



Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

LEAD. ORGANIZE. INSPIRE. The voice of the Lower Platte.

LPRCA MEMBER MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, December 3, 2020 – 10:00 a.m.

Virtual Go-To Bi-Annual Meeting

1. Welcome / Introductions: David Potter welcomed everyone and thanked the members for attending the meeting virtually. Corridor Alliance member representatives participating included: Marlin Petermann-PMRNRD, Eric Williams-PMRNRD, Paul Woodward-PMRNRD, Larry Vrtiska-NE National Guard, Bob Bergholz-NGP, Shuhai Zheng-NeDNR, Becky Wisell-DHHS, Ryan Chapman-DEE, Tara Anderson-DEE, Brandon Beethe-DEE, Ron Yoder-UNL, Rachel Herpel-UNL (Water Center), Paul Zillig-LPSNRD, and David Potter-LPSNRD. Others present included: Tom Mountford-LPNNRD, Jennifer Swanson-NARD, Matt Pillard-HDR, Dave Rus-USGS, Matt Moser-USGS, Kathy Hauschild-LPSNRD, and Gary Aldridge-LPSNRD. 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. All eight Alliance members/agencies were represented at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was also stated. There was not a meeting held earlier in the year due to the COVID Pandemic. The LPRCA meeting began at approximately 10:04 a.m.
2. Review of October 16, 2019 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. Minutes were approved by consensus.
3. Budget/dues/scheduled invoices: Potter walked through the FY2021 budget and stated that each of the eight agencies will be invoiced \$1,000 for dues. The dues are deposited in to the administrative fund and pay for the costs of ESRI, website, and memberships. We hope that all eight agencies can pay their dues but we understand that there are certain limitations on State agencies. Last year all but DEE and DHHS were able to pay their dues. A budget spreadsheet was displayed during the meeting and explained. A copy of the budget spreadsheet will be sent along with the minutes to each member agency. There is currently no paid coordinator so this is why administrative costs are down. Besides the administrative costs, the only active projects currently are the stream gages with USGS. Share of payments by the agencies are handled through separate agreements. Invoices will be sent out later in 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. Minutes from the bi-annual meetings will continue to serve as the newsletters/correspondence. Tom Mountford reminded the Alliance that LPNNRD has been holding some LPRCA funds for administrative expenses that date back a few years and could be used when needed.

4. Current LPRCA Activities/Projects

A. Stream Gage Agreements and updates: Matt Moser with USGS provided an update on the current stream gages ran through the Alliance and what information/data they're providing. Moser went through some of the data being collected from the various stream gages. The agreement for the gage(s) on the Platte River Chutes funded by the National Guard is set to expire April 30, 2021 (was set to expire in 2020 but was extended for one year at no additional cost). Moser also stated that the gage on the chutes is now questionable because of the limited function of the chutes due to the sandbar at the entrance(s). Moser and Rus will discuss some options for this gage later in the meeting. The other two agreements (3 long-term sites and Leshara) will expire June 30, 2022. The Leshara site is jointly funded by LPSNRD, LPNNRD, PMRNRD, LWS, MUD and USGS. The three long-term sites are jointly funded by LPSNRD, PMRNRD and USGS. Expiration and cost-share information on the gages was identified in the FY21 budget presented by Potter.

5. Reports and Updates on Related Corridor Activities

A. Flooding/levees/recovery on the Missouri River: Shuhai Zheng with NeDNR announced Tom Riley being named the new Director and gave an update on a study between Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and the Corps of Engineers (the Corps) on the Missouri River. This study will identify flooding areas along the Lower Missouri River and potential solutions by engaging stakeholders. This study is expected to complete in the spring 2021. NeDNR and other three states' representing agencies signed a feasibility cost share agreement in September with the Corps to develop flood reduction alternatives that are feasible and implementable. This Lower Missouri River General Investigation Study will be kicked off soon and it is expected to be completed in three years. The Corps are currently updating flow frequency for the Missouri River by including 20-plus years of additional flows and particularly historic flows that occurred during the last decade. The Corps are also planning for a study to update the stage-frequency of the Missouri River. NeDNR's levee inventory (USACE levees, public levees, and private levees) efforts found the information for private levees is very limited. According to latest update from the Corps, all active levees under the Corps PL 84-99 program will be restored to their pre-flood protection levels before next runoff season.

B. Platte River Flood Repair Projects:

- Platte River Breach Repair near Plattsmouth: Potter gave a brief presentation on the repairs completed by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Final work on the 300 foot bank repair was completed in July 2020 and total cost was a little over \$2.2 million.
- Levees and River Access Areas: Petermann provided updates on PMRNRD projects resulting from the recent flooding. He noted that USACE made 2019 flood repairs under their 84-99 program to levees and channels along the Missouri River, Platte River, Elkhorn River and Papillion Creek totaling approximately \$35 million in federal funding and about \$3 million in local NRD funding. Most of repairs have been made. Petermann also updated the Alliance on the operation and maintenance addendum to the 2003 Interlocal Agreement for the Western Sarpy/Clear Creek Flood Control Project which has been in the works for the last two years. The addendum has been completed and is currently being considered for approval by PMRNRD,

LPNNRD, LPSNRD and the Nebraska National Guard along with an easement on National Guard land by LPNNRD and LPSNRD.

