



# Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

*Rodney Verhoeff, Coordinator*

## MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008 \* 9:30 a.m.

Location – Papio-Missouri River NRD

8901 S. 154<sup>th</sup> Street \* Omaha, NE \* (402) 444-6222

1. **CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS.** Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA Coordinator, called the quarterly meeting of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) P-MRNRD office at 8901 S. 154<sup>th</sup> Street in Omaha, 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. Approximately 25 people were in attendance.
2. **PROOF OF LEGAL NOTICE/PUBLICATION.** 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 the FINAL Agenda and it was adopted as presented.
4. **APPROVAL OF LOWER PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR ALLIANCE (LPRCA) MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup>, 2008 MEETING.** No modifications were made to the April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008 minutes. Minutes were approved via general consensus.
5. **ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS.**
  - a. **LPRCA Airboat Tour – Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup> \* 9 am – 4 pm \* Fremont to North Bend**  
Verhoeff stated he was working hard to line up enough airboats for the tour for the 53 people signed up. He estimates it will take approximately 18 boats and he has 15 right now. Speakers are all lined up as is the catering and port-a-potties. Tim Bryson with Bryson's Airboat Tours has been helping coordinate the event as a volunteer and has really been a huge help. The tour will go from Bryson's landing upstream to near North Bend. Topics include: T&E species, water quality studies, the Biological Opinion, sand and gravel mining, airboating, and the Loup Power Canal relicensing process.
  - b. **"What You Need to Know About Public Records and Open Meetings in Nebraska" \* July 29<sup>th</sup> \* 8:30 am – 4:30 pm \* GI Interstate Holiday Inn \* Seminar presented by Lorman Educational Services \***  
**Presenters: Leroy Sievers – Knudsen, Berkheimer, Richardson & Endicott LLP, David Bargaen – Rembolt Ludtke LLP, Mark Fahlsou - Rembolt Ludtke LLP, Rodney Verhoeff – LPRCA.** Verhoeff will be presenting the practical component of this presentation and how to utilize and apply public records statutes and the Open Meetings Act.
  - c. **WQ Open – Thursday, Sept 4<sup>th</sup> \* 10 am presentation by PRRIP (Headwaters Corp) \* 12:30 pm tee-off.**  
Verhoeff is also busy lining up the golf tourney. It will again be at Quarry Oaks near South Bend. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year of our agreement with NEBCO to hold the tourney at Quarry Oaks. Jerry Kenny is lined up to give a presentation on the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP) prior to the event. If all team members attend they get 2 strokes off their score. Verhoeff hopes to have all LPRCA members have a demo on a hole. He will be contacting everyone soon for help.
  - d. **Lower Platte River Summit – Thursday, Nov 6<sup>th</sup> \* 10 am tours \* Noon summit \* \$40/person.** Repeating the very successful event held in 2006, the LPRCA will hold a summit every two years. This year, Verhoeff has been working with a several other organizations including the NPS, USGS, the NRCS, UNL Water Center, and the *Prairie Fire* newspaper. The USGS has pledged \$500 and the NPS has already paid to reserve the facility at Camp Calvin Crest and a few other items. The UNL Water Center is helping with design of materials and registration. The *Prairie Fire* newspaper is providing space in the paper for an article on the LPR. The NRCS has been very active in helping to set up the art display we will have this year along with a string quartet. It has been a huge benefit having a committee plan and organize the event this time

around. We tentatively have two featured speakers: Frank Austenfeld, Executive Director for the Land Trust Institute and the Watershed Institute AND Michael Grunwald, an award-winning author and correspondent for *TIME* magazine. Michael wrote a book on the Everglades that has applicability to the LPR area. Cost for Michael Grunwald is approximately \$10,000 and we hope to share this cost 3 ways with two departments at UNL.

