



# Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

*Rodney Verhoeff, Coordinator*

## Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 \* 9:30 AM**

**Held at the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District  
3125 Portia Street \* Lincoln, Nebraska 68501 \* (402) 476-2729**

1. **Call to Order.** Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA Coordinator, called the quarterly meeting of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) to order at 9:35 AM. Meeting was held at the Lower Platte South NRD Office located at 3125 Portia Street in Lincoln, Nebraska. **Roll Call.** An attendance sheet was distributed and those in attendance signed in. A copy of this attendance sheet is available for inspection upon request.
2. **Proof of Legal Notice Presented.** Proof of publication was presented. The legal notice was published in the Omaha World-Herald. Notifications were sent to those on the e-mailing lists, mailing list, and press releases sent to all area newspapers.
3. **Approval of Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) Minutes from February 28th, 2006 Meeting.** No modifications were made to the February 28th, 2006 draft minutes. Minutes were approved via general consensus.
4. **Business Items.**
  - **Committee Reports**
    - Budget & Fundraising / Programs & Projects held a joint meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2006. Version 4 of the FY 07 Budget was agreed upon with the addition of the Water Quality Monitoring Network (**Approved**)
  - **2006 Lower Platte River Summit** – *“Investing in the river of our State and the state of our River – The Lower Platte”* - **Creation of a Programs Committee.** A programs committee was created with Ron Zelt of USGS, Frank Albrecht of NG&PS, Steve Gaul of NDNR, and a rep from each of the 3 NRDs. Verhoeff will contact with a date to meet probably sometime in late June or early July.
  - **Washington D.C. Trip March 29 & 30, 2006** – Verhoeff reported on the annual trek to D.C. by the 3 NRDs to meet with congressional members and agency staff. This year, the group met with staff from Sen Hagel's office, Sen Nelson's office, Cong Fortenberry's office, and with Cong Lee Terry and staff. The purpose is to update them on the 3 existing WRDA projects – W. Sarpy, Antelope Valley, and Sand Creek as well as point out our need for additional funding for both existing and proposed projects such as the Lower Platte River Watershed Restoration language in the new WRDA bill. The group also met with COE staff, EPA staff on the Targeted Watershed Program, FEMA staff on floodplain mapping, and the USGS on our proposed Water Quality Monitoring Network.
  - **NE Environmental Trust Fund Grant for CIS** – The Cumulative Impact Study (CIS) was awarded a \$115,000 grant by the NETF for the completion of the hydrologic study component in cooperation with USGS and creation of a Geographic Information System (GIS). Verhoeff and Frank Albrecht with NG&PC worked to get the grant application put together.
  - **LPRCA 10-year Appreciation Awards** – Verhoeff will be making the rounds to all the Alliance members to present them with a framed recognition certificate for participating in the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for ten years.

## 5. SPECIAL PRESENTATION – “GIS – An Essential Tool for Natural Resources Management”

Shaula Ross, GIS Specialist with the Lower Platte South NRD, gave a great presentation on the use of GIS for natural resources applications. She gave a nice background on what GIS really is and how adaptable it can be for the natural resources management field. Additionally, she demonstrated GIS in action by demonstrating several layered maps which contained multiple parameters and could be manipulated depending upon what you want to see for data. GIS is not just a mapping tool, it is much bigger and can contain multiple layers for an area along with accompanying databases that can contain very detailed information. The CIS project is an example of the use of GIS to compare multiple layers of information through time.

## 6. LPRCA Program and Project Updates.

- **LPRCA – General Activities – Nebraska Land Trust, NE Innovation Zone Commission, PACE, LPWMA, NE Indicators Conference.** Verhoeff referred attendees to his quarterly report for details on these activities. He also handed out a summary of the past year’s activities and a calendar of activities for Spring-Summer 2006.
- **River Obstruction Program – Camp Ashland.** Verhoeff gave an update on this project. The LPRCA is partnering with the NE Military Dept (NE Army Nat’l Guard) and the NG&PC to remove 6 pairs or two pilings consisting of 4-5’ diameter cylindrical metal conduits filled with concrete. Each conduit has 4-5 wooden pilings contained within. We are not yet sure how far each extends down. Sometime in July, the partner group will be contracting with a firm out of Colorado that does non-intrusive sonar testing of objects. We hope to determine how far the Camp Ashland obstructions extend. We may try to evaluate additional sites since the company out of Colorado will already be here and the travel cost would be greatly reduced. It appears that Olsson Associates will be handling the engineering and will bid out the actual removal.
- **Lower Platte River Environmental Carrying Capacity Project – Phase 1** of the project (data collection and assessment) is completed and a copy of the Phase I Report was handed out to attendees. Phases 2-6 will entail gathering missing data, creating the GIS, conducting an environmental analysis, looking at various growth scenarios, and developing implementation strategies. The partner group has been considering partnering with the NE Innovation Zone Commission (NIZC) to complete the study in two years rather than the scheduled five years. Both groups seem to have many common interests and could pool resources to complete the study in a timely fashion.
- **Cumulative Impact Study** – This study continues to rumble along with data and aerial photo acquisition. Currently, many of the COE staffers who have been working on the project are assigned elsewhere for Iraq and Hurricane Katrina duty. This has slowed the progress somewhat, but activity should pick up by late summer and fall. Verhoeff said he is working with COE staff to develop a workplan and timeline.
- **Airboat Tour 2006** – This year, the tour will be on July 14, 2006 and will go from the Hwy 50 landing up to Sokol Camp and back. Topics for discussion are still being worked out but may include presentations from NDOR, BNSF, LPRCA, USGS, Douglas Co, Sarpy Co, NE-IA Metroplex Conference, NE Innovation Zone Commission, NACEE, NGPC, NLT, PACE, among others. Verhoeff mentioned that he continues to have difficulty getting enough airboats each year as many operators don’t feel we pay enough to cover the rising cost of gas and that some participants are not careful enough with their boats.
- **Golf Tournament 2006** – This event will be held on August 22, 2006 at Quarry Oaks from 11 am to 7:00 p.m. The cost will be \$65 per player. Recall, that we agreed to a three-year sponsorship deal with NEBCO in which they provide funds, marketing, teams, and other support. This year we will be cutting out the presentation before tournament due to the Summit being so close. However, we will increase the trivia and demos on the holes.
- **Kiosk Program Update** – Verhoeff has been working with Frank Albrecht on this and plans to meet with a representative from the Big Muddy Workshop, a consultant specializing in kiosk designs. Verhoeff and Albrecht will take a tour of the proposed sites to place the kiosks at before the summer ends.
- **WRDA-Authorized COE Projects –**
  - ✓ **W. Sarpy/Clear Creek – Camp Ashland** – The Camp Ashland portion of the project is basically completed, with the grass seeding completed this spring. Federal funding has limited the amount of work that can be done on the Western Sarpy/Clear Creek portion, but they have cut a chute into Vencil’s Island and cleared an island of vegetation to create nesting habitat. A tour is scheduled for later this summer.

