



Lower Platte River
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

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QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 16th, 2011 9:30 a.m.

Location: Lower Platte South NRD

3125 Portia Street, Lincoln, NE

Conference Room

NOTE: A Tour of Antelope Valley followed the regular business meeting

1. **CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS:** The meeting was called to order at 9:38am by Meghan Sittler. Introductions were made at this time.
2. **PROOF OF LEGAL NOTICE/PUBLICATION:** Meeting notice was published August 11th, 2011 in the *Omaha World Herald*.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** The agenda was approved by consensus.
4. **APPROVAL OF LPRCA MINUTES FROM APRIL 20TH, 2011 MEETING:** The minutes were approved by consensus.
5. **PLATTE RIVER WATER TRAIL:** Tim Montgomery of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission gave an overview and update of the Platte River Water Trail (PRWT) program. The Platte River is going to be used as an example to promote and provide a basis for future non-motorized water trails throughout the state. When completed, the water trail maps will provide users with good access points and points of interest along their voyage. The purpose of the Platte River Water Trail program is to encourage people to get out in nature, and educate conservation practices and preservation of the Platte River. Currently there are a few handouts and maps on the NGPC website, however, they need to be updated.

There are five main goals for the PRWT project in the future: revise the print materials, create a GIS trail map, create an interactive website for trip planning, improve the public access points, and increase signage for educational and on-trail purposes. Revisions of the print material include additional color photos, improved map format to highlight the river and its resources, and designated sections of the trail noting partial, single or multiple-day trips. The proposed GIS trail map will use real-time and site images to show launch sites, hazards, and river obstructions. The proposed interactive website for trip-planning is based off of the Missouri National Recreational River water trail feature. Their website provides contact information, camping and restroom locations, who maintains the area, and anecdotal notes for each site. Tim said the proposed Platte River Water Trails website could be a great potential for the LPRCA as a stand-alone website. Currently there are six public access points throughout the LPR, however a few are in poor condition and there needs to be more access points to break, get drinking water, and use the restroom. The fifth goal is to deploy interpretive signage along the river, but this task can wait so information will be more accurate.

Marlin Petermann said Two Rivers is a good site for access because it is short trek and would only need minimal work to update. Schilling could be a good access site because of the road and sand beach, however the bank is steep and it needs to be more inviting. Montgomery said that if Schilling WMA was improved, it would remain primitive because it is a WMA. Petermann offered the idea of an additional access point around Hwy. 6 at Ashland or near the Lincoln Water Systems. Montgomery plans to meet soon with the National Park Service. Jason Alexander mentioned that canoe races and river festivals could bring more publicity to the river from the local communities. Also, he said it may help to provide a chart on the trail documents to display cfs and how they affect the quality of floating down the river. This may prevent a first-timer from having a bad experience in low-

flow and not returning to the Platte. If this flow-rate and quality impact information was posted on the future website, it may even be of interest to floating-adventure outfitters. Meghan Sittler is excited about the project because with the strong partnerships within the LPRCA, this goal can happen. She said the best way for the public to understand and want to protect the Platte River is for them to have first-hand experience on the river. Sittler and Montgomery will be floating the river for mapping purposes over the next few weeks and the mapping & water trail work will continue with LPRCA, LPSNRD and NGPC personnel through the next year.

