



## Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

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### **LPRCA MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, October 25, 2021 – 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: Marlin Petermann-PMRNRD, Eric Williams-PMRNRD, Paul Woodward-PMRNRD, Jim Swenson-NGP, Bob Bergholz-NGP, Tom Riley-NeDNR, Shuhai Zheng-NeDNR, Andy Kahle-DEE, Ryan Chapman-DEE, Tara Anderson-DEE, Brandon Beethe-DEE, Ron Yoder-UNL, Paul Zillig-LPSNRD, Tracy Zayac-LPSNRD, and David Potter-LPSNRD. Others present included: Tom Mountford-LPNRNRD, Jennifer Swanson-NARD, Dustin Wilcox-NARD, Matt Pillard-HDR, Matt Moser-USGS, 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. A meeting notice was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on October 13, 2021. Six of the eight Alliance members/agencies were represented at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was also stated. The LPRCA meeting began at 10:01 a.m.
2. Review of May 14, 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. Minutes from the bi-annual meetings will continue to serve as the newsletters/correspondence.
3. Financials/Budget Update: Potter reviewed the FY2022 budget. Each of the eight agencies were invoiced \$1,000 for dues and six were paid earlier this year. It was noted there are certain limitations on State agencies. All but DEE and 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. It was noted that some share of payments by the agencies are handled through separate agreements. Invoices are usually sent out in November or December to those NRDs and agencies participating in the various stream gage agreements. 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.
4. LPRCA Interlocal Agreement and Membership, DHHS status: There was not a representative from DHHS at the meeting, however Potter shared an email with the group stating that DHHS has elected to withdraw from the LPRCA given that the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy is now responsible for water-related programs. DHHS will be sending written notice of this decision soon. Potter stated the Public Drinking Water Division officially moved to the NDEE on July 1, 2021 (LB-148).

The Alliance discussed the possible directions to take. The current amended interlocal agreement will be reviewed and the item will be discussed and possibly acted on at the next meeting.

5. Current LPRCA Activities/Projects

A. Status of USGS Stream Gages/Monitors, Reports from Gages: Matt Moser with USGS 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 the two agreements are set to expire in June 2022. If new three-year contracts for the Leshara and three long-term sites are approved, monitoring will begin in late spring of 2022 which will allow for continued data collection.

B. Agreements for Gages at Leshara and Three Long-Term Sites: Potter briefly discussed the agreements for the various stream gages. The agreements for the 3 long-term sites and Leshara will expire June 30, 2022. The Leshara site is jointly (and now equally) funded by LPSNRD, LPNNRD, PMRNRD, LWS, and MUD, and also by USGS. The joint funding agreements with each agency will expire in December 2021. Potter will contact each agency and propose another 3-year funding agreement. The three long-term sites are jointly funded by LPSNRD, PMRNRD and USGS. The cost-share information on the gages was identified in the FY22 budget presented by Potter. The new agreements will need to be considered at the meeting in March so LPSNRD can take action on them in April. Expenditures for the new agreements will not occur until FY23. Members present and associated with the gages all agreed to move forward with preparing new agreements. Mountford said that LPNNRD has questioned the benefit of the gage now that nitrates and other parameters are below levels of concern. Matt Moser agreed to attend a committee and/or board meeting with LPNNRD to discuss the benefits of the monitoring gage and data.

6. Reports on Related Corridor Activities and Projects

A. Lower Missouri River General Investigation Study: Tom Riley with NeDNR provided an update on a various studies and plans that NDR is involved in. The Lower Missouri River GI study between Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and the Corps of Engineers (USACE) on the Missouri River identifies flooding areas along the Lower Missouri River and potential solutions by engaging stakeholders. Final Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Study Report is expected in January 2022. Information gathered and findings from the PAS report will be used to inform the GI Study. The purpose of this GI study is to develop a systemic plan for Lower Missouri flood reduction. Expected completion is in 2025. FY22 major project tasks would include gathering historic flood damage data, inventorying hydrology and hydraulic (H&H) models, and conducting preliminary H&H assessments. This will form the framework of the study and selection of alternatives for evaluation. Once alternative solutions are identified, additional reach-specific feasibility studies (FS) will be initiated. The USACE Missouri River Flow-Frequency Update Study is anticipated to be completed at the end of the year. Provisional results suggest flows higher than those in the 2003 Study for a specified frequency. If anyone is interested in interim information, they can contact Tony Krause with the USACE. The Platte River Recovery & Implementation Program involved a governance committee that just approved contracting with Southern Illinois University and UNL for pallid sturgeon work. The program is working to quickly identify native vs hybridized strains and distinguish from shovelnose. Field work is expected in 2022. Riley also provided an update on the State

Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan and shared some meeting dates and other related information. The target date for completion and a final plan is June 2022. Information can be found at their website: <https://dnr.nebraska.gov/floodplain/nebraska-flood-hazard-mitigation-plan>. Monthly updates also available at that site.

B. Statewide Tourism and Recreational Water Access and Resource Sustainability Committee, a.k.a. "STAR WARS" (LB406) and Statewide Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan: Matt Pillard with HDR presented a power point on Star Wars bill and the project activities. 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. HDR was awarded the contract and a draft of the plan is expected to be completed by the end of the year. Tom Riley discussed the Statewide Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan in his DNR Report.

