenda. The purpose of the meeting was also stated.
3. Review of October 25, 2021 Meeting and Approval of Minutes: Potter stated that the minutes of the last meeting were distributed prior to the meeting and are on the LPRCA website. There were no changes or corrections. Minutes were approved by consensus. Potter reminded the group that minutes from the bi-annual meetings will continue to serve as the newsletters/correspondence.
4. LPRCA Interlocal Agreement and Membership, DHHS termination: Potter stated that he received an official letter dated April 19, 2022 from DHHS stating their termination from the LPRCA as per the Amended Interlocal Cooperation Act Agreement. DHHS is taking this action because responsibility for administering the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act was transferred from DHHS to the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE). The Public Drinking Water Division officially moved to the NDEE on July 1, 2021 (LB-148). It was determined the current amended interlocal agreement is not needed to be amended at this time. DHHS will be removed from the membership and the website will be updated accordingly.
5. Financials/Budget Update: Potter reviewed the proposed FY2023 budget. Each of the eight agencies were invoiced \$1,000 for dues in December. All but DHHS paid their dues. The dues are deposited into

the administrative fund and pay for the costs of ESRI, the website, and memberships. A copy of the budget was sent to each member agency so they could budget accordingly. Besides the administrative costs, the only active projects currently are the stream gages with USGS. These costs reflect the recently approved agreements with USGS. It was noted that some share of payments by the agencies are handled through separate joint funding agreements. Invoices are usually sent out in December to those NRDs and agencies participating in the various stream gage agreements or other projects. The project fund holds monies for current and future projects. In addition, the Reserve funds are in place to initiate potential projects such as the Lower Platte River Restoration and Resiliency Study.

#### 6. Current LPRCA Activities/Projects

A. Updates on approved renewed Agreements for Leshara and Three Long-Term Sites: Potter briefly discussed the recently approved agreements for the various stream gages. The agreements for the three long-term sites and Leshara were set to expire June 30, 2022. The Leshara site was jointly and equally funded by LPSNRD, LPNNRD, PMRNRD, LWS, and MUD, and also by USGS. The joint funding agreements with each agency expired in December 2021. The new agreement with USGS and the joint funding agreements with the other partners were approved by LPSNRD on behalf of the Alliance on April 20<sup>th</sup>. The three long-term sites have been jointly funded by LPSNRD, PMRNRD and USGS. The new agreement with USGS for the three long-term sites and the joint funding agreement with PMRNRD were approved by LPSNRD on behalf of the Alliance on April 20<sup>th</sup>. The cost-share information on the gages was identified in the FY23 budget presented by Potter.

B. Status of USGS Stream Gages/Monitors, Reports from Gages: Matt Moser with USGS presented a power point and provided an update on the current stream gages contracted through the Alliance. He described the data being collected from the various stream gages and when that information is being collected. Moser stated that data from the gages at Leshara and the three long-term sites is collected April 1<sup>st</sup> through October 1<sup>st</sup> and that monitoring has not been interrupted. He also identified the current monitoring gage agreement with the Nebraska National Guard.

C. Other USGS work in the Corridor: Moser highlighted some other projects they have going on in the Platte River Corridor and also briefly discussed the possible stream gage trend analysis that LPSNRD inquired about.

#### 7. Member Updates and Reports on Related Corridor Activities and Projects

A. National Guard and Camp Ashland: There was no representation for the Guard at the meeting and no report provided.

B. Statewide Tourism and Recreational Water Access and Resource Sustainability Committee, a.k.a. "STAR WARS" (LB406) and the Jobs Economic Development Initiative Act, a.k.a "Jedi": John Engel with HDR presented information on the proposed projects in the bill. There are three specific recreational areas in the state being examined: the Lake McConaughy region, the area around Lewis and Clark Lake and Niobrara State Park, and the Lower Platte River. The project in the Lower Platte River Corridor is the proposed lake in Sarpy County. HDR was awarded the contract and the plan was completed early this year after several workshops and meetings held in the project areas. More study and design are needed on the proposed lake.

C. Statewide Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan: John Engel with HDR presented information on the Statewide Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan and its timeline. The plan should be completed in a couple weeks and submitted to the Legislature. Meetings were held once a month on average with many opportunities for input. Information can be found at their website: <https://dnr.nebraska.gov/floodplain/nebraska-flood-hazard-mitigation-plan>. The last plan was approved in 2013. This new Statewide Plan is more comprehensive and has more historical information and was a project resulting from the 2019 flooding.

D. NeDNR Updates: Tom Riley with NeDNR announced that the Department has a new home in Fallbrook and in the same building as the Department of Environment and Energy. An open house is planned for June 21<sup>st</sup>. Riley stated this is a “historic” year with so many funded projects, including the Perkins County Canal, JEDI Project, Gehring-Ft. Laramie Canal tunnel collapse permanent fix, and the Resilient Soils and Water Quality Act. The Department is to provide assistance in the formation of a producer learning community to build awareness and knowledge relating to soil health and water quality to guide agricultural producers and landowners in making informed decisions in order to bring about a more rapid and widespread adoption of best management practices.

