



Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

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

LPRCA MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 9, 2022 – 10:00 a.m.

Bi-Annual Meeting held at LPSNRD

1. Welcome / Introductions: David Potter welcomed everyone and thanked the members for attending the meeting. Corridor Alliance member representatives participating included: Larry Vrtiska-National Guard, Amanda Grint-PMRNRD, Ian Ghanavati-PMRNRD, Jim Swenson-NG&P, Jeff Fields-NG&P, Jesse Bradley-NeDNR, Ryan Chapman-LPNNRD, Sean Elliott-LPNNRD, Andy Kahle-NDEE, Tara Anderson-NDEE, Dane Pauley-NDEE, Dan Ross-NDEE, Ron Yoder-UNL, Paul Zillig-LPSNRD, Will Inselman-LPSNRD, and David Potter-LPSNRD. Others present included: Dustin Wilcox-NARD, Jennifer Swanson-NARD, Matt Pillard-HDR, Matt Moser-USGS, Brenda Densmore-USGS, and Gary Aldridge-LPSNRD Director. Invites were sent out to at least two individuals from each of the eight members/agencies of the Alliance, including the person that was authorized to sign any documents. Alternates were recommended to participate if the two individuals could not attend. All eight Alliance members/agencies were represented at the meeting. The LPRCA meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. All those in attendance introduced themselves.
2. Agenda Review and Publication of Notice: A meeting notice was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on October 27, 2022. Potter displayed the Alliance website on the screen and reviewed the agenda.
3. Review of May 25, 2022 Meeting and Approval of Minutes: Potter stated that the minutes of the last meeting were distributed prior to the meeting, copies were made available at the meeting, and they are on the LPRCA website. There were no changes or corrections. Minutes were approved by consensus. Minutes from the bi-annual meetings will continue to serve as the newsletters/correspondence.
4. LPRCA Interlocal Agreement and Membership, LPNNRD Re-Instatement as Voting Member: Potter stated that he received notice from Lower Platte North Natural Resources District (LPNNRD) that they wish to be reinstated as a voting member and will pay the annual dues. According to the current Amended Interlocal Agreement, there is no formal action needed and the agreement does not need to be amended at this time. LPNNRD will be added back to the membership and the website will be updated accordingly. With the decision of Nebraska Health and Human Services to withdraw from the Alliance earlier in the year and LPNNRD's re-instatement, the Alliance has a total of eight agency members.
5. Financials/Budget Update: Potter reviewed the proposed FY2023 budget. Each of the eight agencies will be invoiced \$1,000 for dues and for their share in the stream gage agreements with USGS in December. The dues are deposited into the administrative fund and pay for the costs of ESRI, the website, and memberships. A copy of the budget made available at the meeting to each member agency so they would know how much will be billed.

6. Current LPRCA Activities/Projects

A. Status of renewed USGS stream gages/monitors, reports from gages at Leshara and three Long-Term Sites: Matt Moser presented a power point and provided an update on the current Alliance-USGS stream gages. The agreements for the three long-term sites and Leshara were renewed in April 2022. The three long-term sites have been jointly funded by LPSNRD, PMRNRD and USGS. The Leshara gage is jointly and equally funded by LPSNRD, LPNNRD, PMRNRD, LWS, and MUD, and also by USGS. The joint funding agreements with each agency were also renewed in April.

B. Potential Trend Analysis at one or more LPRCA stream gage sites: Matt Moser and Brenda Densmore with USGS discussed the data being collected from the various stream gages and when that information is being collected. Data from the gages at Leshara and the three long-term sites is collected April 1st through October 1st and that monitoring has not been interrupted. The data collected dates back several years. A Trend Analysis on one or more of the stream gages is possible. Moser and Densmore identified the possible parameters of such analysis, including but not limited to nitrates and turbidity. USGS will continue to develop a scope for the possible trend analysis. LPSNRD, LPNNRD, PMRNRD, NDEE and maybe the Guard are interested. Potter will also reach out to MUD and Lincoln Water to see if they have any interest.

C. Lower Platte River Camera / Stream Gage Project Update and other USGS work in the Corridor: Moser and Ryan Chapman announced the success of the Lower Platte River Camera project. The project was funded by LPNNRD, PMRNRD, Dodge County, City of Fremont, and USGS. USGS coordinated the project and is conducting operations and maintenance. The timelapse cameras located on various bridges over the Platte River take photos every 15 minutes and help provide information on flows and ice jams. There is also a camera installed on the Loup Power Canal property at the confluence of the Platte and Loup Power canal return. There is need for more of these cameras on other segments of the Platte River within the Corridor.

