

## Memorandum

**To:** Programs, Projects and Operations Sub-Committee

**From:** Jerry Herbster  
John Winkler, General Manager

**Date:** March 6, 2009

**Re:** Elkhorn Crossing Recreation Area Site Improvements

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District received and opened bids for the Elkhorn Crossing Recreation Area Site Improvements on March 6, 2009. There were bids received ranging from \$219,400 to \$304,525. Attached is a bid summary. Based on bids received, Dostal's Construction bid of \$219,400 is the apparent low bid. The engineer's opinion of cost was \$319,000.

The project consists of the following summary of improvements and amenities:

- Day Use Area:
  - Concrete pad for 2 picnic tables
  - Overlook area with 2 benches and interpretive exhibit
  - Accessible parking pad
- Central Camp Area:
  - Pre-engineered restroom facility similar to that at Graske Crossing
  - Solar-powered lighting within restroom
  - Swing set with 3 belt swings and 1 tot swing
  - Bench seating area adjacent to swing set
  - Accessible parking pad
  - Accessible walk to water well (well to be provided by others)
  - Trash dumpster pad
- Tent Camping:
  - 14 total tent camping sites; each site will include a concrete pad with picnic table and fire ring
  - 7 barbecue grills will be provided within the tent camping area; each grill will be shared between 2 camping sites
  - One accessible tent camping site and one accessible barbecue grill will be provided and will be connected by an accessible walk to the parking pad
- RV Camping:
  - 8 total RV camp sites will be provided, one of which will be accessible
  - Each RV camp site will include a picnic table and fire ring on a concrete pad
  - 4 barbecue grills will be provided adjacent to the RV camp sites; each grill will be shared between 2 RV camp sites

- Other Site Improvements:
  - A single concrete pad with a fire ring and barbecue grill will be provided near the north end of the site to accommodate visitors who might wish to camp further away from others
  - A wood post-and-cable fence will be provided throughout the site to keep vehicles on roads and within parking areas
  - A small self-registration station will be constructed to provide a location for campers to register

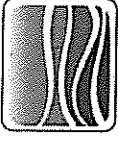
Elkhorn Crossing located at 252<sup>nd</sup> and Bennington Road was initially acquired and constructed in 1989 as a recreation area to be managed by the Papio Missouri River NRD. The initial conceptual plan of the park facility was to provide for R.V. and tent camping on site, however, these amenities were never fully developed. A single stall restroom was constructed on site and due to neglect and vandalism has fallen into disrepair. The site also offers a canoe/boat ramp access point to the Elkhorn River and this amenity receives a lot of use. Since its initial development, Elkhorn Crossing has experienced a degree of neglect and the park has had its share of challenges with vandalism, supervision, trespassing, litter and other illegal activity. Besides providing a first class facility for the taxpayers of the District; one of the main goals of the rehabilitation effort is to provide a safe and secure family environment in which the elements of the past are removed from the area and people who value our natural resources and recreation areas return. The District has worked with and will continue to work with several law enforcement agencies and neighboring property owners to guarantee this park is free from the destructive activities of the past.

Management received the attached letter in June of 2008 from Mr. Norman Vogel, an adjacent landowner, concerning the decline of Elkhorn Crossing over the last decade and the District's response to his concerns.

In fiscal year 2008/2009 the District budgeted \$175,000 for the effort to begin the rehabilitation of Elkhorn Crossing. At the present time the District has spent \$106,949.00 on the following activities (engineering, design, tree removal, fencing, signage, rip rap, rock, piping, grading) in order to prepare the site for the majority of the rehabilitation work. As with most projects and programs it is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate the full extent of the effort and funds that needs to be expended to complete a project appropriately. Therefore, the budget for Elkhorn Crossing is \$240,000 short for the completion of the rehabilitation project as presented.

Therefore, the Sub-Committee and the Board of Directors has two funding options to consider if approval of the project is granted. One: delay the start of the project until the next fiscal year which begins July 1, 2009 so the project can be budgeted into the next fiscal year's budget. Two: Amend the current fiscal year's budget to reallocate the required funds from a project that will not be completed this fiscal year to the Elkhorn Crossing Rehabilitation Project.

- **It is managements recommendation that the Subcommittee recommend to the Board of Directors that the bid of Dostal's Construction in the amount of \$219,400 for construction of the Elkhorn Crossing Recreation Area Site Improvements should be accepted; and, that the General Manager, on behalf of the District, should execute the advertised construction contract with such bidder providing for such price; and, that the F.Y. 2008-2009 budget be amended to reallocate \$240,000 from budget category 4410 Trails-Construction to budget category 4385 NRD Recreation Development.**



**The Big Muddy Workshop, Inc.**  
Landscape Architects / Interpretive Planners

# BID TABULATION

<b>Owner:</b>	Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District 8501 South 154 <sup>th</sup> Street Omaha, NE 68138	<b>Landscape Architect:</b>	The Big Muddy Workshop, Inc. 4502 S 42nd Street Omaha, NE 68107
<b>Project:</b>	Elkhorn Crossing Recreation Area Site Improvements	<b>Bid Date/Time:</b>	March 6, 2009/2:00 p.m.
		<b>Project No.:</b>	BMW #0545

BIDDER	TOTAL BID AMOUNT	BID BOND	ADDENDA RECEIPT	VOLUNTARY SUBSTITUTIONS
Navarro Entp	\$ 265,242. <sup>40</sup>	X		
Dostals const.	219,400. <sup>00</sup>	X		Low Bidder
GPC const.	238,792. <sup>00</sup>	X		
Elkhorn West const	235,900. <sup>00</sup>	X		
Stephens & Smith	304,525. <sup>00</sup>	X		

WINKLER

My name is Norman Vogel and I am the landowner of the 40 acres adjacent to and up the river of the Elkhorn Crossing Recreation Area at the intersection of 252<sup>nd</sup> Street and Bennington Rd. My NRD contact is Jerry Herbster. Mr. Herbster has always been a sympathetic ear to my input concerning the park. I have owned the property for over a decade and have watched the decline of the park to its current state. I have listed the problems below and any help would be appreciated.

