



Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

Meghan Sittler, Coordinator

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 22, 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 9:33 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. Meghan recognized and thanked Ryan Bjerke who has interned for over 2 years while working on his Master's degree; he graduated and accepted a position in South Dakota. She also introduced Sara McClure, a Master's of Public Administration student at UNO who is also interning, and Anthony Marshall, a graduate student at the University of Denver who will be interning this summer starting in June. Larry Vrtiska was acknowledged as having received National Environmental Leadership award from the Army National Guard.
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 21, 2010 MEETING.** No modifications were made to the January 21, 2010 minutes. Minutes were approved via general consensus.
5. **NEBRASKA LAND TRUST – DAVE SANDS -**
 - a. **Update on Lower Platte River Work**

The Nebraska Land Trust will be seeking conservation easements in another focus area, similar to the Schramm Park effort of a couple of years ago. This new area of concentration is around the Bluffs area of the Lower Platte specifically in 4 areas: Mahoney, Louisville/Platte River State Park, Cedar Creek and Sarpy/Camp Maha. The assets in this area that should be preserved include: water, oak/hickory forests, geology, farms, biodiversity, recreation, human history and the fact that it is scenic. Because it's more cost effective and better for the environment if large blocks of land are protected through easements, a concerted effort will be launched to contact stakeholders in these 4 areas and educate them about the process. A database of landowners will be created; they will be contacted; interested land owners will be visited; and assessment will be made of individual properties to see if they have the assets that the NLT wishes to preserve. If they get enough people interested, the NLT will approach the Nebraska Environmental Trust for a grant that will help purchase easements if a landowner wishes to have an easement but does not want to donate one.
6. **ENVIRONMENTAL SUITABILITY ANALYSIS**
 - a. **OUTREACH PLAN – PROPOSED TIMELINE & NEXT STEPS – THERESA BAKER, HDR**

Theresa talked about outreach, branding and layout, and the new tagline for the Alliance: *Lead Organize Inspire – the Voice of the Lower Platte*. The next steps include meeting with Partners, identifying target audience, outreach and networking opportunities. As well, promotional materials will be created and the Environmental Suitability Assessment will be shared with a target audience; there will be sharing of databases as well, such as with the Nebraska Land Trust. Before seminars are conducted surveys will be launched to determine content; the seminars will be promoted with our partners.

b. UPDATE ON PHASE III & LAND SUITABILITY ANALYSIS – MATT PILLARD, HDR

Land Suitability Analysis – The model is in its final revisions and the model will be begin to be deployed over the next several weeks. The model will be ground-truthed before all features are deployed.

ArcGIS update –the data layers from the ESA and LSA are currently being transferred to ArcGIS for input and display on the NRD MapMaker site.

7. CUMULATIVE IMPACT STUDY (CIS) –PHASE III

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

Scope of Work Phase III – USGS met with USACE at the end of March. The proposed scope of work includes sediment sampling, GIS cross-sections of the river, and sediment analysis. Jeff also discussed some funding issues. This shouldn't impact the work because we will be allowed to spend the Federal dollars before the rest is raised because there is a history of good relations. The USGS will be sampling for the sediment budget this summer and do a GIS analysis as well and by November 30th the USGS should have the work completed. The contract should be wrapped up by spring, but will need the rest of the sponsor funding to continue.

Finally, Jeff discussed progress on in-kind accounting for the approximately \$1 million that dates back to the 1994-95 projects that were rolled into the 15th Amendment to that agreement. This is the total amount needed from 1998- 2001. The Authorization name for the \$1 million project was the Lower Platte River Tributary Study.

8. WATER QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK 2010 SEASON – DAVE RUS, USGS

The Lower Platte South NRD Board approved a 3-year monitoring contract. Water quality data has been collected and published in the annual report. They have redeployed continuous monitors at Salt Creek near Ashland, the Platte River at Louisville and on the Elkhorn near Waterloo. The new agreement includes the following components: Collecting 9 samples (plus 1 additional QA/QC sample) per year at Salt Creek at Ashland. The samples would be analyzed for suspended sediment, e-coli, and nutrients including dissolved ammonia, dissolved nitrate/nitrite, dissolved phosphate, total phosphorous, and total kjedahl nitrogen.

- 1) Collect 9 samples (plus 1 additional QA/QC sample) per year at the Louisville and Waterloo gages. These samples would be analyzed for e-coli and suspended sediment. Existing sampling programs from the USGS and NDEQ will be leveraged at these two sites as well.
- 2) Continue continuously monitoring temperature, dissolved oxygen, specific conductance, and turbidity at the Louisville, Waterloo, and Ashland gage sites from April 1 to mid-September each season.

Project costs would be as follows

<u>Year</u>	<u>LPRCA (75%)</u>	<u>USGS (25%)</u>	<u>Total</u>
2010	\$67, 210	\$22,400	\$89,610
2011	\$69,230	\$23,070	\$92,300
2012	\$71, 300	\$23,770	\$95,070

USGS and LPNNRD entered into a separate agreement for Shell Creek. It is hoped that this will be included within this agreement beginning next year.

