



**Lower Platte River
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE**

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

LPRCA MEETING MINUTES

Friday, May 9, 2025 – 10:00 a.m.

Bi-Annual Meeting held at Lower Platte South NRD

1. Welcome / Introductions: David Potter, Interim Coordinator, welcomed everyone and thanked the members for attending the meeting. Corridor Alliance member representatives in attendance included: Larry Vrtiska-National Guard, Amanda Grint-PMNRD, Ian Ghanavati-PMNRD, Andrea Faas-NG&P, Michael Townsend-NG&P, Shuhai Zheng-NeDNR, Tyler Martin-NeDNR, Ryan Chapman-LPNRD, Brandon Beethe-LPNRD, Daniel Ross-NDEE, Noah Hovorka-NDEE, Dan Trotter-UNL, Dick Ehrman-LPSNRD, Steve Herdzina-LPSNRD, and David Potter-LPSNRD. Others present included: Matt Moser-USGS, Matt Pillard-HDR, Gary Aldridge-LPSNRD Director, Gary Hellerich-LPSNRD Director, and Don Jacobson-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. An alternate was recommended to participate if one of the two individual reps could not attend. All eight Alliance members/agencies were represented at the meeting. The LPRCA meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. All those in attendance introduced themselves.
2. Agenda Review and Publication Notice: A meeting notice was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on April 28, 2025. Potter reviewed the agenda.
3. Review of November 8, 2024, Meeting and Approval of meeting minutes: Minutes of the last meeting were distributed prior to the meeting, supplied at the meeting, and are posted on the LPRCA website. There were no additions, corrections, or objections. Minutes were approved by consensus. Minutes from the bi-annual meetings will continue to serve as the LPRCA newsletters/correspondence.
4. Current Membership, Dues, and Website: Potter identified the current Corridor Alliance membership consisting of eight agencies. Each of the eight agencies will be invoiced \$1,000 in December for dues and for their share in the streamgage agreements with USGS. The dues are deposited into the administrative fund and pay for the costs of ESRI, the website, and memberships. The LPRCA website has been updated with current meeting information and member representatives. There was also discussion on what will happen when DNR and DEE merge.
5. Financials and Budget Update: Potter presented the proposed budget sheet to the group identifying the various agencies and their costs for the year. The costs include dues, share of streamgages, and participation in the trend analysis. LPRCA now holds only two esri licenses. LPSNRD board approves the budget as per the interlocal cooperation agreement.

6. Current LPRCA and Related Activities/Projects

A. USGS streamgages/monitors - Leshara and three Long-Term Sites: Matt Moser provided an update on the current LPRCA-USGS streamgages. The agreements for the three long-term sites and Leshara were renewed in March for a five-year period. The three long-term sites have been jointly funded by LPSNRD, PMRNRD and USGS. The Leshara gage is jointly funded by LPSNRD, LPNNRD, PMRNRD, LWS, and MUD, and also by USGS. The joint funding agreements with each agency are in the process of being approved. Moser updated the group on what data is being collected from the streamgages and when. It has been a drier start to the 2025 season. Reduced stream flows lead to less turbidity, higher temperatures, and less nitrates due to less runoff. The data collected dates back several years (Leshara since 2016 and three long-term sites since 2007). Moser also discussed the Nebraska and Kansas USGS office merger and on October 1st will become the Central Plains Water Science Center. In his report, he also mentioned there is a new data visualization tool in the works with USGS funds. This would be a visual way to look at the data.

B. USGS Streamgage Trend Analysis Project Update: Moser provided an update on the two-year project. The project will look at the data collected and should be published in July 2026. Preliminary analysis shows turbidity values are going down over time, nitrates are decreasing, and water temperature has been increasing. They hope to have more results this November.

C. USGS camera update: The success of the Lower Platte River Camera project was discussed. These cameras have been funded by LPSNRD, LPNNRD, PMRNRD, Dodge County, City of Fremont, and USGS. The timelapse cameras located on various bridges over the Platte and Elkhorn Rivers continue to take photos every 15 minutes and help provide information on flows and ice jams. There are 15-20 camera sites across the state and there is now a camera near Louisville on the Hwy 50 bridge which is funded by USGS, PMRNRD and LPSNRD.

D. Water Quality Management Plan – Section 319 Project Updates: Ian Ghanavati with PMRNRD stated they canceled their proposed Section 319 Project a couple months ago. The proposed Southern Sarpy/City of Springfield Water Quality Enhancement Project was approved by EPA in March 2023 and was focused on a concentrated area around Springfield and does not involve any construction activities. PMRNRD was working with NDEE to revise the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) to focus more on urban BMPs and less on agricultural BMPs due to the land transition in South Sarpy County. The PIP revision was taking too much time. Ryan Chapman stated that there are currently no Section 319 projects under the LPRCA WQMP in LPNNRD but looking at Wahoo and Skull & Bone.