C. Camp Ashland - Post Flood Building Rehab Project, Floodwall Extension Project, and Platte River Chutes/USGS gage: Larry Vrtiska was not able to attend the meeting and there was no representation from the Nebraska National Guard in attendance. Potter and Moser informed the Alliance the agreement for the gage(s) on the Platte River Chutes funded by the National Guard expired April 30, 2021. The Guard decided to continue monitoring the chutes and entered into a separate agreement with the USGS to continue the gage. LPRCA is not involved in this particular agreement. Moser and Potter also stated that the possible sandbar study discussed at the last meeting was now not needed after a meeting with U.S. Fish and Wildlife on the status of the chutes.

D. State Parks and Trails: Swenson announced the appointment of Tim McCoy as the new NGPC Director to replace Jim Douglas who is retiring at the end of the year. Swenson gave an update on the parks along the corridor. The pandemic has generated more park use and NGPC is updating numerous RV sites. He also reported that a conceptual design is in the works for a water and hike/bike trail network and provided an update on the Adventure Park project. The NGPC is celebrating their centennial anniversary and there are many activities being held throughout the year at various parks.

E. Hwy 34 Platte River Bridge Trail and Lied Platte River Bridge: Williams provided an update on the status of the two bridge projects. 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. Plans are at 60%. Project was originally estimated at \$2 million but will need to be reviewed in the next few months and an amendment to the agreement(s) may be needed. Bid letting is expected in November 2022 with construction in Spring 2023. The Lied Platte River Bridge repairs are completed and the bridge was opened in time for the Market-to-Market race. The Highway 31 Connecting Link Trail on the north/east side in Sarpy County is also completed and open. Now that the flood repairs are completed, other components of the bridge need to be looked at, including the railings, for long-term structural recommendations.

F. Updates from DEE, Sampling: Chapman discussed the surface water sampling being done in the Lower Platte Basin and also groundwater sampling across the state. A map was displayed and distributed showing locations of the surface water sampling that was done. These included the Basin Rotation Monitoring Program (42 sites in the Lower Platte and Nemaha River basins), Wahoo Creek Special Study (LPNNRD is collecting these samples for Wahoo Creek WQMP), Public Drinking Water

Special Study (two sites in the Corridor include North Bend and Louisville), Ambient Stream Monitoring Program (monthly grab samples collected at 101 sites statewide and year-round), and the Stream Biological Program (45 sites monitored in the Lower Platte and Nemaha river basins with invasive carp found in Oak Creek near Lincoln, Salt Creek near Greenwood, and the Platte River near Louisville). Fish tissue monitoring was also conducted in 2021 within the Lower Platte and Nemaha river basins. Parameters analyzed included mercury and selenium. One sampling location was on the Platte River at Louisville and a number of larger tributary streams (Shell, Salt and Wahoo Creeks). Most data will be available at the end of this year or early 2022. Sampling next year will be concentrated in the Missouri Tribs and Elkhorn River Basin. The Nebraska Groundwater Quality Clearinghouse, released in April 2021, can be found at [www.clearinghouse.nebraska.gov](http://www.clearinghouse.nebraska.gov)

G. Update from UNL: Yoder discussed briefly the Deadmans Run project through East Campus and the joint effort with LPSNRD, the city, and USACE. The University is also working on the tributary through East Campus between Holdrege and Deadmans Run. In addition to the bank stabilization, there will be a new pedestrian bridge replacing the one removed due to the channel improvement project. The overall project is approximately 75% complete. He also stated that the University continues to monitor their property near Mead for water quality related to the issue/contamination of the ethanol plant.

H. Lower Platte River Cameras / Stream Gage Project Update: Mountford reported that the River cameras will assist in observing river flows and ice movement. The project is funded by LPNNRD, PMRNRD, Dodge County and the City of Fremont, and group is also working with USGS. Equipment (timelapse cameras) will be installed in November-December on bridges at Highways 15, 77, 79 and 64 and things should be up and running by the end of the year. The project is also looking at some private locations for the cameras.

## 7. Future Projects/Studies:

A. Water Quality Management Plan – 319 Projects and Implementation, Application to EPA: Potter and Pillard informed the group the WQMP is a five-year plan, so development of the next LPRCA WQMP will be budgeted in FY24 and FY25. 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. To date, there has not been any Project Implementation Plans (PIP) submitted to EPA, however PMRNRD has started preparing two of them. One of the PIPs would be for Turkey Creek-Platte River Watershed and with LPSNRD. This particular watershed is on both sides of the river so there has been coordination between LPSNRD and PMRNRD. LPNNRD is also looking at submitting a PIP for their watersheds. NDEE has developed a recent PIP Preparation Guide and will get that to the NRDs to assist them in their applications/submittals.

B. Lower Platte River Watershed Restoration and Resiliency Study – Update/Status, schedule meeting with NRDs: Zillig briefly discussed the possible Restoration and Resiliency Study and its current status. There has been no change and a meeting is still needed between the three NRDs to determine whether the project is still viable. They will wait on a meeting until after the DNR studies are completed; as a change in direction with the study may be warranted.

C. Discussion of Any Other Possible Projects for LPRCA: Potter asked the group to identify and consider any other projects for the LPRCA. No additional projects were identified at this time.

8. Schedule Next Meeting: The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 2022. A doodle poll to the members will be used to determine the best date to have a meeting.
9. Comments, Questions, General Discussion, Adjournment: Potter shared an article with the group on removal of pipeline supports in the river near Fremont by Northern Natural Gas. With no further questions or comments, the meeting ended at approximately 11:45 a.m.

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