



# Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

Rodney Verhoeff, Coordinator

## Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004 \* 9:30 AM**

**Held at the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District**

**8901 S. 154<sup>th</sup> Street \*Chalco Hills Recreation Area\*Omaha, Nebraska 68138 (402) 444-6222**

**1. Call to Order.** Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA Coordinator, called the meeting of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) to order at 9:30 AM. Meeting was held at the Papio-Missouri River NRD Office conference room located at 8901 South 154<sup>th</sup> Street in Omaha, Nebraska. Verhoeff introduced his new intern for the Alliance: Craig Wacker. He will also be helping Glenn Johnson with the Cass County Infrastructure Study.

**Roll Call.** An attendance sheet was distributed.

**2. Proof of Legal Notice Presented.** Proof of publication was presented. The legal notice was published in the Omaha World-Herald – the statewide newspaper. A news release on the meeting was sent to all area newspapers and radio stations. Notifications were sent to those on the mailing and e-mailing lists.

**3. Approval of Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) Minutes from April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004 Meeting.** No modifications were made to the April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004 draft minutes. Minutes were approved via general consensus.

**4. Update on Nebraska Community Foundation Affiliation.** Since, the Alliance itself isn't able to achieve a non-profit status (the Alliance cannot enter into agreements), affiliation with the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) would allow us to share nonprofit status and establish a "Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance Fund." The affiliated fund agreement would be between the NCF and the Lower Platte South NRD, who would serve as the signatory on behalf of the Alliance. A Fund Advisory Committee will govern use of the funds. Verhoeff distributed a copy of the agreement between the NCF and LPSNRD to establish the LPRCA Fund. At the last LPRCA meeting, members of a Fund Advisory Committee were determined: Verhoeff would be the Chair; Glenn Johnson would be the Secretary/Treasurer. Other members are Steve Oltmans, John Miyoshi, Frank Albrecht, and Steve Gaul. The committee would guide the investments, grants, and disbursements and make recommendations to the LPSNRD. Johnson was chosen as signer for disbursements. Copies of an amendment to the Interlocal Agreement creating the LPRCA were distributed for review. The amendment is the 2<sup>nd</sup> one to the interlocal agreement and is needed to allow for the creation of the "Lower Platte River Corridor Fund" and to establish how the fund will be managed (through advisement by the Fund Advisory Committee), how funds will be invested, how distributions will be made, and which organization (LPSNRD) will serve as sponsor. It was the consensus of the group to accept the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment to the Interlocal Agreement. Verhoeff will work with the nine organizations of the LPRCA to get the amendment signed. The goal is to have the amendment in place by the next LPRCA meeting.

**5. Grants.** Verhoeff would like to pursue two grants with the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund (NETF), and again because of the nature of our Interlocal Agreement, the LPSNRD would need to serve as the signatory for the grant applications. One grant would be for \$10,000 for the development of kiosks to put along the river displaying information about the Alliance, the Lower Platte River, and the "8 Reasons to Protect the Lower Platte River." The other grant would be for about \$25,000 to help with the Environmental Carrying Capacity Study. This study would look at land-use planning and how it affects the entire corridor - - on a regional basis. The results of this study could be used on a local, county, and municipal level to make the best decisions on current and future land-use, and to assess infrastructure needs. Currently, we do have some funding from the three NRD's to get started on Phase I of the Environmental Carrying Capacity Study. Phase I would include collection and tabulation of county and city

comprehensive plans, existing data, and projected growth trends. Verhoeff requested a letter of support from LPRCA members for each of the grant applications. The group gave consensus to move forward.

**6. Interlocal Agreement for Environmental Carrying Capacity Study** – Verhoeff handed out copies of a proposed Interlocal Cooperative Agreement between the 3 NRDs, which serve on the on the LPRCA, regarding the Environmental Carrying Capacity Study. Since the Alliance is unable to sign agreements, the LPSNRD would have to serve as the sponsor on behalf of the LPRCA. The proposed agreement stipulates this arrangement and also outlines Phase I and gives general details of future phases. Currently, there is no dollar commitment from the NRDs for these future phases - - only funding that has already been budgeted in FY04 and FY05 by the NRDs. Once the Phase I scoping has been done, we will have a better idea of overall study costs. At that time, the agreement will need to be amended again. We will also have more details on the actual study itself following the scoping process.