6. **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS** **Keystone Petroleum Pipeline – Jeff Rauh, TransCanada.** Jeff Rauh with TransCanada was on hand to discuss the proposed Keystone & the Keystone XL petroleum pipelines scheduled to transect Nebraska and cross under the Platte River. They will use directional drilling to get the pipeline under the river approximately 30' below the river bed. On land, the pipeline will be 4' below grade and will range from 30-36" in diameter. Canada is the largest supplier of crude oil to the US and is second only to Saudi Arabia in terms of world oil reserves. Most of the oil in Canada comes from oil sands – 179 billion gallons with 4 billion gallons in traditional reserves. Oil derived from oil sands is now economical to extract since prices have risen so much in recent years and demand continues to rise. TransCanada has \$30 billion in pipeline assets and over 40% of its employees are US-based. The Keystone Pipeline will carry 435,000–590,000 barrels per day (bpd) and will primarily service Midwest markets by 2009. The Keystone XL Pipeline is just in the proposal stage and should be in service by 2010-2011 and will primarily serve the Gulf Coast market. This pipeline will carry from 700,000-900,000 bpd. A copy of Jeff's PowerPoint will be available on the LPRCA's website at [www.lowerplatte.org](http://www.lowerplatte.org).
7. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
  - a. **NE Natural Legacy Plan Flagship Initiative – Update (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA).** Scott Luedtke with NG&PC said that the program coordinator is leaving for another job, but he (Scott) would serve as a temporary contact until a new coordinator comes on board. There is funding in this year's budget (FY09) for the LPR to set up a flagship program. However, he suggested we get together to discuss further.
  - b. **FY09 LPRCA Budget/Membership – Update (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA).** There was a spirited discussion as 3 state agencies (NDEQ, NDNR, NH&HS) notified Verhoeff that they would not be contributing this year. The agencies indicated it was not due to performance or direction of the LPRCA, but rather due to severe budget shortages and a directive from administration to cut external program funding for their respective agencies. The remaining 3 entities (UNL-SNR, NG&PC, & NE Military Dept) indicated they would be contributing at the new requested level - \$7,000 rather than the old \$5,416.67. Questions arose as to why in the middle of a biennium budget where the funds were budgeted, that they were cut. Agencies indicated they have redirected funds away from the LPRCA to other areas with shortfalls. All agencies indicated that we should approach them again on a yearly basis for contributions. A question also arose as to whether or not the increase in requested amount from \$5,416.67 to \$7,000 made the difference. The response was that it would not have mattered. Verhoeff asked if he should send a letter to each agency head still inviting them to remain a member even if they cannot contribute funds and suggest they contribute by participation and in-kind. The group felt this would be a good idea. Verhoeff will send a draft around for review.
  - c. **Demos for WQ Open – Discussion (LPRCA Members).** Verhoeff asked each member to identify a contact person that he could work with when developing demos for the WQ Open.
  - d. **LPRCA Intern Position – Update (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA).** Ryan Bjerke was recently hired to serve as the new LPRCA intern replacing Doug Vrana, who took a fulltime position with Servi-Tech, a crop consultant. Ryan is finishing up his MS program at UNL in Natural Resources with an emphasis in Human Dimensions. Unfortunately, Ryan had a class and could not make the July meeting.
8. **LPRCA PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS**
  - a. **Project Updates, General Activities, & Involvement – Quarterly Report (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA)**
    - i. **Cumulative Impact Study – PHASE II - Update (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA).** The COE continues to gather and compile GIS info for the CIS project. Hopes are to have the project completed or near completed by October. Originally, the COE was to present at this meeting, however, there are still some unfinished items such as land classification and trend analysis that need to be completed before we can demo the products. Unfortunately, this project is over budget and nearly a year-and-