7. Member Updates and Reports on Related Corridor Activities and Projects

A. National Guard and Camp Ashland: Larry Vrtiska with the Nebraska National Guard provided an update on the activities and projects at Camp Ashland. Most of the construction resulting from the flood and MILCON for Camp Ashland rebuild is anticipated to be completed this December. The Guard is looking to complete an Integrated Natural Resources Plan focusing on drought and wet conditions. Vrtiska also stated the Guard is still working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to figure out the drainage issue and culvert height with Turner Lake.

B. NeDNR Updates: Jesse Bradley, Assistant Director with NeDNR provided an update on the many funded projects. Regarding LB 925 Resilient Soils and Water Quality Act, the Department is to provide assistance in the formation of a producer learning community to build awareness and knowledge relating to soil health and water quality to guide agricultural producers and landowners in making informed decisions in order to bring about a more rapid and widespread adoption of best management practices. Kent Zimmerman will be the coordinator. Regarding the "STAR WARS" and "JEDI" Project, information was shared on the proposed projects, including the Wahoo Creek watershed structures, Schuyler levee, and proposed lake on the lower Platte River. Bradley stated there are studies underway on the proposed lake and that a location has not yet been identified. The Department needs to look at the effect of the lake on

Lincoln and MUD wells. Bradley also briefed the group on the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) projects and funds, including status of Lincoln's second water supply, Gehring-Ft. Laramie canal tunnel, and Perkins County Canal. Finally, Bradley stated that DNR is working with USACE on a \$10 million study updating hydrology in the Missouri River.

C. PMRNRD updates, including Hwy 34 River Bridge Trail and other trails and the Platte River Railroad Obstruction: Amanda Grint provided a brief update on the Platte River Bridge Trail project that is Federally funded with 20% local match and PMRNRD, LPSNRD, Sarpy County, Cass County, Plattsmouth, Bellevue and others participating in the project. NDOT is looking at some realignment and project has been delayed about a year. The project is now expected to be out for bid in Fall of 2023. Grint also updated the group on the Railroad obstruction issue in the Platte River. Back in 2019 the railroads constructed a causeway to make repairs from the flooding. The soil left in that location west of the Highway 34/75 bridge has caused an obstruction and the river to shift. PMRNRD, LPSNRD, Sarpy County and Cass County all have an interest in getting this corrected before major problems arise. There have been meetings with the railroads and removal of the obstruction has been discussed but nothing planned or determined yet.

D. Updates from UNL, including WRAP meeting and Rogers Farm Anniversary: Yoder discussed the purpose and actions of the Water Resources Advisory Panel (WRAP). It was created in 2006 to better connect outside experts and those who often rely on the University of Nebraska water-related research, education and outreach to make decisions impacting our State's water resources. Members of the panel from the Alliance include NeDNR, NG&P, NDEE and a representative from the NRD system. In addition, UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nebraska Water Center and Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute work closely with WRAP. The panel is looking to reinvigorate their purpose and presence. Yoder then shared information on the Rogers Memorial Farm and the 75th Anniversary held in September. UNL continues to work with NRDs on nitrate levels through statewide soil health in Extension and conducts research on soil conservation for the last 30 years at Roger's Memorial Farm. The farm is operated as a research and demonstration farm by the Department of Biological Systems Engineering (BSE), cooperating with several other University departments and USDA agencies.

E. LPSNRD update, including MoPac Connector: Paul Zillig discussed the status of the MoPac connector project, work with the MoPac Alliance, and the funds (\$8.3 million) provided by the Nebraska Legislature to Nebraska Game and Parks (NG&P) for the trail connection. Local support has been expressed if utilizing existing public right-of-way, the NRD is assessing the availability of existing public right-of-way and will be meeting with the county. The NRD will also need to further discuss with NG&P Funding eligibility, the application process, and any local matching funds required.

F. State Parks & Trails and NG&P Projects: Jeff Fields gave an update on the parks along the corridor and the Metro Park Project (Schram, Mahoney, Louisville and Platte River State Parks). Construction is ongoing at Schram State Recreation Area on the treehouse educational classroom project and construction will begin in 2023 on the canyon ponds renovation project. Platte River State Park will have ADA trails and new restrooms and parking. Mahoney is nearing completion of the greenhouse expansion and construction is slated to begin on a pool expansion project which will include a lazy river. Schram and Louisville Parks will have more trails for next season with river access from Schram. Visitation to the parks was down some across the state.

