



# Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

*Meghan Sittler, Coordinator*

## MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 21, 2010 9:30 a.m.

Location – Lower Platte South NRD

3125 Portia St, Lincoln, NE 68501

1. **CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS.** Meghan Sittler, LPRCA Coordinator, called the quarterly meeting of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) to order at 9:34 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 30 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 OCTOBER 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2009 MEETING.** No modifications were made to the October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009 minutes. Minutes were approved via general consensus.
5. **LPRCA MEMBERSHIP/DUES UPDATE**—Meghan Sittler reported that all members that were able to pay dues for FY2010 had paid with the only exception being UNL. Meghan also introduced Rachael Herpel of the UNL Water Center as a new Alliance member representing the UNL C&SD and Water Center.
6. **Nebraska Land Trust – Dave Sands—Agenda item rescheduled for April 2010 LPRCA Quarterly Meeting**
  - a. *Update on Lower Platte River Work*
  - b. *Strategic Planning Outcomes*
7. **Cumulative Impact Study (CIS) –Phase III**

Meghan Sittler and Jeff Greenwald (USACE) provided an update on the progress of the scoping of Phase III of the CIS.

  - a. In-kind accounting: Meghan Sittler is continuing to work with LPRCA members on the in-kind accounting.
  - b. Conceptual model: Jeff Greenwald of the USACE discussed the upcoming conceptual modeling workshop to be in an effort to move forward with Phase III of the CIS. He stated that the model could be used to guide future research and adaptive management strategies. Additionally, Meghan remarked that representatives of HDR would be in charge of facilitating the meeting.
8. **LiDAR Proposal for the Lower Platte River** – Meghan mentioned that USGS has \$30,000 to contribute to LiDAR collection for 399 square miles of the Lower Platte River Corridor. The remaining sum of \$22,000 would need to be covered by the three NRD's or other funds. Meghan will be working with USGS, NIROC and each NRD to develop a proposal to have the LiDAR imagery collected.
9. **Environmental Suitability Assessment (ESA)**—Matt Pillard (HDR) provided an update on the ESA project and the Land Suitability Analysis component of the ESA. Matt related that various elements and factors of the LSA model were discussed at a December meeting, while ways to implement and move forward would be the focus of a February meeting. He also noted that ESA geodatabase information was continuing to be transitioned to the MapMaker website. Furthermore, he stated that shape files that were being refined and digitized would be a

continued focus. He also talked about the effort to “brand” LPRCA-related publications and events by creating a suite of tools and an overall outreach plan. Lastly, he said three public meetings would be held sometime during May and June of this year to increase awareness of the LPRCA’s mission, programs, and activities.

10. **Water Quality Monitoring Network – 2009 Season Recap** Dave Rus provided a discussion of the outcomes of the 2009 monitoring season. He stated that 3 complete seasons of data had been collected to this point. He also queried the group to ascertain whether they felt additional samples should be collected or if the site should be shifted somewhere other than Salt Creek at Ashland. Moreover, large group questioning continued when he sought opinions on what water quality constituents should be considered a priority in terms of monitoring efforts. After a brief discussion, E. coli, atrazine, suspended sediment, and nitrates were all suggested as potential constituents.
11. **Fremont Lake #20 – Update** Paul Brakhage of NDEQ presented a summary of the work at Fremont Lake #20. First, he provided an extensive background/history of the project. Paul Brakhage with NDEQ provided the group with an update on the Fremont Lake #20 Alum Treatment Project. Initial monitoring conducted on this lake identified high concentrations of the microcystin toxin produced by blue green algae. These high concentrations resulted in the beach being closed for 36 weeks from 2004 through 2007. In April 2007 the NGPC applied rotenone to the lake to renovate the fishery. In October of 2007 alum was applied to the lake. Post treatment monitoring documented an increase in water clarity from 12 to 71 inches, an 83 percent decrease in phosphorus, an 89 percent decrease in algae density, and a 99 percent decrease in algal toxins. No toxin samples have exceeded the beach posting criteria since the lake was treated. Total cost of the treatment was \$140,466. A majority of these costs were funded through the Nebraska Environmental Trust. He also noted that literature reviews suggested that it may have been the first time aluminum sulfate had been utilized to reduce microcystin in a sandpit lake.
12. **Invasive Species Efforts** –Russ Schultz and Mike Reed provided an update on the Lower Platte Weed Management Area efforts. Initially, Mike commented on the major progress that had been made in chemically treating stands of phragmites in and along the river using both helicopter and airboat methods. Additionally, he stressed the need to be proactive in future monitoring and control efforts. Finally, he discussed the coordination and agreements made between the three Alliance NRD’s, NGPC, Ducks Unlimited, and local landowners in an effort to mitigate and minimize the future spread of phragmites.
13. **Ice Jam Preparedness** –Marlin Petermann (P-MRNRD) provided an update on monitoring efforts of ice thickness and flood potential. Thicknesses are ranging from 13 inches to 18 inches at various points throughout the lower Platte with an average thickness being close to 16 inches. Some gradual melting has been occurring with some places now having water flowing over the ice. They are continuing to monitor the thickness and will continue to assess whether ash application will be necessary over the next several weeks. Will Myers provided an overview of the NEMA permit required for the ash application and distributed examples to interested LPRCA members.
14. **WRDA-Authorized COE Projects & WRDA**
  - i. **W. Sarpy/Clear Creek – Camp Ashland (P-MRNRD / NE Military Dept)** – Currently, there are 4 segments of the Western Sarpy/Clear Creek levee in either design stages or active construction including construction of conservation measures to offset any impact of construction on fish and wildlife habitat. Segment 1 construction was completed during 2009 with final inspection completed in December. Segment 1 included construction both on and near Camp Ashland. The only remaining concern is the installation of temporary flood prevention measures between the Guard Camp and the Burlington Northern Rail line. This will only be necessary primarily in preparation for potential ice jams. Formal levee construction could not be completed as it could potentially exacerbate flooding from Salt Creek during large scale precipitation events. Segment 2 (Pflug Road to Jansen Sandpit—Western Sarpy Side; Guard Camp to south end of Thomas Lakes—Clear Creek side) is near completion. Remaining finishing work (i.e. fine grading and seeding) will be completed during Spring/Summer 2010. Segment 3 (Western Sarpy—Fairview Road to Lincoln Road) is in the pre-construction phase. Anderson Excavation was selected as the contractor for this segment and met with the Corps of Engineers on January 12.