6. **PROPOSED NEBRASKA ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST GRANT TO INVESTIGATE SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL DYNAMICS OF SANDBARS IN THE LOWER PLATTE RIVER:** Jason Alexander provided a brief overview of the pilot study followed by updates and goals of the NET grant. The project covers 103 miles of river, ten cameras are to be installed, and nine sandbar surveys are to be conducted over a three year period. Questions guiding the project are; is there a pattern to sandbar height?; where do sandbars tend to develop?; are there geometric variations involving channel slope?; and will bridge construction affect sandbar habitat geomorphics? Progress since the installation of four camera's back in April included a \$5,975 joint-funding increase for stage-only gaging stations, and the second sandbar survey which took place in late July. From April to late July, the number of measured sandbars greater than two acres increased by 12, the number of sandbars counted greater than two acres increased by 24, and the number of locations with bank measurements decreased by eight. Stream-flow information is being provided by the USACE. Costs for the LPRCA (with NET funds) in scenario A (at 25%) is \$351,030 compared to scenario B (at 30%) of \$322,657. Currently the USGS is refining the grant proposal for NET, and hopes to expand the study area upstream to the Elkhorn confluence.
7. **PROPOSED 319 GRANT TO INVESTIGATE SEPTIC TANK LOCATION & ISSUES:** Pat O'Brien provided a review and update on the proposed non-regulatory 319 grant. As mentioned at April's meeting, NDEQ would work with UNL CALMIT to collect remote-sensing data via plane. The remote-sensing data technology can detect a one1 to 3 degree temperature change, as well as detect vegetation. Septic tanks would be identified by more vegetation and heat plumes with-in the project corridor of 100ft. from the river's banks between Hwy. 75 and Hwy. 77 near Fremont. Data collection has to be done early spring or late fall, during the leaf-off time window. This technique was used at Johnson Lake to locate old septic tanks and pollutant discharge. Currently the projected cost for the project is \$80,000 of with 40% local match. Sittler will be working with UNL and NDEQ to prepare and submit the grant in September.
8. **PROPOSED NEBRASKA ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST GRANT FOR FREMONT STATE LAKE WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT:** Paul Brakhage, NDEQ, provided an update on Fremont Lake #20, followed by the proposed NET grant for additional lakes to receive similar water quality treatments. Fremont Lake #20 was completed in fall 2007 and continued to look similar to a northern Minnesota Lake this year due to another summer of low phosphorous levels. The successful treatment of Fremont Lake #20 has brought national attention, so NDEQ's new proposal is to continue treating lakes within the Fremont Lakes area in addition to a lake at Platte River State Park. NDEQ looked at impairments (eutrophication signs) which lead to high pH in lakes. They met with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and Lower Platte North NRD to discuss the treatment of 15 of the 20 lakes that are in the worst condition. The NGPC is interested in site improvements, promoting education and fisheries improvements at some of the sites. The joint goal is to conduct aluminum and copper-sulfate treatments on 15 lakes, and three of those would have fisheries renovations. The TMDL's are almost done for the 15 lakes and should be submitted this fall. The cost of fishery renovations at the three lakes is \$540,000. The NGPC will provide \$80,000 and DEQ will be in charge of monitoring the project for two years. LPRCA will be partnering with NDEQ, LPNNRD, and NGPC on the Nebraska Environmental Trust submission.
9. **LPRCA EVENTS**
 - A. *Kayak Tour:* Meghan Sittler provided a brief review of the July 19th kayak tour. The summary was accompanied by a photo slideshow prepared by LPRCA intern, Heidi Christensen. The tour this year was a success, however interest in the event has continued to increase. With such great interest from the general

public, Meghan offered the idea of having two kayak tours in 2012; one for LPRCA representatives and one for the public.

B. Water Quality Open: Meghan Sittler reminded everyone of the upcoming LPRCA Water Quality Open, taking place Thursday Sept. 1st. The featured presenters will be Neal Suess, President and CEO of Loup Public Power District, and Lisa Richardson, Project Manager at HDR. A few of the scheduled Water Quality Open demonstrators were present in the meeting and were recognized. She is hoping for a dry tournament day.

10. **NICHE AGRICULTURE IN THE LOWER PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR:** University of Nebraska-Lincoln graduate student, Marco Floreani, provided information regarding his interest to do a spatial analysis of local food production in the Lower Platte River corridor. He plans to work with, and conduct a study with the DNR to promote self-sustaining food practices for the LPR. He will determine how regional foods meet the local needs, and compare soil type and land cover data and relate that to the local population/public health. With the public's increasing interest in farmers markets, Marco believes this study could promote agricultural tourism; an opportunity for those that live in the city to adventure out of town to buy local products. The project is not commodity based. Very little research like this has been done in Nebraska so Marco plans to create a model for potential food production. He will prepare a map and report for the LPRCA and hopes to have the project completed by spring of 2012.

11. **WRDA AUTHORIZED PROJECT UPDATES**

A. Antelope Valley: N/A

B. Sand Creek: Mike Murren said currently construction is going well, however the company had been delayed due to weather issues. The company, Prudent Tech., is new to earth moving and the project should be complete by mid-September. NGPC received good results from the Wanahoo surveys. The recreational park is planned to open in April, however operation and maintenance management is still up in the air. There are also seven dam projects, four of which have been started at different stages. Three should be completed this fall. They are asking for \$2 million in the next budget and would use the same contractor. These dams are all privately owned and range from 15 acres to 42 acres.

C. FREMONT & SCHUYLER 205: Mike Murren announced the public meeting taking place the afternoon of August 16th. He said the project is moving rapidly.

D. WESTERN SARPY CLEAR CREEK: Marlin Petermann said three areas are currently under construction and they should all wrap up this fall. He said on the Saunders County side \$3,000 is still needed to complete the gap.

E. LOWER PLATTE RIVER WATERSHED AUTHORITY: Meghan Sittler said that as of now, the airboat tour to show the Assistant Secretary of the Army and Corps personnel a portion of the watershed is scheduled for Sept. 2nd.

12. **OTHER BUSINESS:** None reported

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None made

14. **NEXT MEETING DATE:** By consensus the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday October 20th at 9:30am at the Papio-Missouri River NRD.

15. **ADJOURN:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:05am.

16. **TOUR OF ANTELOPE VALLEY--GLENN JOHNSON, LPSNRD**

-Heidi Christensen, LPRCA Intern