**7. Project Agreements.**

- a. **Environmental Carrying Capacity – PCA and General Service Agreement** – Covered in previous agenda item.
- b. **River Obstruction Study** – Verhoeff stated he is currently looking at a general service agreement for this project and options for removal of the various types of pillings. Craig Wacker is currently working on determining legal descriptions for locations of river obstructions and submitting them to the COE, so they can determine if they can assist with removal. At this time, the project has not progressed to the point that a project agreement is necessary. However, we will need to reconsider next spring.

**8. FY 2005 budget – Member Contributions.** Verhoeff will be getting letters out to LPRCA members for FY05 contributions. NRDs are being asked to contribute \$29,000, while state entities are being asked to contribute \$5,416.67, which is the same amount as the past several years. Verhoeff stated he would meet with anyone who would like him to go over the budget and current/future activities.

**9. Tour Presentations.**

- a. **2004 LPRCA Airboat Tour** – Next month, Verhoeff will have a Power Point presentation on the airboat tour. Sixty-two people attended the tour. Two incidents with airboats hitting rebar at the launch site, were prime examples of why we need to move the River Obstruction Study project forward. Verhoeff handed out itineraries and maps of the airboat tour, which covered the area from South Bend to Plattsmouth. He suggested possibly doing two smaller tours next year with county and officials and focusing on specific projects along the river. We could team participants up with a member of the Alliance or an NRD.
- b. **UNL Water Resources Tour** – This year, the tour covered the Central and Lower Platte River area. Verhoeff had the privilege of planning parts of the tour and giving a presentation on the LPRCA. He also assisted with several stops, which highlighted many of the issues/projects the Alliance is working on. Some of these stops included a new mining operation near Linoma Beach; constructed and natural wetlands, which serve as habitat for piping plovers and least terns; a presentation at the PMRNRD on infrastructure studies; an update by UNL on the Pallid Sturgeon/Sturgeon Chub research project; and an ice cream social and presentation on the Joslyn Castle Institute and the 60-mile radius study. Verhoeff said that any suggestions for next year's tour should be given to Mike Jess or Verhoeff.

**10. Water Quality Open 2004 – Wednesday, September 1, 2004 – Arbor Links.** Verhoeff encouraged anyone to sign up since there are still open spots. At 11:00 a.m. on September 1<sup>st</sup>, Steve Merkel with Landscapes Unlimited will give a presentation on the conservation practices used at Arbor Links. Landscapes Unlimited is a golf course architectural/management firm that helped build Arbor Links and they specialize in the development of golf courses which utilize soil and water conservation principles. Registration forms and information on the tournament were distributed to attendees. Forms are also available on-line.

**11. Strategic Planning – Discussion of Long-Term Strategic Planning Exercise.** Verhoeff suggested holding a retreat for a strategic planning exercise and asked for any suggestions or ideas. One suggestion was to bring in a representative from each of the housing developments in the corridor. Another was a long range planning session with county and city officials. Verhoeff will start putting something together.