1. Underage Drinking and Drug Use – Teenagers use and abuse the place freely because there is no park supervision at all, except for the person that picks up the trash.
2. Vandalism – It is rampant on the park property and, as a result, on my property as well. Fences and gates are constantly torn down. Live trees are cut down and trash is left everywhere on the river frontage.
3. Agreement – Prior NRD management, Steve Ultman, assured me in writing that the NRD would maintain its boundary signs. This has not been done. In a recent phone call, Mr. Herbster told me that after multiple attempts it is not practical to maintain the boundary signs because they will be “torn out or shot out.” To the best of my knowledge the NRD has not made multiple attempts to restore the boundary signage. I have seen only one attempt, the sign on 252<sup>nd</sup> and Bennington Rd. which is there and is in good condition. The one on the river boundary lasted only 2-3 years and was never replaced after the river shoreline moved. I have placed no less than a dozen “No Trespassing” posts over the years. Despite written assurances the

NRD has only put up one sign, one time. The NRD has made no meaningful effort to inform its guests of the park boundaries.

4. Off Road Vehicles – Over the years the NRD has been helpful in limiting off road driving in the park. Sadly it is at the expense of the park's usability. The NRD has trenched along the entrance road and erected a post-and-cable barrier at the parking lot. For several years this was very helpful. While I was out of town this spring, vandals destroyed trees to make a road that extended from the NRD boat ramp to my property. When park personnel saw this road being cut on park property, why did they do nothing? The result is vehicle traffic from the park to my property. Approximately \$5,000 in damage has been done to my equipment and repeated attempts to break into my storage trailer. I do not believe this would have happened if there were no vehicle access from the NRD to my property.
5. Slow maintenance – If a fence is down it should not take three years to be fixed, as was the case after the ice storm a few years back. If the fence at the parking lot is damaged it should not take months to repair. If vandals are cutting a road through park property the NRD does nothing to stop them.
6. Supervision – Supervision of the park is nonexistent. Why must an adjacent landowner complain about damage to fences, wildlife, and gates before the NRD takes action? Over the years I have at least on 50 occasions asked minors in possession to leave the park and/or my property. I have had the county sheriff out on at least a dozen occasions. After my complaint, the NRD and Sheriff office raided the place one time a few years back. Every year there is a new crop of

juveniles. One attempt at park control per decade is not sufficient to have any effect. I have had the Sheriff out 3 times within the last 24 hours.

7. NRD's Position – Jerry Herbster has stated the NRD's position on several occasions. It is the NRD's stated position is that the maintaining of order in the park is the responsibility of the County Sheriff. The Sheriff's position is that they will do what the can. The Deputies that have answered my calls have always been professional, courteous, and sympathetic, but in truth they can do very little. They write out a special watch report which I take as doing a drive through when time permits. Unfortunately, it is Friday and Saturday when the police are most needed, but are least likely to be available for a drive through.
8. Responsible Use of the Park has Declined – Use of the park by families, boy scouts, and those who canoe has declined steadily over the years. It simply is not safe. The last night I was at the park it was approximately 9:00 PM, and I heard gun shots fired on park property. The deputy I was with said he was not comfortable walking along the river with who knows what going on out there. The park has declined to the sad state because the lack of NRD supervision. It cannot be done casually at 2:00 in the afternoon once a week or two. A change in the park will require the NRD to provide evening and late hour supervision of their guests. I appreciate the time you have taken to review my concerns. If I can in any way assist in returning the park to its intended use do not hesitate to contact me.

Norman Vogel

11919 North 176 circle

Bennington Ne. 68007

Home 402 763 9280

Cell 402 763 9280

June 17, 2008

Mr. Norman Vogel  
11919 North 176<sup>th</sup> Circle  
Bennington, NE 68007

Dear Mr. Vogel:

The purpose of this correspondence is to address your letter regarding concerns at the Elkhorn River Crossing Recreation Area at the intersection of 252<sup>nd</sup> Street and Bennington Road.

I have attached a list of action items that I have directed our Park Staff and Park Supervisor, Mr. Jerry Herbster, to begin addressing immediately at Platte River Landing and Elkhorn Crossing.

Sadly it appears that many of the concerns you expressed were vandalism, supervision of the recreation area, trespassing, illegal use of off road vehicles and other criminal behavior such as the discharging of firearms in the park area.

I am in the process of scheduling a meeting with the Douglas County Sheriff to discuss our problems at the Recreation Area and to enlist their assistance in monitoring the facility more regularly. In addition, I am going to pursue an option with other law enforcement agencies to determine if we can secure some additional security and monitoring of the facility.

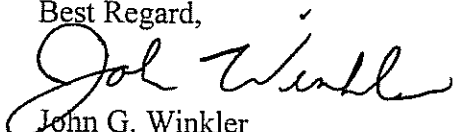
Per the attached action item list I have directed Park Personnel to post property boundary signs and to repair property boundaries including the use of structural devices to prevent access to restricted areas of the recreation area and surrounding private property.

It is our sincerest intent to improve these recreation areas by discouraging irresponsible use and criminal behavior, proper maintenance and encouraging the return of families and individuals who value our natural resources and recreation areas.

If you have questions, require additional information or have additional comments and concerns please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your time, efforts and offer of assistance. It is citizens such as yourself that make our parks and recreation areas possible for everyone to enjoy.

Best Regard,

  
John G. Winkler  
General Manager