



Lower Platte River CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

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

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Monthly Report for May 2016

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Quarterly Meeting

The LPRCA held our Quarterly Meeting on Tuesday, May 3rd at Lower Platte South NRD in Lincoln. Zach Schulz and Marc Rosso from JEO gave a presentation regarding a recently completed study of potential water supply options near I-80 exit 426, the community of Ashland, and Mahoney State Park. Other agenda items included a review and update presentation on the Lower Platte Recreation Plan with particular attention to the initial public informational meetings and the LPRCA's focus on continuing conversations and targeted education about appropriate recreational opportunities and importantly other issues of critical concern such as water quality and other related programs. Matt Pillard and Ryan Woehl of HDR presented an update on the transition to the ESRI ArcGIS platform and the new LPRCA map gallery. Matt Moser of USGS provided a tutorial on how to set alerts for both streamflow and water quality parameters. Discussion was also held on the initial steps to make the water quality data more readily available via a mobile web application or standalone app. The draft FY2017 LPRCA budget was also presented along with a brief "year in review". The next Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 9th at 9:00 a.m. We are identifying a location at this time.

NEWBA Watershed Partnership Project

Throughout the past several months, I have been working with a group of individuals from across the state engaged in water management on a local or watershed level scale. The group has primarily been facilitated by board members of the Nebraska Water Balance Alliance (NEWBA). The group is working on expanding from the model of the Western Nebraska Irrigation Project initiated by the Nature Conservancy, Coca-Cola, local landowners, and NEWBA two years ago into additional and diverse landscapes across the state. The goal of that project is to utilize on-farm technology to achieve and monitor water savings, nutrient management/water quality and other key ecosystem or watershed parameters. Importantly that project facilitates field days and other "peer networks" to increase understanding of the technology and management as well as communicate the outcomes of the project. Additionally, private funds from, in that case, Coca Cola have been utilized to provide cost-share on the technology or conservation practices, monitoring equipment, and also funded the field days. The current effort would again expand that model into six additional landscapes/watersheds. I have been engaged with them regarding potential funds for the project work in the Lower Platte watershed. They have begun to receive some levels of commitment from commodity groups and private industry. They are also working on funding applications which I have been assisting with. The details are still being fleshed out but there will certainly be more to come on this effort.

RMS/SORP

I attended the joint River Management Society and Society of Outdoor Recreational Professionals conference in mid-May. The conference focused on effective partnership for river conservation as well as how partnerships are used to foster recreation and stewardship of a rivers' and surrounding community's

resources. It was a really great conference that provided an opportunity to reflect on the success of the LPRCA partnership and the opportunities we have to engage communities, organizations and the public into helping sustain the resources of the Lower Platte.

Lower Platte River Recreation Planning & Education

In May, I learned that the National Park Service has extended our Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance grant we originally received in 2014. The NPS will continue to assist the LPRCA in working with local stakeholders on on-going or potential recreational use as well as with targeted education and a variety of other opportunities. We sincerely appreciate this support from NPS. Some of our next steps include working on educational materials for current or interested recreationists in the area to better inform them of stewardship principles, private property issues and concerns, water quality and unique opportunities and services in the communities and surrounding areas. We also plan to continue having meetings with local fire and rescue to better understand ongoing concerns and demands, the Nebraska Airboat Association, recreational businesses, community groups, and others.

Events

Event planning continued in May for the Kayak Tour, Water Quality Open and the Lower Platte River Summit. The Kayak Tour, scheduled for June 7th, filled in its usual very quick pace. The tour will feature presentations from the LPRCA, NGPC, the Lower Platte Weed Management Area, the Nebraska Watershed Network, the Nebraska Land Trust and USGS. We continue to watch river levels as the tour approaches after another very wet and turbulent May throughout the basin. We do have a back-up date identified if needed and will make a final determination the weekend prior to the event.

The Water Quality Open is scheduled for Thursday, August 25th at Quarry Oaks Golf Course. Dr. Elizabeth VanWormer of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Natural Resources will provide the keynote presentation. Dr. VanWormer is a veterinarian and wildlife epidemiologist who focuses on the interaction between humans, wildlife and domestic animals with regards to health and environmental stresses. The keynote presentation begins at 10 a.m. with the golf and educational displays on the course starting at noon.

We also continued planning the Lower Platte River Summit scheduled for Tuesday, October 25th in Schuyler at the Oak Ballroom. We are working on a Nebraska Environmental Trust PIE grant to help fund the Summit this year. The PIE Grant is due by July 1st and we have it almost ready to go. Additionally the steering committee met in May to discuss additional speakers for a panel discussion, tour stops and other potentially interactive aspects of the Summit. More details soon!

Upcoming Events:

LPRCA Kayak Tour, June 7, 2016. *The LPRCA Kayak Tour has been included as a "Find your Park" event as part of the National Park Service Centennial celebration.*

NARD Blue River Basin Tour: June 13-14

Quarterly Meeting: August 9th, 9:00 a.m. TBD

Water Quality Open: August 25th. Quarry Oaks Golf Course

Nebraska Water Center Symposium. October 20th. UNL Innovation Campus.

LPR Summit: October 25th, Oak Ballroom, Schuyler