- ✓ **Sand Creek/Lake Wanahoo** – The final design has the road back on top of the dam. The goal is to have dirt moving by next spring. The dam design has also been modified to state standards since COE standards require protection for a 10,000 year flood and increase the cost dramatically.
- ✓ **Antelope Valley** – Antelope Valley continues to move forward with the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the flood channel in progress. The Big “X” is currently under construction with a portion scheduled to be open by summer.
- ✓ **205 Studies** – Fremont is furthest along of the three studies. They plan to revamp an existing levee to keep Fremont out of floodplain. The Schuyler project is moving forward with survey work to see if the new floodplain map can be reduced. They will do a full blown study if necessary. North Bend is on hold until the Hwy 30 placement is finalized.
- ✓ **WRDA 2006** – WRDA continues to crawl forward. At this point, the House has passed a version and the Senate is debating the bill. Once both houses pass a version, they will need to conference to come up with a combined bill. WRDA contains provisions for Lower Platte River Watershed Restoration efforts to the tune of \$12 million.
- ✓ **WQ Monitoring Network** – Verhoeff discussed the idea to establish a water quality monitoring network for the Lower Platte River Corridor by upgrading USGS gaging stations to take realtime, continuous water quality readings for a variety of parameters. Verhoeff has been meeting with the USGS to draw up a proposal and estimate costs. After talking with the 3 NRD managers, the LPRCA is looking at starting the project yet this year by upgrading just a few stations and then adding more in the future. There is a new line item in the LPRCA budget presented today reflecting the desire to move forward with this project.
- **Recent conferences & Meetings – Reports**
  - **UNL Water Law, Policy, and Science Conference May 4 & 5 2006 at Nebraska City.** Verhoeff reported on this annual conference and the theme of “adaptive management.” He handed out a report detailing the event.
  - **RMS Symposium – May 9-11, 2006 South Sioux City, NE.** Verhoeff reported on this conference that is held every other year by one of the top two river organizations in the nation. This year, they chose to come to the heartland – S. Sioux City, NE. Most of the conference focused on the Missouri River since this event was combined with the annual Missouri River Symposium. Verhoeff handed out a detailed report.
- **Others** – No other items were discussed.

#### 7. Upcoming and Recent Meetings/Events.

- **Next LPRCA Meeting – August 2006 [ACTION].** The next quarterly meeting of the LPRCA will be held on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at the LPNNRD starting at 9:30 a.m. **NOTE – This was changed to Sept 6 at 10 am at the LPNNRD to accommodate other schedules.**
- **“Pathogens in Drinking Water” Workshop** – May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006 Sponsored by Groundwater Foundation with assistance from the LPRCA. Anyone can attend.
- **UNL Water Center/ Kearney Chamber of Commerce 2006 Water & Natural Resources Tour** – July 18-20, 2006 Touring the Missouri River Basin. Verhoeff plans to attend this tour. It would be his 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **“Conservation Easements: A Legal, Financial, Governmental and Conservation Perspective”** – August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006 in Omaha. This event focuses on the various aspects of easements. Verhoeff will be giving a portion of the presentation on how easements can be applied in Nebraska for river protection. Cost is \$304/person and it gives continuing education credit.
- **LPRCA Summit.** Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Swanson Retreat Center at Camp Carol Joy Holling. Noon to 7:30 p.m. Call LPRCA at (402) 476-2729 for more info.
- **Others** – No items were discussed.

8. **Other Items of Interest – Public Comment.** No other items were brought up for discussion.

9. **Adjourn.** The May 23, 2006 quarterly meeting of the LPRCA adjourned at 12:10 p.m.