



Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

Rodney Verhoeff, Coordinator

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 24th, 2007 * 9:30 a.m.

**MEETING LOCATION – City of Valley Office Building
203 N. Spruce Street * Valley, NE * (402) 359-2551**

1. **Call to Order.** Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA Coordinator, called the quarterly meeting of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) to order at 9:40 AM. Meeting was held at the City of Valley office building located at 203 N. Spruce Street in Valley, NE. **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 area newspapers.

3. **Adoption of Agenda.** No changes were made to FINAL Agenda and it was adopted as presented.

4. **Approval of Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) Minutes from the January 18th, 2007 Meeting.** No modifications were made to the January 18th, 2007 minutes. Minutes were approved via general consensus.

--Skipped to Agenda Item # 6 to accommodate schedule of featured presenters--

6. **SPECIAL PRESENTATION – “City of Valley Wastewater System”** (Jim Almsted, Almsted & Perry Consulting) After a nice introduction by Mary Caffey, Mayor of Valley, Jim Almsted with Almsted & Perry Consulting gave a brief history of the Valley wastewater system. The original system was constructed in 1965 and later updated in 1977. The system became “worn out” and could not meet DEQ standards and the city was put on administrative order to develop new or improved system by 2005. The city did a 40 year planning study and considered options such as conveyance to another provider. This would require long term agreements, but would have reduced equipment cost. As a result, Valley signed an agreement with Fremont to convey wastewater to their system. Fremont had extra capacity and could easily accept the estimated 200,000 GPD from Valley. To acquire the necessary equipment and pipelines, Valley took out low interest loan for \$4.8 million. Actual cost was \$200,000 less. Prior to the new system, residents paid \$12.50 per household with no volume limitations. After the new system was implemented, the rate schedule changed to \$25/household for the first 2000 gallons and then \$3.81 per each additional 1000 gallons. Valley finished its conveyance system in Nov 2005 and met the DEQ deadline to be in compliance. The average 200,000 GPD from Valley is only 4.4% of the total Fremont system capacity. Arlington is also looking at hooking into Fremont’s system along with Ginger Cove and 3 additional subdivisions.

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5. Business Items.

a. Strategic Planning

- i. **Retreat – Summary & Report.** Verhoeff handed out a summary of the LPRCA Planning Retreat held December 19th, 2006 at Camp Kitaki. He said there was a good turnout with reps from all but one LPRCA member organization present. The retreat covered past, present, and future Alliance activities and direction. The next retreat will be at the end of 2008 and will be our in-depth strategic planning effort that occurs every 6 years.

- ii. **Comprehensive Plan - Report.** Verhoeff mentioned that he has been working on ideas for a comprehensive LPR plan that would highlight all of our activities, our vision, our mission, goals, objectives, and an overview of the Corridor. It will also contain direction for future actions and a long range implementation plan. Verhoeff mentioned that he may look into an NETF grant to help fund this effort.
- b. **LPRCA Intern Position – Report.** Verhoeff introduced Doug Vrana, the new LPRCA intern. Doug is a senior at UNL in soil science. He will graduate in December of 2007. He grew up near Prague, where his family still farms today and his dad, Dave, serves on the LPNNRD board. Doug has always wanted to work in natural resources or agriculture and specifically would like to have a career with the NRDs. Doug has been with the LPRCA since January of this year.
- c. **UNL “U-Care” - Program – Report.** Verhoeff discussed this new program at UNL that provides a stipend for students to do a project during the summer months in their field. Verhoeff presented to a UNL Honors Water class and two students expressed interest in doing a project this summer. As a result, he will be meeting with these students to design a project. Initially, it looks as though their interest is in resources assessment. The LPSNRD will provide some office space for the students to use if needed.
- d. **Pertinent Legislation – Report.** LB 701 is a bill to help the 3 Republican River Basin NRDs meet terms of the Republican River Compact. It provides additional tools to meet the requirements of this compact such as NRD authority to acquire groundwater and surface water rights, creates a riparian vegetative task force, and creates a cash fund to lease irrigation rights from irrigation districts. The conservation easement legislation was held over until the next session.
- e. **Programs/Projects/Activities for 2008 – Discussion.** Verhoeff reviewed programs, projects, and activities planned for the upcoming FY. Most are carry-overs from FY07 such as Riv Obs Removal Project, Env Suitability Assessment, Cumulative Impact Study, and the Water Quality Monitoring Network. One new item is a series of coffee shop meetings set for the fall/winter of 2007. After a discussion, the board approved the current FY08 LPRCA budget (version #3) as the final working version that will be forwarded to the NRDs.
- f. **FY08 Budget - Discussion.** Verhoeff handed out the latest version (#3) of the LPRCA budget for FY08. The bottom line this year is \$507,325 compared to \$869,352 for FY07. The primary difference is the smaller price tag on the Camp Ashland River Obs Removal Project compared to the Hwy 50 project in the previous year. Verhoeff had to increase the administrative portion to account for increases in office supply costs, fuel increases, and salary/benefit increases. Other items were trimmed as much as possible.
- g. **NE Natural Legacy Plan Flagship Initiative – Discussion.** Mark Humpert with the NG&PC gave a presentation on the NE Natural Legacy Program. This program is intended to help implement component of the NE Natural Legacy Plan to protect and improve fish and wildlife habitat in Nebraska - - it takes a habitat-based approach rather than a species-based one. To do this, the NE Natural Legacy Committee, comprised of 20 organizations, is looking to establish flagship initiatives in important habitat areas in the state. These areas have been identified as “Biologically Unique Landscapes” or BULS (40 in NE) and the Lower Platte River has been identified as one of these BULs. In other BULs, coordinating biologists have been hired to focus on these efforts. To date, there are 5 areas in NE with an interest to establish a flagship initiative and some have already begun the process. Verhoeff led a discussion after the presentation on the possibility of the LPRCA serving as a flagship organization for this program and sponsoring a coordinating biologist. There needs to be a champion to head an effort like this up. It will also require the submission of a proposal to the committee for review and approval. Humpert said that there is some funding available through an NETF grant and the NE Wildlife Grants program, but it is on a first come-first serve basis. Humpert would like to just know by May if the LPRCA has an interest in pursuing a flagship initiative. **After considerable discussion voted to move ahead and let the NE Natural Legacy Committee know we have an interest.** Mike Jess with UNL Conservation & Survey Division suggested we develop a draft proposal through an LPRCA committee and bring back to full group for review. The Programs and Projects Committee was suggested to develop the draft.
- h. **NE Land Trust Strategic Planning Effort - Discussion** – The NE Land Trust will be holding a board meeting on June 1 and a strategic planning meeting on June 2 both at the P-MRNRD in Omaha. Verhoeff will be attending both on behalf of the LPRCA.

