



**Lower Platte River  
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE**

**LEAD. ORGANIZE. INSPIRE.**  
The voice of the Lower Platte.

MEETING MINUTES

**Wednesday, April 20th, 2011 9:30 a.m.**

**Location – Nebraska Game and Parks Commission  
2200 N 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE**

1. **CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS:** The meeting was called to order at 9:36am by Meghan Sittler. Introductions were made at this time.
2. **PROOF OF LEGAL NOTICE/PUBLICATION:** Meeting notice was published April 13th, 2011 in the *Omaha World Herald*.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** The agenda was approved by consensus.
4. **APPROVAL OF LPRCA MINUTES FROM JANUARY 18TH, 2011 MEETING:** The minutes were approved by consensus.
5. **SPECIAL PRESENTATION: JOEL JORGENSEN, NGPC “TERN AND PLOVER MONITORING UPDATE”**  
Joel Jorgensen provided an update of the on-going tern and plover research being conducted along the Lower Platte River. He focused on terns for the presentation. Terns have two main habitats within the Platte River, consisting of mid-channel sandbars and sand/gravel mines along the river bank. Because the lower Platte River is very dynamic compared to the Central Platte and Missouri Rivers, the management and conservation decisions made, could have positive or negative consequences. The main concept of Joel's discussion was that the lower Platte River needs periodic high flows to produce clean sandbars for tern and plover habitat. How often is periodic and how much flow is considered high? According to Parham's Model, good sandbar habitat needs a periodic bank-full flow of 38,170cfs. This model was reflected in the research gathered in 2008 and 2009. In 2008 there was a high flow exceeding 38,170cfs. This was followed by huge sandbars in 2009 and very high numbers of nest sites. Researchers are also looking at nest survival and chick survival. For chick survival they are using the mark-recapture technique. Data showed a good tern productivity response to high-flow events. Using this information, researchers can try to predict nest numbers and success. In 2010 there was a very high flow, so with large sandbars 2011 may be a successful tern and plover year. Following the presentation, questions arose involving Lake McConaughy water releases, ice-jam impact on sandbar construction, food availability for shore-birds, problems with basing bird success while only looking at the regional scale and the accuracy of Parham's Model.
6. **WATER QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK**  
Dave Rus of the USGS provided a season review and outlook, as well as, discussed the approved NET grant. Last year, four sites were monitored in the corridor. These included Shell Creek near Columbus, Elkhorn River at Waterloo, Salt Creek near Ashland and the Platte River at Louisville. One sample that stood out was from the Elkhorn site on June 9<sup>th</sup>, because above-standard levels of E-coli were found.

Reports from the collected data are available on the National Water Information System website. The sampled water quality sites are also available online. Much like how you can look up real-time stream flow, the goal of the WQMN is to have water quality variables available real-time. For example, online viewers could locate E-coli levels in their local creek. Recently, a proposed NET grant was approved for \$164,000. This is no burden to the LPRCA budget. The grant will be applied to continued monitoring and correlation of a statistical model to the monitoring, in order to make the real-time predictions.

#### **7. PROPOSED 319 GRANT TO INVESTIGATE SEPTIC TANK LOCATIONS & ISSUES**

Pat O'Brien of NDEQ and Meghan Sittler, coordinator, met two weeks prior to the meeting with UNL CALMIT personnel to discuss using remote-sensing data to identify septic tank locations. UNL is willing to incorporate this data collection along with their flights. The areas of interest are near old cabins east of Hwy75 by Fremont, and west of Hwy77 near the Fremont Lakes. The remote-sensing technology used, shows vegetation and thermals within a 2 degree margin. Septic tanks would be identified by more vegetation and heat plumes in the water. The key to the 319 grant proposal is that it is strictly for education and water quality. Not enforcement. A few members were leery of a possible violation should enforcement arise. It is clear that the intent for data collection would be for water quality issues, could be used as ground-truthing for the Environmental Suitability Analysis project, as well as, other future research. LPRCA members came to the agreement to go ahead with the next step of the grant proposal and report the costs at the next meeting.