- Clear Creek Levee and Fuse Plug: Mountford commented on the completed flood repairs to the Clear Creek Levee and the Fuse Plug. The Levee was paid for and completed by the Corps under the PL84-99 program. The Fuse Plug repair was not part of the PL84-99 project since it's not considered part of the federal levee. FEMA assisted LPNNRD to rebuild the Fuse Plug Levee at 75%. The Fuse Plug repair included cost for engineering and reconstruction totaled \$117,133. FEMA reimbursed LPNNRD \$87,850 leaving a total local cost of \$29,283 equally paid by LPNNRD and LPSNRD. The operation of the fuse plug has been outlined in the operation and maintenance addendum to the 2003 Interlocal Agreement for the Western Sarpy/Clear Creek Flood Control Project.
- Camp Ashland-Post Flood Building Rehab Project and Floodwall Extension Project: Vrtiska provided an update on Camp Ashland, including the repairs to the levee/river bank (to be completed in April 2021 and costing \$6 million) and reconstruction of the camp and buildings (1.5-2 years to complete with an estimated cost of \$50 million).
- State Parks: Bergholz gave an update on the repairs to the parks resulting from flood damage. All the parks are open along the corridor but some repairs are still needed. Two Rivers and Louisville Recreation areas had lots of damage. Field teams did a great job to get repairs done so parks could be open by Memorial Day. Schramm Park canoe launch is still under construction and they're still dealing with dike issues at Fremont State Lakes.

C. Hwy 34/75 Platte River Bridge Trail: Williams stated that the project is Federally funded with 20% local match and PMRNRD, LPSNRD, Sarpy County, Cass County, Plattsmouth, Bellevue and others participating in the project. The bridge extensions for the trail are all in place. Sixty percent plans are expected in January and letting in November 2021. Hope to have project completed end of 2022.

D. Lied Platte River Bridge Repair: Williams updated the Alliance on the status of the bridge repair and trail on the east side of the river. The FEMA assisted repairs were placed in three phases – 1) debris removal, 2) super structure repair, and 3) substructure repair including ice breakers. The goal is to get the substructure repairs done by ice jam weather. The east end of the bridge and trail along Hwy 31 are still closed. The trail will need to slightly relocate trail and right-of-way realigned. Estimated completion is Spring-Summer 2021.

E. Lower Platte River Ice Monitoring Cameras/Sensors Project: Woodward provided an update on the project being funded by LPNNRD, PMRNRD, Dodge County, and the City of Fremont. There are four sites having cameras (Hwy 64, Hwy 77 at Fremont, Hwy 79, and at Columbus) and pictures will be every 15 minutes. Cost will be around \$20K and submitted for a grant. If grant is successful, may look at a fifth site.

6. Future Projects/Studies:

A. Continued monitoring of Platte River Chutes vs. Sandbar Study: Vrtiska, Moser and Rus commented on the status of the Platte River chutes monitoring gage stating the chutes are not functioning as they were before the flood. Flow into the chutes is now blocked by a sandbar and

therefore improvising the use of the stream gage that's there. USGS and the Guard are looking at a study to evaluate the sandbar and the chutes. This potential study could expand on or use information that was found in the Lower Platte River Sandbar Dynamics Study recently completed by Jason Alexander. USGS will continue to research the possibility and parameters of such a sandbar study and bring it to the Alliance at the next meeting. If the stream gage were to continue, the Guard and USGS would now be able to enter into an agreement themselves without the Alliance but continuation of that agreement would not be likely without the flows in the chutes.

B. Implementation of Water Quality Management Plan – 319 Projects: Matt Pillard reminded the Alliance members that the WQMP had been approved by EPA April 9, 2019. The WQMP was also approved by the Alliance by consensus and each of the three NRDs also approved the plan. Pillard stated that with the plan approved, projects within the priority 1 areas of the plan within the corridor are now eligible for 319 funding. To date, there has not been any projects identified or PIPs submitted yet for any of the priority areas but there has been some discussion. Ryan Chapman with DEE reminded the Alliance of the Septic Tank Program stated in the WQMP and said that it might be good to look at it for one of the Alliance projects. More information and discussion will be had on potential 319 projects at the next LPRCA meeting.

C. Lower Platte River Watershed Restoration and Resiliency Study: Zillig briefly discussed the possible Restoration and Resiliency Study and its current status. Zillig stated that nothing has really changed since the last LPRCA meeting and that LPSNRD had corresponded with the US Army Corps of Engineers on the funding start but everything pretty much stopped with the flooding and pandemic. He reiterated that more emphasis should be given to the recent flooding and more on resiliency. The study may allow for the ability to use the 75/25 cost sharing and to look globally at establishing a restoration vision/master plan for the Lower Platte River Corridor probably including some lower reaches on the major tributaries. The study dates back to 2007 and currently, the three NRDs (LPS, PMR, and LPN) had all committed to the project and a request was made to the Corps. Discussion is needed between the three NRDs as to whether the project is still viable. The three NRDs will try to get together before the next Alliance meeting. The Study will be placed on the next LPRCA meeting agenda for more discussion. Zillig mentioned that money in the existing project fund and reserve could and should be used as matching money needed for starting the project.

D. Discussion of any possible projects for LPRCA: Potter asked the group to identify and consider any other projects for the LPRCA. Other than the sandbar study, 319 projects, and the Lower Platte River Restoration and Resiliency Study, none were identified at this time.

7. Schedule Next Meeting: The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 2021. A doodle poll to the members will be used to determine the best date to have a meeting. Possible agenda items will include possible sandbar study, WQMP projects such as septic tank program, and Lower Platte River Restoration and Resiliency Study.

8. Comments/Adjourn: Meeting ended at approximately 12:05 p.m.

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