7. LPRCA Program and Project Updates.

- a **LPRCA – General Activities** – Verhoeff handed his quarterly report and an informational packet.
 - i. **Quarterly Report** – Verhoeff handed out his quarterly report detailing activities and project updates.
 - ii. **Info Packets / Articles** – Each quarterly meeting, Verhoeff said he will hand out a collection of pertinent articles from our clipping service.
 - iii. **Website Features** – The website continues to be updated and is now featuring the Camp Ashland River Obstruction Removal Project – Phase I. Airboat tour info and WQ Open registration forms will be added soon.
 - iv. **Newsletter** – The next newsletter has been postponed until late summer 2007 because of all of the current activities. Again, it will feature an LPRCA member organization and their reps.
- b **Nebraska Innovation Zone Commission (NIZC) – Update**. Kathy McKillip, Executive Director of the NIZC, was on hand to give an overview of the NIZC and an update on their progress. Currently, the group is working on bidding out development of a comprehensive regional economic development plan. The LPRCA ESA project will help supplement the plan by providing environmental information into the mix. Verhoeff pointed out that the LPRCA had delayed conducting Phase II of the ESA because of the potential that the NIZC might be able to secure funding for this effort and we could partner. However, the funding did not materialize and both groups decided to work on their individual studies/projects and collaborate at a later date. McKillip thanked the group for all of their help.
- c **Environmental Suitability Assessment (ESA) – Report**. Verhoeff that this is the new name of the Environmental Carrying Capacity Study. The new name was developed with a steering committee of LPRCA members and partners to better reflect what the study really is doing – determining environmental constraints and opportunities and suitability for development. Phase II will begin shortly with HDR continuing as the consultant under a services agreement with the LPSNRD, which is serving as the LPRCA sponsor. Matt Pillard with HDR is the new PM for this project and he updated the group on the projected activities for Phase II including a needs assessment with the counties to get local input. Ultimately, we will develop a tool or reference that local decision-makers can use when reviewing development proposals that will give them info on environmental issues. There is nothing like this available today that focuses solely on these issues.
- d **Flood Reduction Efforts – Island Clearing – Request for Discussion**. P-MRNRD Director Rich Tesar had requested the LPRCA consider supporting an effort to help clear sand bars that have become vegetated due to lack of scouring action along the LPR Corridor. These vegetated sand bars contribute to debris capture, increase flooding potential, and take away from habitat for T&E species. The group felt the idea warranted additional discussion and assigned it to the Projects & Programs Committee.
- e **River Obstruction Program**
 - i. **Camp Ashland Project – PHASE II – Discussion**. PHASE II will include removal of the remaining 3 sets of concrete pilings (6 total) and the option to remove eleven wooden pilings further upstream. Cost will determine how much of this gets done. PHASE II is anticipated to commence in the fall of 2007 and be completed by the end of 2007. We anticipate having the same partners and funding contributions.
 - ii. **Future Projects – Discussion**. Verhoeff mentioned that Two SRA would be a good choice for the next project although Hwy 77 may be an alternative since several airboaters have mentioned it is very dangerous. Regardless, the LPRCA will have to re-load with funds over the next couple of years to be able to do additional projects. If WRDA passes, we would have another funding source.
- f **Cumulative Impact Study - Update**. The CIS group will be meeting on May 31, 2007 to review progress to date. Also, there has been considerable discussion on parameters regarding the QA/QC analysis the group plans to have CALMIT conduct. Phase II is tentatively expected to be completed by December 31, 2007.
- g **Special Events - Reports**
 - i. **Airboat Tour 2007**. The 2007 LPRCA Airboat Tour will be held on Friday, July 20th, 2007. It will cover the portion of the river from the Lied Bridge to the confluence near Plattsmouth. Hopes are to limit the attendees to 45 or less.
 - ii. **Golf Tournament 2007**. The WQ Open will be held on Wed, Sept 5th, 2007 at Quarry Oaks. Plans are to have a presentation at 10 am and golfing at 12:30 p.m. Verhoeff hopes to feature the “8 Reasons to Protect the Lower Platte River.” Again, we will have demos and trivia on various holes.
- h **Kiosk Program Update** – The kiosk program got shelved for a few months due to higher priority activities. Hopes are to pick back up later this summer and fall.