The contractor expects to begin clearing trees and other preparation work as early as March 1<sup>st</sup>—weather dependent. This is the majority of the Western Sarpy levee and should be completed within 2 years from the beginning of construction.

Segment 4 (Clear Creek—north of Thomas Lakes) LPNNRD has contracted with both JEO and EA consultants to prepare legal descriptions for the right of way for levee construction. Currently 4.5 miles of the right of way has been prepared. LPNNRD is hoping to begin negotiations to acquire the necessary right of way in late February or early March following the appraisal process.

The conservation measure portion of the construction for the Western Sarpy side will be submitted for bid over the next several weeks. Once the contract is awarded and construction begins it is estimated that it will take a year to complete all conservation measures on the Western Sarpy side. Measures to be completed include: construction of the Platte to Elkhorn chute, grassland and food plot plantings at Vencil's Island; opening Jansen Pit area to the Platte River and wet meadow construction.

- ii. **Antelope Valley (LPSNRD).** The flood control portion of Antelope Valley should be completed on January 27. They are currently preparing a Letter of Map Revision to be submitted to FEMA in the next week or two.
- iii. **Sand Creek (LPNNRD).** The earth work has been completed for Lake Wanhoo. The relief system—concrete and labyrinth need to be completed and that is anticipated to take 1 month to complete. The Corps of Engineers is working on the recreation design and will need to have completed for bid by October 1, 2010.
- iv. **205 Studies (LPNNRD).** LPNNRD is currently working with FEMA and the Corps on revisions based on new levee criteria that has been adopted following hurricane Katrina.
- v. **LPR Watershed Authority Updates.** Meghan Sittler and Glenn Johnson met with members of Senator Nelson's staff in early January. They are continuing to work with them on including an appropriation for the Watershed Authority in the 2011 budget.

15. **Member Updates/Current Efforts – None**

16. **Special Presentation—“Social Networking in the Natural Resources Arena”— Scott Bonertz, Public Information Manager, NGPC**

Scott gave an informative presentation illustrating how social networking media could be utilized to expand participation in natural resource-based decisions and activities and better engage and educate the general public. His main focus was on networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, but he also briefly discussed the positive benefits of internet blogs.

17. **OTHER BUSINESS –**

18. **PUBLIC COMMENT –**

19. **UPCOMING CONFERENCES/MEETINGS/EVENTS**

- a. **Next LPRCA Meeting –** The next meeting will be April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 at the LPSNRD in Lincoln starting at 9:30 am.
- b. **Upcoming NRD Board Meetings**
  - i. Lower Platte North NRD—February 8, 2010 \* 5:30 p.m. 511 Commercial Road – Wahoo, NE. Go to: <http://www.lpnnrd.org> for more information or call (402) 443-4675
  - ii. Papio-Missouri River NRD – February 11, 2010 \* 7:00 p.m. \* Natural Resources Center at 8901 S 154<sup>th</sup> Street – Omaha, NE. Go to: <http://www.papionrd.org> for more info or call (402)-444-6222.
  - iii. Lower Platte South NRD – February 17, 2010 \* 2:00 p.m. \* 3125 Portia Street – Lincoln, NE. Go to: <http://www.lpsnrd.org> for more information or call (402)-476-2729

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

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**NOTES**

- **Location** – The Lower Platte South NRD is located at 3125 Portia Street in Lincoln (near 14<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:msittler@lpsnrd.org).
- **Meeting information (past and present)** can be found at [www.lowerplatte.org/meetings.html](http://www.lowerplatte.org/meetings.html).