#### **8. FY2012 LPRCA PROPOSED BUDGET**

Meghan Sittler, coordinator, provided copies of the proposed budget and gave a brief overview of each item. UNL has not paid their dues yet, so Meghan is working with Rachael Herpel. One key item of discussion was the River-Obstruction-Removal project. Due to increase in costs and loss of Coast Guard funding, the listed value is only for one phase of the project. There is no other potential for cost-share. Over-all, the individual NRD budgets are similar to last year due to an increase in grants this year. Meghan will adjust the necessary items and present the budget again in a few weeks to each NRD board. The FY2012 LPRCA proposed budget was approved by consensus.

#### **9. LPRCA KIOSKS**

Meghan Sittler, coordinator, passed around a sample poster to be inserted in the kiosks. She also showed a short PowerPoint of the recent installation of two kiosk structures placed at Platte River State Park and Mahoney State Park. It has taken a long-time for this project to be almost accomplished so everyone was pleased with the progress. The posters are designed for easy changes in the future. John Miyoshi requested a copy of the poster and PowerPoint via email.

#### **10. LPRCA KAYAK TOUR**

Meghan Sittler, coordinator, noted that save-the-date postcards were mailed for the upcoming LPRCA kayak tour. The tour is going to be held July 19<sup>th</sup>, but the route is uncertain at this time. It could be the same route as last year, but there is the option of putting-in at Hormel Park and taking-out at Platte River Landing. Meghan hopes to scout a route within the next few weeks.

#### **11. CUMULATIVE IMPACT STUDY & CONCEPTUAL MODEL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

Jeff Greenwald provided an update of the Conceptual Model Development. He recently met with USACE personnel to create a predictive template for geomorphology and hydrology using historic and current data. Data would expand to include water quality and species inventory from related studies. Jeff stated that last

year the USACE collected sediment samples in the Platte River from Columbus to Plattsmouth. Initially, they were hoping to award the contract in-house, but due to funding restraints and being behind in planning, they may have to wait until fall. There were no objections to waiting.

## **12. RIVER OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL PROJECT AT TWO RIVERS STATE RECREATION AREA- PROJECT STATUS & FUTURE**

Meghan Sittler, coordinator, provided an update on issues dealing with the causeways. Olsson Associates (OA) has to prove that construction of the causeways would be in compliance with nine points listed under the 404 permit. The time constraint is 6-8 weeks, so hopefully officials will notice that causeway construction is a relatively quick process. OA plans have not been passed to the Corps as of yet, because the NRD's need to approve a review of the construction process first. Meghan and John Snowden met prior to the meeting to discuss future plans and decided to hold off meeting with the Federal agencies until OA reviews the nine points for use of a causeway under Special Condition 9 of the 404 permit.

## **13. ENVIRONMENTAL SUITABILITY ANALYSIS- ARCGIS VIEWER & LAND SUITABILITY ANALYSIS**

Matt Pillard from HDR provided an update on the ArcGIS Viewer and LSA. He said they are in the final 5% of the ESA and the only piece left on the report is the LSA appendix. A meeting was held in February to make changes to the model based on errors found in the field analysis. The corrections and reason for changes need to be written in the report. On the ArcGIS Viewer, modifications of text, CIS and other research links, and LiDAR aerial information will need to be reviewed by Meghan. Projected time of completion is May, which will be followed by real-life scenario experiments to confirm the program's accuracy.