G. Updates from NDEE: Tara Anderson provided various updates on NDEE projects and activities. Title 117 – Surface Water Quality Standards triennial review is still in progress and hoping to be completed mid-2023. The 2022 Integrated Report will go public soon. NDEE’s surface water monitoring has concluded their basin rotation efforts for 2022 (Elkhorn Basin and the Upper Missouri River Tributaries). Last year monitoring was in Nemaha and Lower Platte Bains. Next year monitoring will be in North Platte, South Platte and White Hat basins. 2021 Data Ambient Fish Tissue Monitoring Report was published in July. A pilot study is underway to look at noenicitinoids in ambient waters, sediment, benthic macroinvertebrates. Groundwater monitoring of 500 wells across Nebraska should be wrapping up at the end of this year. The Source Water Protection Grant RFP will come out in late winter / early Spring 2023 and will be due in summer. Laura Nagengast is the new Source Water Protection Extension Educator which is a partnership between UNL and NDEE. Laura is working on educational materials for communities and source water. The Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network is re-launching in Spring 2023. There will be quarterly workshops where people will have an opportunity to learn from peers about wellhead protection projects around the state. Topics of discussion/field days include the nexus of conservation, public health, drinking water, hydrogeology, soil health and much more.

Regarding Section 319, Anderson informed the group of the Highboy Project where a partnership between NDEE, UNL and NRDs used 319 funds to plant cover crops with a highboy machine on 3,300 acres on 29 farms across four NRDs in eight counties. Partnership is looking at plans for next five years. Anderson also stated the Know Your Well Section 319 agreement for partnership between NDEE, PMRNRD and UNL has been signed and are ready to contact schools.

Dan Ross introduced himself as the new Water Planning Section Supervisor. He briefed the group on the recent Kaizen meeting. Laura Johnson is now the Drinking Water and Groundwater Division Administrator. Dane Pauley is the new 401/404 Certification Coordinator and will begin working on the assumption package to submit to EPA. Andy Kahle provided some updates to the Drinking Water Program. Jennifer Swanson, NARD-DEE Liaison provided information on the Reverse Osmosis incentive program.

H. Lower Platte North NRD update: Ryan Chapman reported on Lower Platte North’s District-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Application is being made for FEMA funds to update the plan. Several post-2019 flood projects are still underway but making progress. These projects along with several flood planning projects are able to leverage federal funds made possible through an active Hazard Mitigation Plan.

8. Future Projects/Studies:

A. LPRCA Water Quality Management Plan 5-Yr Update: Potter stated the LPRCA Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) is due for its five-year update in 2024 and asked NDEE to share some information on the update process. Brandon Beethe was not able to attend the meeting, but Anderson provided some information. The plan update could be accomplished in-house. A summary of what has been done in the watersheds since the plan was adopted and events that have changed things such as the 2019 floods, updated graphs and figures, changes in priority areas or phase requirements, updated references to the latest Integrated Report, and other changes such as NDEQ to NDEE could be placed in an addendum to the plan. It is understood that PIPs can only be submitted under a current plan. Having a management plan expire in the middle of an implementation project will not have any effect on the active

project. Potter and Chapman will continue researching the update requirements, estimated cost and timeframe, and any needed funding agreements.

B. Water Quality Management Plan – 319 Targeted Projects, Application and Implementation: Ian Ghanavati has now assumed the duties of the water quality management plan projects now that Paul Woodward resigned. Ghanavati stated that PMRNRD has worked with NDEE on Project Implementation Plans (PIPs) for Section 319 funding to EPA for work in work in multiple watersheds, including Buffalo Creek, Turtle Creek, Turkey Creek-Platte River, and Zwiebel Creek-Platte River. The Southern Sarpy/City of Springfield Water Quality Enhancement Project is being reviewed by EPA. Turkey Creek and Zwiebel Creek which extend south of the Platte River, is a watershed that will involve LPSNRD in some capacity. Chapman reported that LPNNRD is planning to meet with local stakeholder groups this winter in preparation for submitting a PIP for both priority watersheds.

C. Lower Platte River Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Comprehensive Study – Update/Status: Zillig again briefly discussed the possible Restoration Comprehensive Study and its current status. There has been no change since the last meeting. A letter had been sent in April 2022 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stating the continued interest of the three NRDs. Now that LPNNRD is back in the Alliance, a meeting is needed and will be scheduled between the three NRDs and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss needs and priorities. This congressional study dates back several years. The NRDs had been waiting to meet until after the DNR studies are completed; as a change in direction with the study may be warranted.

D. Discussion of any other possible projects for LPRCA: Potter again thanked the agencies for attending the meeting and identified the benefit of having the Alliance ready to go with any upcoming issues or additional projects. He asked the group to identify and consider any other projects for the LPRCA. In addition to the possible Trend Analysis of the stream gage(s), other mentioned possible projects included: 1) Zoning and floodplain issues related to RV parks and sand & gravel operations and 2) Inventories of levees in the corridor and National Levee program risk assessment.

9. Schedule Next Meeting: The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 2023. A doodle poll to the members will be used to determine the best date to have a meeting.

10. Comments, Questions, General Discussion, Adjournment: With no further questions or comments, the meeting ended at approximately 12:10 p.m.

Submitted by: David Potter, Assistant General Manager LPSNRD and Interim LPRCA Coordinator