- i. **WRDA-Authorized COE Projects** –
 - i. **W. Sarpy/Clear Creek – Camp Ashland** – Continues to move forward. Currently identifying a crossing over the chute on the east side (Vencil's Island). This is estimated to cost \$100,000 for this crossing.
 - ii. **Sand Creek/Lake Wanahoo** – Clearing and grubbing completed for the Wanahoo structure. The design for the structure will be completed in July and can begin construction shortly thereafter. Funding has been \$2.3 million in FY06 and \$1 million in FY07. Still working on FY08.
 - iii. **Antelope Valley** – Currently, there is a \$6.3 million waterway construction project underway from Y Street to Vine and south to S Street. The FY08 President's budget has \$9 million for AV, which will allow for completion of the flood control component of the project to J Street.
 - iv. **205 Studies** – Nothing new for the Fremont and Schuyler studies.
 - v. **WRDA 2006** – WRDA continues to hobble forward at a snail's pace. There has been an inclusion to increase the WS/CC allotment for the total project cost. Once both houses conference and develop a combined bill, then the combined bill will be up for a final vote. Looks like later this summer or fall now. Bob Weaver continues to be our eyes and ears in DC on WRDA.
- j. **New & Inactive Programs/Projects** – *Update* (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA)
 - i. **UNL Class Projects** *NEW* – Discussed in quarterly report
 - ii. **Water Quality Monitoring Network** *NEW* – This project has been delayed due to high water. We hope to begin consistent sampling in May. The USGS installed two monitoring sensors (sondes) at Louisville and one on the Elkhorn at Waterloo. Next year, we will look into expansion of this network.
 - iii. **Coffee Shop Meetings** *NEW* – These meetings are planned or fall/winter of this year to get public input into direction of LPRCA activities. .
 - iv. **Floodplain Mapping Public Awareness Meetings** *INACTIVE* – Some floodplain meetings have already been held, but we are awaiting FEMA approval of floodplain maps to hold more public meetings.
 - v. **Water Museum** *INACTIVE* – Verhoeff has still not heard back on this idea since last fall.

8. Recent Conferences/Meetings/Events

- a. **NARD Legislative Conference** – Jan 23 & 24, 2007 * Embassy Suites
- b. **LPR NRDs DC Meetings with Congressional Delegation** – Feb 27th, 2007 * Washington DC
- c. **Earth Wellness Festival** – March 21 & 22, 2007 * SCC in Lincoln (84th & O)
- d. **UNL 4th Annual Water Law, Policy, and Sci Conference** – March 26 & 27, 2007 * Embassy Suites
- e. **NACEE Board Meeting** – April 2nd, 2007 * Lincoln
- f. **Lower Platte River Basin TMDL Meeting** – April 6th, 2007 * LPSNRD in Lincoln
- g. **Others.** No others were discussed.

9. Upcoming and Recent Meetings/Events

- a. **Next LPRCA Meeting – July/Aug 2007 [ACTION]**. The next meeting of the LPRCA will be July 24th, 2007 at the P-MRNRD starting at 9:30 a.m.
- b. **Cumulative Impact Study (CIS) Meeting** – April 23rd, 2007 * 10 am * LPSNRD in Lincoln
- c. **Groundwater Foundation/USGS Seminar “ Pharmaceuticals & Personal Care Products in Drinking Water”** – April 25th, 2007 * 9 am – 3:15 pm * Lincoln Holiday Inn. Register at www.groundwater.org.
- d. **P-MRNRD Water Works** – May 1st & 2nd, 2007 * Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium / Schramm SRA
- e. **LPNNRD Spring Sensation** – May 2nd, 2007 * Czechland Lake
- f. **Schilling WMA Tour for Agencies** – May 25th, 2007 * 10 am – 2 pm * Schilling WMA
- g. **NARD Basin Tour** – June 18th & 19th, 2007 * Lower Platte River Basin.

- h. PACE Meeting – June 20, 2007 * 10 am * Place TBD
 - i. Others. No other items were discussed.
10. **Other Items of Interest – Public Comment.** No comment was offered.
 11. **Adjourn.** With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.