## 12. LPRCA Program and Project Updates.

- a. **LPRCA – General Activities** – Educational events including Water Wellness programs, the airboat tour and planning for the Water Quality Open have taken a lot of time recently.
- b. **Lower Platte River Weed Management Area (LPWMA)** - Verhoeff attended a tour of the Two Rivers SRA, which was coordinated by the LPWMA. It was a great tour with weed ID sessions, a demonstration of how to apply a new herbicide called Habitat, and updates on LPWMA activities. The tour really highlighted the large extent of the problem with noxious weeds in the Lower Platte River Corridor. The group had recently received a grant for \$54,000 from the US Fish & Wildlife Foundation PTI program for additional help this summer, supplies, and equipment. The LPWMA group has been working with the air boaters association and also using ATVs to spray some of the hard to reach areas. In addition to purple loosestrife, salt cedar is another invasive species that is a serious threat since it can excrete salt into the soil and crowd out native vegetation. The LPNRRD is hosting a website for the LPWMA group at [www.lowerplattewma.org](http://www.lowerplattewma.org)
- c. **205 Studies – Flood Control/Flood Reduction Projects**- Tom Mountford of LPNRRD gave an update on 205 study activities. South Fremont - The Interlocal Agreement has been signed by all of the partners: Fremont, Englewood and Dodge County. It is now currently with the COE. Nelson Carpenter of the COE stated they are going to seek permission to execute the agreement by the end of the fiscal year - the end of September. Mountford stated the primary focus is building up an existing levee that is no longer recognized by FEMA as offering adequate flood protection for Fremont. Schuyler – Schuyler would be next in line to move forward with future phases. There appears to be community support to move forward. North Bend - The COE is completing the preliminary study assessment for construction of a levee and will determine a benefit/cost ratio for the project. They are running into some problems with proposed alignments for Highway 30 since the city, county, and state have not yet reached consensus on alignment.
- d. **Multimedia – Newsletter, Brochure, Video, Website** – Verhoeff handed out the new LPRCA brochure, which highlights “8 Reasons to Protect the Lower Platte River.” The spring/fall edition of the LPRCA newsletter, Corridor Connections, should be out in the next few days. Verhoeff is looking for suggestions, for the fall/winter edition. The LPRCA staff has been busy producing additional copies of the video. If you would like a copy or know someone who would be interested, let the office know. Verhoeff has been visiting various civic organizations talking about the Alliance and using the video to promote our activities.
- e. **WRDA-Authorized COE Projects**
  1. **W. Sarpy/Clear Creek – Camp Ashland** - Nelson Carpenter briefed the group on the project and its progress. The project looks at flood reduction in the area from Highway 6 up stream 12 miles. The project is currently in the design and construction phases, concurrently. The COE just awarded two contracts – one for island clearing as part of the conservation practice component of the project and the other for demolition of six cabins in the floodway. Design will continue through spring of 2005 as long as OMB releases funding. For the next FY, they are seeking \$6.5 million with the total project budget at \$18 million. The Camp Ashland Guard Camp is a separately funded yet related project to design and construct/modify a riverside levee system to protect the camp. This levee system will connect to the Clear Creek system. The project cost is estimated to be from \$2.5 to \$2.8 million. Marlin Petermann talked about raising/removing 22 cabins – 9 on the Sarpy Side, and 13 on the Saunders side. The PMRNRD is taking the lead on this project on behalf of the LPNRRD and the PMRNRD. On the Saunders County side, 2 cabins have already been bought out and 5 will be raised. Marlin showed some slides of the processing of raising the cabins and how it is accomplished. The process is complicated and utilities have to be unhooked so the raise can take place. In some cases, the cabins don't cost as much as the raising process, but it is the landowners choice to raise or take a buy out. Buy out as a first option, but some people won't sell. This shows how important access to the river really is to some people. Current zoning regulations in Sarpy County do not allow for permanent structures in the floodway for more than 6 months so most of these structures are older “grandfathered” structures. A question was raised whether or not people can re-build in the floodway and whether or not improvements can be considered “building.” They will get flowage easements for the properties and levee easements for some. Four hundred acres were purchased to do some of the conservation measures on and near Vencil's Island including the creation of youth mentored program area on Vencil's Island.

