



Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

Meghan Sittler, Coordinator

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 28, 2009 *9:30 a.m.

Location – Lower Platte South NRD

3125 Portia Street * Lincoln, NE * (402) 476-2729

1. **CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS.** Meghan Sittler, LPRCA Coordinator, called the quarterly meeting of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) to order at 9:35 a.m. 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-mail list, mailing list, and press releases sent to area newspapers.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA.** No changes were made to the agenda and it was adopted as presented.
4. **APPROVAL OF LOWER PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR ALLIANCE (LPRCA) MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 20, 2009 MEETING.** No modifications were made to the January 20th, 2009 minutes. Minutes were approved via general consensus.
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. **FY 10 LPRCA Budget – Update (Meghan Sittler, LPRCA)** Members of the Alliance discussed the status of the LPRCA FY2010 budget. Meghan Sittler mentioned budgeted items such as: the Natural Amenities Tour, WQ Open, Airboat Tour, WQ Monitoring Network, ESA, CIS, and the Public Opinion Survey. It was mentioned that Meghan should have a discussion with Herb Angel from NG&PC about the specifics for the funding of the River Obstruction Removal Program. Furthermore, it was stated that the Phase III of the CIS project should have a clear-cut vision and well-defined goals and products in order to gain the full support of the project partners. The LPRCA budget was approved by consensus subject to approval by each funding agency.
 - b. **LPRCA Long Range Implementation Plan & LPRCA Member Retreat—Meghan Sittler, LPRCA** Meghan Sittler commented that the implementation plan should cover at least a 3 year time period because most LPRCA projects span that time length. In addition, Meghan Sittler proposed a member retreat in July/August 2009 to facilitate further discussion on the matter. A date of July 28th, 2009 was identified by consensus. One member suggested that the retreat be held at Camp Ashland because the meeting space would be free of charge; another suggestion was to hold the retreat at the UNL ARD conference room. Meghan will work with the members to arrange the details for the retreat.
6. **UNL Environmental Studies Student Presentation on Public Access in the LPR Corridor—Presentation (Jessica Shortino, Kim Tomczak, Elyse Watson, UNL)**

A team of students from UNL gave a presentation which examined public access on the LPR from Fremont to the confluence with the Missouri River. Along with a look at the current public access points on that stretch of the river, they also identified strategies implemented by other states around the nation to enhance public access to rivers. The presentation is available on the LPRCA web site.

A discussion between LPRCA members followed the presentation and was focused on identifying potential new public access sites as well as improving some of the existing access points including the Schilling Wildlife Management Area take out. The highway 6 bridge near Ashland was discussed as a potential new

public access site. Maintenance was identified as a consistent problem dealing with many public access points. A suggestion was made to work with neighboring communities to utilize community service programs such as those required by many high schools and other programs to assist with the maintenance efforts. The Hormel Park access point near Fremont is an example where LPNNRD has agreed to do the large-scale maintenance with the city of Fremont maintaining the site on a day-to-day basis. Additionally, a comment was made by an audience member to work to consolidate the public access points and recreational opportunities into a single information point to help the public more easily identify public access points and recreational opportunities.

7. LPRCA PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

a. Project Updates, General Activities, & Involvement

- i. **Environmental Suitability Assessment**— The Needs Assessment portion of the ESA project has been completed. HDR has provided the LPRCA with a draft of the Phase III report and the report associated with the Land-use Suitability Analysis model. Meghan is currently reviewing those reports and will provide comment to HDR over the next week or so. Additionally, a Technical Review Committee is being formed to assist the LPRCA and HDR in weighting the factors associated with the Land Suitability Analysis.
- ii. **Water Quality Monitoring Network - Update (USGS)**. Dave Rus (USGS) provided an update on the results of the most recent phase of the WQMN work. He also provided a brief introduction into some possible extensions and next steps to expand the established monitoring. He provided an example from Kansas as a way to illustrate this point.
- iii. **River Obstruction Program – Update (Meghan Sittler, LPRCA)**. Several questions were raised as to the feasibility of construction equipment access the focus area at Two River SRA. There were also questions relating to Section 404 permitting in light of the fact that causeways are no longer allowed to be built in the river. Discussions will continue as we get closer to implementing the design and permitting portion of the program.
- iv. **Cumulative Impact Study (CIS) – Phase III Discussion (LPRCA Members)**. There was a discussion about working with the Corps of Engineers on a proposed Phase III of the CIS project. There is \$167,000 appropriated within the FY2009 federal budget for Phase III. The federal appropriation requires a 50% cost share from the local partners in the form of either cash or in-kind time or services. Defining a clear goal and outcome of the proposed Phase III was again mentioned. Setting a meeting in mid-May with the COE to identify if that goal can be reach was discussed.
- v. **Invasive Species Efforts** – Glenn Johnson reported that the Unicameral is forwarding legislation to extend the Riparian Vegetation Task Force for four more years with funding at \$2 million per year. The Lower Platte River is not eligible for funding under that authorization because money from that task force is only able to be distributed to efforts in basins that are fully- or over-appropriated.
- vi. **Public Opinion Survey – Meghan Sittler, LPRCA**. After the public opinion survey was preliminarily described, one member suggested formulating a list of proposed questions/rankings and circulating it to the group for review and comment. Meghan Sittler will be circulating the list for input from LPRCA members over the next several weeks.

b. Education, Information, & Outreach Projects / Events / Meetings/ Activities.

