



# Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

*Rodney Verhoeff, Coordinator*

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 9:30 a.m.**

**MEETING LOCATION – Hardin Hall on UNL East Campus  
33<sup>rd</sup> & Holdrege Street \* Lincoln, NE \* (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 9:45 AM. Meeting was held at Hardin Hall on UNL East Campus, 33<sup>rd</sup> and Holdrege Street, Lincoln, NE. A tour was held prior to the meeting for those wanting to see the new facilities at Hardin Hall, which now is home to UNL's School of Natural Resources. **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. Approximately 35 people in attendance.

**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 July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Meeting.** No modifications were made to the July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 minutes. Minutes were approved via general consensus.

### **5. Business Items.**

- a. **LPRCA Member Contributions for FY08 – Discussion.** Verhoeff reminded LPRCA members that contributions for FY08 are due. He would be sending out a second notice to all members who have not contributed yet. For state agencies, the amount has not changed for the past several years and remains \$5,416.67. Verhoeff reiterated that he would visit with any agency wishing to hear about the LPRCA and progress over the past year or to justify to that agency the importance of membership in the LPRCA.
- b. **LPRCA Strategic Planning Efforts – Discussion.** Verhoeff mentioned that 2008 is the point in our 6-year strategic planning cycle where we hold a more in-depth review of the LPRCA vision, mission, goals, objectives, programs, and projects. There will be a 3 NRD strategic planning meeting in January to review programs and projects before the budget process starts. Verhoeff expects to have a strategic planning session in late 2008 for the entire LPRCA membership.
- c. **NE Natural Legacy Plan Flagship Initiative Application** – Verhoeff mentioned that the LPSNRD had authorized a position for a Coordinating Biologist that would be funded through a partnership with NG&PC and their NE Natural Legacy Program. We would need to submit an application to the NE Natural Legacy Program partner group to receive the funding. Verhoeff suggested waiting until later in the year or early next year to pursue further. Another consideration is that there is limited office space currently at the NRD since they have recently hired for several new positions.
- d. **NETF Grant for LPR Corridor Land Use Assessment – Discussion.** Verhoeff mentioned that he had submitted a grant application to the NETF for Phases II & III of the Environmental Suitability Assessment (ESA) in the amount of \$100,000. This will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> try for a grant for this project. Although past applications have received positive comments on the project itself, the NETF reviewers have commented that the ESA project is too similar to the JCI Metroplex project that has already been funded. Verhoeff stated he made the distinction between the two efforts very clear in this application since they are very different projects and met with NETF officials prior to submission to make sure he was addressing all of their concerns and questions.

**6. SPECIAL PRESENTATION – “Biological Opinion for the Lower Platte River – T & E Species” ( Kristal Stoner, NG&PC)** Kristal Stoner with the NG&PC gave an informative presentation on the recently released draft Biological Opinion for the Lower Platte River. This opinion report was requested by NDNR as a part of the process to review the Lower Platte River Basin per LB962 for availability of surface water appropriations. DNR has already preliminarily determined that the LPR Basin is “Not Fully Appropriated” but there will be a final determination by the year’s end preceded by a public hearing. A copy of the PowerPoint is available upon request.

**7. LPRCA Program and Project Updates.**

a **LPRCA – General Activities**

- i. **Quarterly Report** – Verhoeff handed out his quarterly report detailing activities and project updates.
- ii. **Info Packets / Articles** – Verhoeff handed out a packet of pertinent articles.
- iii. **Newsletter** – Verhoeff said that the next edition will be out later this winter or spring of 2008. This edition will feature the LPSNRD as the highlighted Alliance member.
- iv. **Website Updates** – The website continues to be updated and improved.