7. Member Updates and Reports on Related Lower Platte River Corridor Activities and Projects

A. NeDNR Updates: Shuhai Zheng reported that on May 7th, the Governor signed LB317 into a law merging NDNR and NDEE into a new Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (NDWEE) on July 1, 2025. The Governor also appointed Jesse Bradley as Director of Water, Energy, and Environment and Matt Manning as Chief Water Officer for the state. The draft report of the Lower Missouri Flood Risk and Resiliency Study with USACE is anticipated to be available in June for public comments. The report will include a recommended system plan for flood risk reduction, new programs, and changes to existing federal policies. Shuhai will share the report link for posting on Alliance's website as soon as the report is released by the USACE.

NeDNR acquired 20 cameras last year. Two cameras have been installed, and they take pictures once every fifteen minutes. Five more will be installed before irrigation season begins and the rest of the cameras are planned to be installed by end of this year. You can check those pictures out from NeDNR's website at <https://nednr.nebraska.gov/Dynamic/StreamgageCameras/StreamgageCameras/>.

B. Updates from UNL: Dan Trotter stated that UNL has partnered with LPSNRD and the City of Lincoln on the Deadmans Run Flood Reduction Project. The project has identified a detention basin in the southeast area of UNL East Campus. Plans are at 30% design. The design will also include a wetlands component near the basin. Another project includes construction of an equine sports complex. As of June 1, Tiffany Heng-Moss will be Interim Vice President and IANR Vice Chancellor.

C. Updates from Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy: Dan Ross provided updates on various projects, activities, and staffing.

- Discussed merger of NDEE and DNR.
- Provided update on water quality standards and coordinator position
- Stated sampling in the Lower Platte was last done in 2021 and next will be in 2027.
- Beach watch sampling will be from May through September at 51 lakes.
- Discussed delisting of e coli in Branched Oak, Holmes Lake, and couple sections of the Platte.

D. National Guard and Camp Ashland updates: Larry Vrtiska with the Guard provided an update on the activities and projects at Camp Ashland:

- National Guard public website with camping and hunting, including rentals
- Turner Lake culvert with USACE
- All buildings are up and maintenance is ongoing
- There are two active bald eagle nests on the camp
- Had Ashland 3rd graders on a tour
- Protected species continue to create challenges with operations
- Executive order forcing Camp to go through management plan
- Continued work with PMRNRD and USACE to allow training north of the camp

E. Game & Parks projects/updates – State Parks and Trails: Michael Townsend highlighted various projects, including:

- The Lied-Platte River Bridge debris cleanup was completed in early March
- The canoe access is open at Schramm State Park
- Update on Venture Park completion and celebrations
- Fremont Lakes improvements
- Platte River State Park Stone Creek Falls getting ADA improvements
- Bluestem SRA is getting new campground

F. Papio-Missouri River NRD updates: Amand Grint provided an update on the Platte River railroad obstruction project. PMRNRD, LPSNRD, Sarpy County and Cass County all had an interest in getting

obstruction removed before major problems arise. PMRNRD worked with Nebraska Economic Development and received an award of CDBG disaster money up to \$7.1 million to do the work. All the material to come out was to be placed in a borrow pit(s) on the north side of the river. The project was completed in early June 2025. Grint also provided an update on the Lower Platte Weed Management Association and the work they do with invasive species. She stated funding from the State has been an issue and the group has been seeking grants.

G. Lower Platte South NRD updates: Potter provided information on the NRD's MoPac – Lied Bridge Connector Project. LPSNRD went through a public involvement process and selected a preferred route. LPSNRD Board of Directors approved the route, but Cass County Commissioners did not. LPSNRD is now examining alternate routes. LPSNRD is utilizing the money granted to Nebraska Game and Parks by the Nebraska Legislature for the trail connection.

H. Lower Platte North NRD updates: Ryan Chapman provided updates on:

- Joint Water Management Advisory Board (Dodge County, LPNNRD, Fremont, North Bend, several diking and drainage districts)
- Wahoo Creek flood reduction dams. There are nine structures to be constructed.
- The new office building.

I. Other: No additional reports were given.

8. Future Projects/Studies:

A. Lower Platte River Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Comprehensive Study update/status: Potter stated this congressional study dates back several years. The three NRDs still have interest in the project, however, there has been no activity with the potential study. A letter of intent and continued interest was sent to USACE on March 7, 2025.

B. Discussion of any other possible projects for LPRCA: Vrtiska stated the National Guard is still interested in getting a position to serve both the Guard and the LPRCA, maybe a 75%-25% role. Potter had provided Vrtiska with copy of the Corridor Alliance Coordinator job description. Discussion was also had on outreach on various grants to communities in the corridor, maybe in form of a letter. Potter again thanked the agencies for attending the meeting and acknowledged the benefit of continuing the Alliance for any upcoming issues or additional projects.

9. Schedule/Plan Next Meeting: The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 2025. A doodle poll will likely be sent to the members 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 11:46 a.m.

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