



Lower Platte River
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

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

3125 Portia St.
PO Box 83581
Lincoln, NE 68501-3581

p: 402.476.2729
f: 402.476.6454

www.lowerplatte.org

Monthly Report for March 2016

Meghan Sittler, Coordinator

Recreation Plan

The series of three public informational meetings regarding the Lower Platte River Recreation plan began in March. The first meeting was Tuesday, March 22nd at the Ashland Community Center. Fifty-six people participated in the meeting from Ashland and represented a diverse set of affiliations, backgrounds and locations. A welcome was given by the Mayor of Ashland and was followed by three additional welcomes from a local outfitter/owner of Platte River Rentals, a director of the Nebraska Airboat Association, and a resident of the community. I presented a brief overview of the recreation plan with Craig Wacker of NGPC and we were followed by David Thomson and Holly Greismer of the National Park Service who presented an overview of water trails in other states within the region and national trends in outdoor recreation. The remainder of the meeting was then spent in small group discussions. Each group discussed “opportunities”, “constraints” and then “free ideas”—or things we had not yet discussed, captured or they thought were key for their community, the river or recreation. The same format was utilized at both the Fremont meeting, held Tuesday, April 5th and the Columbus meeting held Thursday, April 7th. A LPNDR Director and resident of Fremont provided one of the introductions at the Fremont meeting, along with Justin Zetterman, the Fremont City Engineer. In Columbus the brief introductions were by a representative of Loup Public Power District and a local resident who is an avid paddler and working on a design for a potential whitewater park. Twenty-six people participated in the meeting in Fremont and 20 people participated in the Columbus meeting.

The Lincoln Journal Star provided a story about the plan and potential access improvements prior to the meetings and an editorial was written several days after the Ashland meeting. Stories also ran following the meeting in the Plattsmouth Journal and Ashland Gazette. I had sent a number of news releases in the weeks leading up to the event to the following newspapers: Plattsmouth, the Cass gram, Omaha World Herald, Ashland, Wahoo, Douglas County, Fremont, North Bend, Schuyler, and Columbus. The later meetings, despite submitting a number of press releases had somewhat more limited publication and coverage.

Overall the meetings went very well and served as an initial conversation starter with interested and concerned individuals. I am working on a summary of the comments made and discussion from the meetings and will distribute that when it is complete. Information and pictures from the meetings are also on the LPRCA website. We anticipate moving forward with more targeted meetings in the upcoming months and continued conversation with individuals who attended on potential next steps. One of the key first steps for the LPRCA will be working to collect and standardize pertinent information about recreation access, the characteristics and issues with the river—including our real-time water quality information, amenities within the communities and surrounding areas etc. in a format that is useable for recreationists, visitors and others.

Two Rivers Pier Removal

Hawkins Construction started removing the remaining temporary bridge sections that they had left on site over the winter during the end of February and first week of March. Once the sections were removed the final grading of disturbed areas was done. The Corps of Engineers performed their end of project inspection. They had one single comment regarding the rip rap placed along the portion of the bank that had been disturbed from construction. The rip rap was pulled back onto the bank several feet and the concern was satisfied. Reseeding occurred on March 23rd and a final walkthrough was conducted on March 28th. A graded area for emergency boat access, which had been moved further downstream due to construction, was reconstructed closer to the original location by NGPC staff.

Water Quality Monitoring Network

USGS deployed all monitoring site equipment for the Elkhorn River at Waterloo, Salt Creek at Ashland and Platte River at Louisville, as well as the Shell Creek site, in mid-March. The new Platte River at Leshara site was deployed in early April. All data is now available in near real time via the internet (the website for the data is linked from our home page lowerplatte.org). Solar equipment still needs to be deployed at the Leshara location for recharging and operational back up but USGS anticipates completing that install during the second week of April.

Upcoming Events:

2016 Global Water for Food Conference, April 24-26, Innovation Campus, Lincoln.

LPRCA Quarterly Meeting, May 3, 2016, 9:00 a.m., LPSNRD in Lincoln.

River Management Society & Society of Outdoor Recreation Planners National Symposium, May 16-20,
Boise, ID

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.*