b **Water Quality Monitoring Network Report (Phil Soenksen, USGS)** Phil Soenksen with USGS updated the group on this program including a PowerPoint presentation. This was the first year for the program and there were a few glitches including high water damage to some monitors and sanding in of others. USGS feels it has been able to overcome some of the problems we experienced the first year of sampling. There is now a website that Verhoeff and USGS have been working on for this program. It can be accessed at: <http://ne.water.usgs.gov/lowerplatte/>. This year, we had 2 monitors at Louisville and 1 at Waterloo (Elkhorn River). In 2008, we plan to have monitors at Salt Creek near Ashland, Maple Creek, and possibly at Shell Creek. In response to last meeting, we held a meeting between the USGS and NDEQ on Oct 26 to coordinate sampling and monitoring efforts between the two agencies and find out what the other is doing in terms of water quality monitoring/sampling in the basin.

c **Environmental Suitability Assessment – Phase II – Report** Verhoeff and HDR representative Matt Pillard gave an update on this project. They are currently in the midst of meeting with local jurisdictions as part of the Needs Assessment for the PHASE II area (Fremont to confluence). They have also begun to develop environmental features layers and a list of McHargian Analysis layers. Hopes are to finish all meeting by the end of the year.

d **River Obstruction Program**

- i. **Camp Ashland Project – PHASE II – Discussion.** All three bids received came in higher than the consultant’s estimate ranging from \$286,149 to \$557,680. The LPSNRD met and accepted the lowest bid of \$286,149 from Valley Corp of Valley, NE. This will require additional contributions from all 3 NRDs when the engineering costs of \$23,800 are included (total of \$309,949). Verhoeff met with each board and all agreed to increase their funding support. Verhoeff also mentioned he will be asking for more from the NG&PC Boating Safety Grant Program. Hopes are to start removing the obstructions around mid November and completed by the end of December (can only actively be working for 6 weeks). It took a lot of work to create interlocal agreements between the NRDs and an access agreement with Beacon View to reach the obstructions. Looks like the contractor will be using a causeway to reach the obstructions as has been the case in past years. There are also some wooden pilings about 100 yards upstream from the concrete obstructions that will be removed in this project.

e **Cumulative Impact Study – PHASE II Update**. The CIS partner group met on Aug2 and Sept 4 this past quarter. Because of numerous delays on the part of the COE due to deployments, Verhoeff asked for and received an extension on the NETF grant for the CIS until Dec 31, 2007. The group has set this date as the next milestone date for completion of all data layers. The Final Report for PHASE II will take longer so most likely, the project will need an additional extension from the NETF. There has been some frustration from the group because of the many delays which have resulted in the project behind schedule at least a year now. There is approximately \$7,000+ left in the NETF grant. Verhoeff continues to handle grant administration duties for the group.

f **Special Events**

g **Education & Outreach Projects /Events / Meetings**

- i. **WQ Open Golf Tournament – Sept 5<sup>th</sup> / Quarry Oaks.** The WQ Open was held on Wed, Sept 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at Quarry Oaks. The event started with a presentation by Roch Gaussoin of UNL on turfgrass selection and maintenance at 10 am Golfing began at 12:30 p.m. with a shotgun start. There were 8

demos on various holes that featured the “8 Reasons to Protect the Lower Platte River.” The remaining holes had sponsorship signs with water or natural resources trivia on them. We had over \$4,000 in sponsorship funding with NEBCO and Union Bank & Trust contributing \$1,000 each. Again, the event was very well attended with 144 attendees on 36 teams. The weather was once again excellent. Following the golfing, we held a banquet and awards ceremony. We also featured a “take your photo home” display with pictures taken throughout the day that attendees could take home with them. Verhoeff thanked all of those who helped, provided a display, and contributed funds.