2. **Sand Creek/Lake Wanahoo** – Phase I of the Fisheries Project should be underway soon. All three NRDs have been working hard to get OMB to release funding for this and all three WRDA projects and to get in the President's budget instead of relying upon Congressional adds. There may be some modifications to the original plans for the Lake Wanahoo dam since costs have risen and flood containment requirements may make modifications necessary. The COE cost reduction group reviewed the plans for cost-saving measures. One possibility is to have the road below the top of the dam instead of on top. NDOR seems to be supportive of this since it would reduce the need for two bridge structures, although the road could be washed out with a large storm. To put the road on the top of the dam would cost about another \$14 million.
3. **Antelope Valley** – Glenn Johnson gave an update on the AV project. He said that a great deal of progress has been around the Devaney Center and the UNL campus. The AV channel through the State Fair Park has been completed. The Y Street and Vine Street bridges are also under construction. The next phase of the channel project is design and review of the part from the BN Railroad south to S Street under the Vine Street Bridge. Lincoln will be awarding a contract for \$20 million to construct a roadway by Devaney over the railroad tracks.
- f. **Cumulative Impact Study**- Verhoeff stated that the CIS group will meet at 1:30 p.m. today and everyone is welcome to attend. The CIS group did not get the EPA grant (through Jim Parham with UNL) to begin data acquisition (Phase II) since more applications than money were received. Steve Cacioppo, Computer/GIS Specialist with the LPNNRD, is no longer with NRD. He served as the contact point for CIS data and headed up the GIS portion of the project. The LPNNRD is currently interviewing applicants for the position. In the meantime, Julie Godberson with NG&PC and Verhoeff will serve as the contacts for data and GIS information. Steve will still be available for questions at his new position with Douglas County. Verhoeff said he feels the CIS group has really refined the Scope of Work (SOW) and has a better idea of where the project is heading. The draft SOW will be discussed at the CIS meeting following the LPRCA meeting today.
- g. **Lower Platte River Corridor Environmental Carrying Capacity Project** – A handout was distributed, which outlined general provisions of the project. This handout is a general proposal from HDR Engineering to undertake the study. Additional details will be formulated as Phase I – Scoping is completed.
- h. **Infrastructure Studies**
  1. **Cass County – River Utilities Board (RUB)**- Glenn Johnson reported that a draft preliminary engineering report from HDR was received yesterday. It covers the Phase II – a regional wastewater system for the South Bend area. The draft preliminary engineering report for Phase I – a water supply system for the Louisville/South Bend area had previously been received. Each of these reports also includes a rate structure study. The next step in the process is to work with the financial people and some of the potential customers. The NRD would need to set up an Improvement Project Area (IPA) to establish the boundaries of the project area.
  2. **Sarpy County** – Steve Oltmans stated there is an agreement in place to conduct an extensive water and sewer study on the Sarpy County side of the Platte River. In addition to several communities in the area and the PMRNRD, Douglas County and MUD have both pledged to contribute to the study since no federal funding was obtained. As with the infrastructure study on the Cass County side, HDR was hired to do this study. They estimate it'll be approximately an eighteen-month process.
- i. **River Obstruction Study**- This was previously discussed.
- j. **60-Mile Radius Committee** - This committee is looking at development in the Metroplex area - - the area between Omaha and Lincoln, which is basically a 60-mile radius around Omaha. They are looking at current and future development, infrastructure, population projections, and sustainable development principles. The committee oversees a 3-year study funded through the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund (NETF) and also supported by the three NRDs on the Alliance. A final Flatwater Metroplex Conference to present the study findings and land use planning guidelines will be held on September 9<sup>th</sup> starting at 10:00 a.m. at the Scott Conference Center in Omaha.
- k. **Water Wellness Meetings**- Verhoeff said the collaborative group of the LPRCA, UNL Cooperative Extension, and the NRCS conducted eight Water Wellness meetings. The meetings went very well, but attendance was lower than anticipated. Packets from the meetings are available if anyone would like one. A meeting will be held at the end of the month to water wellness meeting and to look at the possibility of

holding more meetings or having a "speakers' bureau." The group would like to target lake communities on the lower part of the river next time. A 319 Grant from NDEQ for \$4,000 was just received to help fund these meetings. A presentation on these meetings will be given at the next LPRCA meeting.

**13. Upcoming Meetings/Events.**

- a. **Flatwater Metroplex Conference – 60-Mile Radius Study Final Report** – A conference will be held at the Scott Conference Center in Omaha September 9<sup>th</sup> will be the final report of the study at a conference to be held in Omaha. The fee is \$10 to attend and includes lunch. For more information check out their website at [www.ecospheres.com](http://www.ecospheres.com) or call 595-1902 and sign up for the conference.
- b. **NARD Annual Conference** – The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) will hold its annual conference in Kearney on September 26-28.
- c. **Next LPRCA Meeting** –November 30<sup>th</sup> will be the next LPRCA quarterly meeting. Verhoeff suggested it move to the LPNNRD in Wahoo. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. and should conclude by noon.
- d. **Others** – None

**14. Other Items of Interest.** None.

**15. Adjourn.** The August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004 meeting of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance adjourned at noon.