9. HORMEL PARK NATURE CENTER – JOHN SCHMITZ, FREMONT PARKS & REC

John Schmitz, director of Fremont Parks & Rec discussed the possibility of building a nature center at Hormel Park on the Platte. Hormel Park, at 168 acres has natural forest and river frontage. A year ago John said the city council and mayor were not interested in doing anything with the park. There is more interest now though. It used to be a high-use park but became run down and attractive to the wrong element. They are talking about changing the culture – closing off the park to vehicular traffic, cleaning up the debris in the area and create an ADA-suitable trail system that would connect to Fremont and the Fremont State Lakes Rec Area. Fremont has limited resources and in interested in collaborating with the LPRCA .

10. DAVIS PRAIRIE DATA SHACK – ALAN KOLOK, UNO Alan Kolok is a professor of Biology at UNO provided an overview of the Davis Prairie Data Shack currently being developed on the Elkhorn River land that was donated by T. L Davis to the University of Nebraska; it's located in SW Douglas County at approximately 245th and Q in Omaha. UNO uses that property for education and research. Randy Brown architects have designed a 200 sq.

foot data shack for water quality monitoring. It's a 3-season building that will double as a data collection site as well as the backdrop for the creation of videos that will be streamed and used for educational purposes, especially for high school and undergraduate learning. Grad students will be used and high school students will come out and create the curriculum and then teach their peers. This data shack will be a prototype and it can be reproduced elsewhere. The three phases cost \$120,000. Phase I is architectural drawings. Phase II is the groundbreaking and construction which will occur in early June, 2010. Phase III is implementing the electronic capabilities so educational outreach can be conducted. Contributions in hand: Papio NRD \$60,000; NU Foundation \$10,000; UNO \$20,000. Alan is still seeking \$30,000 through grants and potential partnerships.

It was suggested that Alan coordinate with Dave Rus and DEQ on the types of data that is collected. There were questions about the actual structure itself – specifically about where sanitary facilities would be sited (there will be none) and a caution about flooding – that even building above the 100 year flood mark may not be enough for that specific spot.

11. PLANNED OR PROPOSED OUTREACH EVENTS – MEGHAN SITTLER

- a. **AIRBOAT TOURS** – due to ongoing concerns about liability issues and the fact that we cannot get insurance for airboat tour events, these have been taken off the schedule for the foreseeable future.
- b. **CANOE-KAYAK TOURS** – it was suggested that canoe and/or kayak tours be offered instead of airboat tours. NGPC is providing staff support and boats for the event. The group asked Meghan to move on it as they did not want to miss another year's opportunity to get folks onto the river.
- c. **WATER QUALITY OPEN** – The date is Thursday, September 2nd at Quarry Oaks
- d. **COFFEE SHOP MEETINGS** – The 1st of the year was held in April in Louisville and another will be scheduled in Gretna in May. We will take a break in the summer.
- e. **SUMMIT** – The summit has been scheduled for Thursday, October 21st at Mahoney State Park. We are proposing a slight itinerary change from previous years. The morning will have a plenary session, a panel discussion and information about Alliance efforts. There will be tours with box lunches in the afternoon, with a return to Mahoney for a reception and wrap up. The focus this year is preserving private lands and private land owners will be specifically encouraged to attend.

12. **INVASIVE SPECIES EFFORTS** – Russ Schultz provided an update on the Lower Platte Weed Management Area efforts. Russ talked about the threat from Japanese Knotweed which is a world-wide problem. It's been found east of Nebraska and Russ feels it needs to be classified as a noxious weed. Efforts include stopping the sale of ornamental varieties and to eradicate it.

13. **ICE JAM PHOTOS** – Marlin Petermann (P-MRNRD) showed photos of the ice on the lower Platte last March, and showed photos of where the ice was dusted with ash. They were pleased to see that the ice, in fact, did melt faster in the dusted locations and helped with the break up. Ice that was over 3-feet thick one week broke up the next with minimal flooding. Glenn Johnson thanked Marlin for monitoring the situation while he and other staffers were in Washington, D.C. for scheduled meetings.

14. WRDA-AUTHORIZED PROJECT UPDATES (POSTPONED)

- a. **ANTELOPE VALLEY (LPSNRD).**
- b. **SAND CREEK (LPNNRD).**
- c. **FREMONT & SCHUYLER 205 (LPNNRD).**
- d. **WESTERN SARPY CLEAR CREEK**
- e. **LPR WATERSHED AUTHORITY UPDATES**

15. OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL – TRAVIS FIGARD, OLSSON ASSOCIATES

Travis reviewed a timeline for obstruction removal. From April 28th-30th they plan to survey concrete piers and survey access routes as well as conduct site reconnaissance for environmental permitting. They hope to have the entire design and permitting phase completed during fall or early winter of this year depending on the type of permit that is determined to be required.

16. DISCUSSION OF FY2011 DRAFT BUDGET [ACTION]

Meghan passed out a draft budget. One small error was noted – that the conceptual modeling workshops total \$4,000 not \$8,000. This draft was approved by consensus with the correction. Meghan outlined the schedule for the partner meetings at which the budget will be approved. Meghan also presented a draft Long Range Plan for the LPRCA and will be seeking input from the members.

17. MEMBER UPDATES/CURRENT EFFORTS (POSTPONED)

18. OTHER BUSINESS (POSTPONED)

18. PUBLIC COMMENT (POSTPONED)

19. NEXT MEETING DATE [ACTION]

Meghan will circulate the date for the next meeting.

20. ADJOURN . The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:14 p.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/NRDOOffice.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.