- a-half over the scheduled completion date due to many issues such as COE personnel deployments and difficulty in getting some of the data.
- ii. **Environmental Suitability Assessment (ESA) – PHASE II – Report (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA).** We recently signed 3 new task orders with HDR for additional Phase II work to review and recommend suitability model, complete Phase III from Fremont to Columbus, and a per diem O&M task order for the IMS to update.
  - iii. **Coffee Shop Meetings – Update (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA).** Nine of 17 meetings are completed - most upstream of Fremont except for Yutan. The remainder will be conducted this fall/winter. Averaged 18 attendees with a high of 40. Received a lot of help from NRD board members and hope to get similar help for downstream meetings. Additionally, any LPRCA member or partner organization wanting to help can join in.
  - iv. **Water Quality Monitoring Network – Update (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA).** Verhoeff met with the USGS on June 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss progress and any issues with the WQ Monitoring Network. The heavy rains and subsequent high flows along with radio transmission problems have resulted in some lost data. However, these issues have now been resolved or will be shortly. However, silting in of the monitors (sondes) still remains an issue. On the positive side, we are gathering a lot of continuous data and beginning to develop relationship curves with sampling data. After a couple of sampling seasons, we should have adequate data to complete the relationship curves to determine contaminant loads at various locations. The USGS is working on a notification system for the Shell Creek monitoring network and will be working in conjunction with NDEQ to install additional monitors throughout the watershed. They are also still working on writing a grant to install some additional monitors. Verhoeff made several recommendations to the USGS for data display and distribution including changes to the project website to include more data and both monitored data as well as sampled data. Verhoeff suggested that all USGS gages on the Lower Platte River be shown with links to stage data even for gages not included in the WQ Monitoring network. This makes it easier for those visiting the site to get all data available from gages in the basin without having to locate it somewhere else on the USGS website. Many of these suggested changes are already in place and the USGS has been extremely responsive. The USGS will make a presentation at the Oct LPRCA quarterly meeting.
  - v. **River Obstruction Program – Update (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA).** The Camp Ashland project is now complete. The only thing remaining is to receive grant funding from the NG&PC from their Boating Safety Grant Program. We will take a year off and bank funds for the next project – Two Rivers State Rec Area in 2010 or 2011.
  - vi. **Invasive Species Efforts – Update (LPRCA Members).** There is currently a collaborative effort between NRDs, counties, private biz, and utilities to do helicopter spraying with Habitat, a herbicide that is approved for aquatic use. The P-MRNRD has pledged \$200,000 and the LPNMRD \$20,000 for this effort. The LPSNRD is currently considering their involvement.
- b. **Education & Outreach Projects / Events / Meetings.** There were no new items for this agenda item.
- c. **WRDA-Authorized COE Projects & WRDA 2007**
- i. **W. Sarpy/Clear Creek – Camp Ashland (P-MRNRD / NE Military Dept).** Partners currently have the 60% preliminary plans for review. The hope is to have the 100% plans by Sept.
  - ii. **Sand Creek (LPNMRD).** Wet weather did slow progress on the sediment trap but it is still nearly 75% complete. They hope to do a tremendous amount of dirt work in Aug and Sept. Plans for the Lake Wanahoo structure have been submitted to the state for review and approval. Hopes are to start construction by the fall. Bids should have been let and will be opened on Aug 7.
  - iii. **Antelope Valley (LPSNRD).** There will be a walkthrough on the Phase II Channel Project to finalize punch list. Final flood control channel (Phase III) contract is scheduled to be awarded on July 18 and completed by Dec 2009.
  - iv. **205 Studies (LPNMRD).** In Fremont, stakeholders are working with NDOR to determine an agreeable alignment for the roadway. North Bend will be holding a public meeting in the near future to discuss their options and interest in continuing.
  - v. **WRDA 2007 - Update (Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA Members).** Verhoeff stated the LPRCA has made an appropriation request in the amount of \$1.7 million for the LPR Watershed Restoration authorization.

- vi. **Flooding Issues.** In Schuyler, there is a Platte River and Shell Creek threat from flooding. Recent flooding at the end of May and beginning of June resulted in flood waters across the RR tracks east of town and has gotten local residents very concerned and wanting to take some action soon.
  9. **RECENT CONFERENCES/MEETINGS/EVENTS.** Verhoeff discussed recent conferences including the River Management Society (RMS) in Portland, ME.
  10. **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**
    - a. **Next LPRCA Meeting – October 2008 [ACTION].** The next meeting will be Oct 7<sup>th</sup> at the NE Dept of Natural Resources office in downtown Lincoln. Starting at 9 am.
    - b. **Others.** No other items were discussed.
  11. **OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST – PUBLIC COMMENT.** There was no public comment
  12. **ADJOURN .** The meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.
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### NOTES

- **Location** – The NE Papio-Missouri River NRD is located at 8901 S. 154<sup>th</sup> Street in Omaha in the Natural Resources Center at Chalco Hills Recreation Area. Call (402) 444-6222 for directions.
- **To be removed / added from our mailing or e-mailing list,** please contact the LPRCA at (402) 476-2729 or via e-mail at [verhoeff@lpsnrd.org](mailto:verhoeff@lpsnrd.org).
- **Meeting information (past and present)** can be found at [www.lowerplatte.org/meetings.html](http://www.lowerplatte.org/meetings.html).