E. Updates from UNL: Yoder discussed briefly the Deadmans Run project through East Campus and the joint effort with LPSNRD, the city, and USACE. He also mentioned UNL’s work on the tributary through East Campus between Holdrege and Deadmans Run. He stated that the University continues to monitor their property near Mead for water quality related to the issue/contamination of the AltEn facility. In addition, UNL continues to work with NRDs on nitrate levels through statewide soil health in Extension and conduct research at Roger’s Memorial Farm located about 10 miles east of Lincoln. The farm is operated as a research and demonstration farm by the Department of Biological Systems Engineering (BSE), cooperating with several other University departments and USDA agencies. Several University classes use the farm as an outdoor laboratory for real life situations and experiences. The Farm’s website is <http://engineering.unl.edu/bse/bse-rogers-memorial-farm/>

F. Hwy 34 Platte River Bridge Trail: The Platte River Bridge Trail project is Federally funded with 20% local match and PMRNRD, LPSNRD, Sarpy County, Cass County, Plattsmouth, Bellevue and others participating in the project. Williams stated the environmental study is done. The project was originally estimated at \$2 million but now the estimate is at \$2.8 million for construction. Bid letting is still expected in November 2022 with construction in Spring 2023.

G. Lied Bridge and MoPac Trail (Sarpy County) – Flood Reconstruction and Closeout: The four repair projects resulting from the flood damage in 2019 are completed and have been closed out by FEMA. The last remaining part is the closeout of a small trail west of the bridge.

H. MoPac Connector (Cass County): Paul Zillig discussed the current status of the MoPac connector project, work with the MoPac Alliance, the funds (\$8.3 million) provided by the Nebraska Legislature, and how those funds will be administered by the NGP to LPSNRD for the trail development. LPSNRD recently met with NGP to discuss the process. More information is needed. LPSNRD will be meeting in a few weeks with the MoPac Alliance to hear their progress on a possible route and the project. An evaluation of any route will likely be needed.

- I. State Parks and Trails: Bill Oligmueller announced the appointment of Jim Swenson as the new NGPC Deputy Director, Jeff Fields as the new Parks Director, and the retirement of Bob Bergholz. Oligmueller gave an update on the parks along the corridor. The Schram Aquarium has a new treehouse classroom and the canyon ponds are being renovated. Platte River State Park will have ADA trails and new restrooms and parking. Mahoney will have greenhouse expansion and new pool/lazy river. Schram and Louisville Parks will have more trails. NGP has less summer help this year so some parks will be experiencing shorter hours and reduced activities. Mahoney is almost 50% short on seasonal help.
- J. Updates from NDEE: Anderson and Chapman provided an update on related NDEE projects and activities, including Federal funding for source water, work with UNL on statewide nitrate campaign project, partnering with UNL to resurrect the Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network that has been mostly defunct since Groundwater Foundation moved to Ohio and contract expired, V-TAPS project, and announcement of UNL's hire of a Source Water Educator.
- K. Lower Platte River Cameras / Stream Gage Project Update: Mountford reported that the river cameras were installed and assisted in observing river flows and ice movement this past winter. The project was funded by LPNNRD, PMRNRD, Dodge County and the City of Fremont, and the group is also working with USGS. Timelapse cameras are located on bridges at Highways 15, 77, 79 and 64. There is also a camera installed on the Loup Power Canal property at the confluence of the Platte and Loup Rivers. The cameras take photos every 15 minutes.
8. Future Projects/Studies:
- A. Water Quality Management Plan – 319 Projects and Implementation, Applications to EPA: Mountford reported that LPNNRD is planning to submit a Project Implementation Plan (PIP) for both priority watersheds in the next 12 months. Woodward said their application for 319 funding for work in multiple watersheds, including Buffalo Creek, Turtle Creek, Turkey Creek-Platte River, and Zwiebel Creek-Platte River, has already been through review with NDEE and they're a few weeks away from submitting the PIP to EPA. The PIP has a major emphasis on administration, education and projects benefiting the City of Springfield, but also provides for urban and rural BMPs. It also includes those portions Turkey Creek and Zwiebel Creek which extend south of the river, therefore LPSNRD will be involved in some capacity.
- B. Water Quality Management Plan Update: Potter stated the LPRCA Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) was approved in 2019 and will be due for its five-year update in 2024. Pillard shared some information he received recently from Elbert Traylor with NDEE indicating that the update could be handled through an addendum and would not require a lengthy process. Chapman and Beethe concurred and offered their interpretation. It is understood that PIPs can only be submitted under a current plan. Having a management plan expire in the middle of an implementation project will not have any effect on the active project. Potter asked LPNNRD and PMRNRD on their continued involvement in the WQMP and direction for update. Both districts indicated that an update of the WQMP is warranted. Potter will continue researching the update requirements, estimated cost and timeframe, and any needed funding agreements. LPRCA and three NRDs will need to budget for an

update in FY24. With an approved WQMP, projects within the priority 1 areas of the plan within the corridor are eligible for 319 funding. Any community or agency within the corridor is eligible to apply.

C. Lower Platte River Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Comprehensive Study – Update/Status: Zillig briefly discussed the possible Restoration Comprehensive Study and its current status. There has been no change other than a recent letter has been sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stating the continued interest of the three NRDs. A meeting is still needed between the three NRDs and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss needs and priorities. The NRDs have been waiting to meet until after the DNR studies are completed; as a change in direction with the study may be warranted. A meeting is expected to happen sometime this summer.

D. Discussion of any other possible projects for LPRCA: Potter asked the group to identify and consider any other projects for the LPRCA. The possible trend analysis of the Louisville stream gage was again mentioned and NDEE and PMRNRD may be interested. More information will be provided. No additional projects were identified at this time.

9. Schedule Next Meeting: The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 2022. A doodle poll to the members will be used to determine the best date to have a meeting.
10. Comments, Questions, General Discussion, Adjournment: With no further questions or comments, the meeting ended at approximately 12:30 p.m.

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