- ii. **UNL CRPL Class Presentation / Tour / Projects.** Verhoeff presented to a UNL community and regional planning class and assisted with a tour of the LPR Corridor. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year that the LPRCA has presented to this class.

h **WRDA-Authorized COE Projects –**

- i. **W. Sarpy/Clear Creek – Camp Ashland –** Marlin Petermann updated the group on the status stating that 1.5 miles of levee work on side (starting at the upper end) has been delayed but bids should be let by Nov 15. There has been some problems with getting survey info and finishing up ROW work. Additionally, the COE has not finished the final design yet.
- ii. **Sand Creek/Lake Wanahoo –** Looks like the embankment for Lake Wanahoo has been pushed back to spring of 2008. Hopes are to begin work on the wetland sediment trap this winter. Sounds like the project has a good chance of funding through the NRDF.
- iii. **Antelope Valley –** O Street Bridge construction beginning and last phase of channel will start in April of 2008 and take approximately 18 months. Also, working on updating floodplain maps and last leg of Big X roadway, which will take 2 years to complete.
- iv. **205 Studies –** No changes from last report. Fremont still working on roadway alignment.
- v. **WRDA 2006 –** Still waiting to see if President signs WRDA or vetos it. Word has it that he will veto, but there sounds like there is enough votes to override. Also, if he fails to act within 10 days of receiving the legislation (he has received) it, it becomes law by default.

j **New & Inactive Programs/Projects – Update.** Nothing to report.

**8. Recent Conferences/Meetings/Events.** Verhoeff discussed each of the following activities:

- a. **CIS Partners Meetings –** Aug 2<sup>nd</sup> & Oct 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* LPSNRD for both meetings
- b. **NACEE Conference –** Aug 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Scottsbluff, NE
- c. **Senator Nelson Staff Tour ( Jonathon Coppess / Kate Howard) \* Aug 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* LPR Basin**
- d. **Trip to DC to meet with Congressional Delegation \* Sept 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* Washington DC**
- e. **LPWMA Group Meeting \* Sept 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* LPNNRD**
- f. **PCS Nitrogen Plant Site Meeting \* Sept 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* P-MRNRD**
- g. **NARD Annual Conference \* Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* Kearney, NE**
- h. **STATEMAP Committee Meeting \* Sept 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* UNL Hardin Hall**
- i. **NLT Board Meeting \* Sept 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* P-MRNRD**
- j. **Others.** No other items were discussed.

9. **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

- a. **Next LPRCA Meeting –** The group decided to hold the next LPRCA quarterly meeting at Lower Platte North NRD – Wahoo, NE on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 starting at 9:30 am. Details will be sent out.
- b. **Pallid Sturgeon/Sturgeon Chub Task Force Meeting –** Oct 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 \* 10:00 am \* CPNRD \* Grand Island
- c. **NIZC –** Focus Group Meetings: **NOTE - - These were held just prior to LPRCA Quarterly Meeting.** (call Ellen Fitzsimmons at HDR to RSVP at (402) 339-1423)

- I. **Cities** - Oct 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 9:15 am \* Mahoney SP Main Lodge \* Cottonwood Room
  - II. **Economic Development** - Oct 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 10:30 am \* Mahoney SP Main Lodge \* Cottonwood Room
  - III. **Recreation** - Oct 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 1 pm \* Mahoney SP Main Lodge \* Cottonwood Room
  - IV. **Tourism** – Oct 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 2:15 pm \* Mahoney SP Main Lodge \* Cottonwood Room
  - V. **Education** - Oct 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 3:30 pm \* Mahoney SP Main Lodge \* Cottonwood Room
  - VI. **Agricultural Issues** - Oct 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 9:15 am \* Mahoney SP River View Lodge
  - VII. **Counties** - Oct 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 10:30 am \* Mahoney SP River View Lodge
  - VIII. **Unicameral** - Oct 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 3:30 pm \* Mahoney SP River View Lodge
  - IX. **Environmental Issues** – Oct 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 6:00 pm \* Mahoney SP River View Lodge
  - d. **CIS Partner Meeting** – Nov 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* 10:00 am \* LPSNRD in Lincoln
  - e. **NLT Board Meeting** – December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007 \* Noon \* P-MRNRD
  - f. **NARD Legislative Conference** – February 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008 \* Lincoln Embassy Suites
  - g. **Others**
10. **Other Items of Interest – Public Comment.** No comment was offered.
11. **Adjourn.** With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.