- i. **Coffee Shop Meeting – Update** Ryan Bjerke (LPRCA) provided an update of the 2009 LPRCA Coffee Shop Meetings. It was stated that a meeting in Ashland on May 12th, 2009 had been scheduled, and a date for a future meeting in Gretna was under discussion. Furthermore, it was also noted that Dave Sands from the Nebraska Land Trust (NLT) will be presenting a talk about their organization's work with conservation easements within the Corridor. Lastly, it was mentioned that the LPRCA was in the process of collaborating with Frank Albrecht from NG&PC to line up additional presenters for the Gretna meeting.
- ii. **Airboat Tour – Update** Ryan Bjerke (LPRCA) provided an update on the planning efforts for the 2009 Airboat Tour, which will be held on Thursday, July 16, 2009. This year's tour will follow the route between Fremont and North Bend that was set for last year's tour, which was cancelled because of inclement weather and high river flows. The LPRCA has been in contact with Tim Bryson of Bryson's Airboat Tours and Matt Shaw of the NE Airboaters Association to line up drivers

and stops for presentations, discussion and lunch. More information on the presenters for the day will be made available as soon as possible. Registration for the tour will be available on-line as well as through the mail.

- iii. **River Kiosks – “8 Reasons”** One member suggested adding “hunting” to the list of 8 reasons to protect the LPR by combining it with the existing “fishing” reason. A discussion of photographs which could represent this idea then followed. It was agreed by consensus that the “Fishing” reason will be changed to “Hunting and Fishing”.
 - iv. **WQ Open Golf Tournament – Update** Meghan Sittler provided a progress update for this year’s WQ Open. She stated that a 3 year agreement had been signed between NEBCO and the LPRCA to continue to hold the tournament at Quarry Oaks in Ashland. She also noted that a “save the date” card had recently been mailed out to inform past participants of the tournament date of Thursday, September 3rd, 2009. On-line registration should also be available for this event this year as well.
- c. **WRDA-Authorized COE Projects & WRDA**
- i. **W. Sarpy/Clear Creek – Camp Ashland (P-MRNRD / NE Military Dept).** Progress continues on the construction of the WS-CC levee. LPNNRD is currently working to identify the land rights and any needed easements to continue construction on the Sarpy County side of the Platte River. The project will receive \$9.3 million over the next two years from the federal stimulus legislation. The stimulus funding should allow the project to be fully completed within that timeframe.
 - ii. **Sand Creek (LPNNRD).** Mike Murren (LPNNRD) reported that approximately 1/3 of the soil has been moved, the box culvert has been started, and the sediment traps have been finished.
 - iii. **Antelope Valley (LPSNRD).** The low-flow channel construction was discussed. The weir is 80 % complete, and the pouring of concrete will begin soon. Progress also continues on the detail work on the Union Plaza. Finally, the state auditor has requested that the Joint Antelope Valley Authority participate in a state audit.
 - iv. **205 Studies (LPNNRD).** There has been a modification and expansion to the Fremont component. A June 2 public information meeting has been set for the Schuyler study and progress continues on developing a formal proposal. There has been considerable public involvement throughout the study. Finally, the Nebraska Department of Roads will now be a partner in the projects as well.
 - v. **LPR Watershed Authority Updates.** We continue to work with the COE and the Congressional delegation on appropriations under the WRDA 2007 authorization of \$12 million. We have forwarded a request for \$2 million in FY2010 to begin watershed planning with the COE and other federal, state, and local partners.

8. **UPCOMING CONFERENCES/MEETINGS/EVENTS**

- a. **Next LPRCA Meeting** – The next meeting will be August 20th, 2009 at the Lower Platte North NRD in Wahoo. Starting at 9:30 am. A tour of Lake Wanhoo will follow.
- b. UNL Water Law, Policy & Science Conference: April 29-30 Embassy Suites, Lincoln
- c. P-MRND “Water Works”—Tuesday, May 5; Schramm Park
- d. LPNNRD, “Spring Conservation Sensation”—Wednesday, May 6, Czechland Lake
- e. Ashland Coffee Shop Meeting—Tuesday May 12, 8:30-9:30 a.m. @ Cherri-O’s Coffee Shop
- f. UNL Global Water Institute “Future of Water for Food” Conference—May 4, UNL Hardin Hall
- g. UNL Water Tour June 14-19, California
- h. LPRCA Air Boat Tour: Thursday, July 16 (*tentative*)
- i. LPRCA Water Quality Open: Thursday, September 3, Quarry Oaks Golf Club
- j. Upcoming NRD Board Meetings
 - i. Lower Platte South NRD – May 20, 2009 * 7 p.m. * 3125 Portia Street – Lincoln, NE. Go to: <http://www.lpsnrd.org> for more information or call (402)-476-2729
 - ii. Lower Platte North NRD – May 11, 2009 * 7:00 p.m. * 511 Commercial Road – Wahoo, NE. Go to: <http://www.lpnrd.org> for more information or call (402) 443-4675
 - iii. Papio-Missouri River NRD – May 14, 2009 * 8:00 p.m. * Natural Resources Center at 8901 S 154th Street – Omaha, NE. Go to: <http://www.papionrd.org> for more info or call (402)-444-6222.

9. **OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST – PUBLIC COMMENT.** There was no public comment

10. **ADJOURN** . The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:45 a.m.

NOTES

- **Location** – The Lower Platte South NRD is located at 3125 Portia Street in Lincoln (near 14th and Adams behind white fire station). Go to <http://www.lpsnrd.org/graphics/Maps/NRDOffice.jpg> for a map to the office or call (402) 444-6222 for driving 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 msittler@lpsnrd.org.
- **Meeting information (past and present)** can be found at www.lowerplatte.org/meetings.html.