## **14. USGS SANDBAR MONITORING PILOT STUDY**

Jason Alexander of the USGS provided an update of the Sandbar Monitoring pilot study. He received a cooperative agreement from the LPSNRD on April 4<sup>th</sup>. During the first week of April, two supplemental stream gauges were installed; one on the Lied Bridge, the other on the Hwy 75 bridge. On April 14<sup>th</sup>, two remote cameras were deployed on the Platte River SP tower and two were deployed on Lied Bridge. Between April 6<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, the first of three projected sandbar surveys between Salt Creek and river mile 4 was conducted. Sampling involved measuring the height and area of 26 sandbars over 2 acres in size, 4 QA/QC measurements of sandbar height and area, recording area and location of 48 sandbars less than 2 acres in size, and measuring the height of high banks at 18 locations. The project timeline is: April/May conduct the pre-high-flow survey; June/July conduct the post-high-flow survey and submit a NET proposal; fall/winter compile the full dataset once the pre-ice survey is collected; winter 2011 write and review an OFR and hopefully publish OFR in spring 2012.

## **15. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA WATER FOR FOOD CONFERENCE**

Rachael Herpel of UNL, announced the Water for Food Conference will be held May 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Registration is open and available online. Speakers from over twenty different countries are scheduled to present. The event will focus on industry, water resource use, aquifer characterization, water quality and more. There will also be a panel discussion. Information about the event is online, and UNL wants to encourage other universities to become involved.

## **16. UNL OLLI COURSE: "UNDERSTANDING THE LOWER PLATTE RIVER"**

Bob Kuzelka of UNL, announced his upcoming tour event entitled, "Understanding the Lower Platte River". The two-day tour of the lower Platte is being held May 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The tour is a compliment to his

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) #407 course, however people of all ages are attending. He is excited to educate students about hydropower while attending the Loup River hydro-power system. He thanked the Alliance for being a co-sponsor of the tour. Information is on the LPRCA website, as well as a link to the formal brochure.

#### **17. WINTER 2010-2011 ICE REPORT**

Marlin Petermann gave a report of Platte River ice jams that occurred during the month of February, and provided a hand-out of photos that corresponded to his PowerPoint. Ice jams that caused concern were near Camp Ashland, Cedar Creek, the Lied Bridge, Willow Point housing development, the Fremont area and the confluence of the Platte and Elkhorn Rivers. Although the ice jams caused minor flooding there were no major problems this spring. Marlin said it was rare to have ice jams downstream of the Lied Bridge, and one of his photos showed a chunk of ice measuring 30 inches thick.

#### **18. WRDA AUTHORIZED PROJECT UPDATES**

- a. Antelope Valley: Glenn Johnson had no report for the Antelope Valley Project.
- b. Sand Creek: The structure is currently closed. Construction of the recreation features is in process and is expected to be complete by September.
- c. Fremont and Schuyler 205: Currently the Corps is trying to evaluate alternatives around Hwy 30 and for the ring levee around town Fremont. The Corp. is evaluating the cost-benefit analysis and the 205 project could be one of the greatest plans in the nation. Dollar amounts will be discussed at meetings this spring.
- d. Western Sarpy Clear Creek: Marlin Petermann said the project is mid-construction. The area south of Thomas Lake is done for the most part. The Sarpy side in segment 5 is awaiting funding from Congress. The Jansen section conservation chutes are almost done. Segment 2 portion is done except for the turn-around area. Friday (22<sup>nd</sup>) they are having a meeting to discuss slough skates on west side of Sarpy and to go over the guides. Larry Vrtiska reported Lincoln Water had placed water on the wrong side of the weir, which delayed work by TCW. He also mentioned that work on the Camp Ashland levee tie-off was at a halt until May due to weather. County road A will be shut down in July and projected completion is set for August-October.
- e. Lower Platte River Watershed Authority: Meghan reported the plan to continue working with the Corps to use the existing authority to transition into the Watershed Program.

#### **19. OTHER BUSINESS**

Meghan mentioned that her intern, Heidi, has been posting links to current news articles relating to the Alliance on the LPRCA website.

#### **20. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None made

#### **21. NEXT MEETING DATE**

By consensus the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. at the LPSNRD office.

#### **22. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Heidi Christensen, LPRCA Intern