




LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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Memorandum

Date: November 8, 2024
To: Board of Directors
From: David Potter, Assistant General Manager 
RE: Platte River Subcommittee – November 7, 2024, Meeting Minutes.

The Platte River Subcommittee met at the NRD office on Thursday, November 7, 2024. Subcommittee members in attendance included Ken Vogel, Gary Aldridge, Seth Hawkins, Gary Hellerich, Don Jacobson, Christine Lamberty, and Susan Seacrest. Directors absent included Luke Peterson. Others in attendance included Dave Landis, David Potter, Samuel Thomas, and Isaac Thomas. The meeting was called to order by Chair Vogel at 6:06 p.m. and the agenda was reviewed.

The first action item on the agenda for consideration was the **2024-2029 Revision to the Water Quality Management Plan for the LPRCA**. Potter provided a background on the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) and the development of the Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP). The Lower Platte River Corridor is generally defined as the 110 miles of the Lower Platte River, the bluffs, and adjoining public and private lands located within the floodplain of the Lower Platte River from Columbus to the mouth of the river near Plattsmouth. The LPRCA is currently a consortium of three Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) and five state agencies dedicated to working with people to protect the long-term vitality of the Lower Platte River Corridor. The Lower Platte River had been listed by NDEQ (now NDEE) as being impaired due to the presence of *E. coli* bacteria, and in 2007 a TMDL for the pollutant was approved.

The LPRCA finalized developed the WQMP in 2019 to implement best management practices that address nitrogen, phosphorous and e-coli and additional water quality parameters. The WQMP identifies priority watersheds for the Lower Platte River Corridor. Management Initiatives identify the need within each of the priority watersheds: inventory current land treatments; identify BMPs and targeted load reductions to develop implementation plans (including implementation cost and schedule); initiate a cost-share program for upgrades to on-site wastewater systems and well decommissioning in housing areas along the Platte; and develop targeted education and outreach including educational workshops focused on on-site wastewater systems.

LPSNRD on behalf of the LPRCA hired HDR to develop and complete the WQMP for the corridor. The draft plan was finalized in October of 2014 and submitted for review. Revisions were made and the revised Plan was submitted to NDEQ (now NDEE) and then to EPA for review in July 2018. The WQMP was amended before final approval and was submitted to EPA at the end of March 2019. EPA approved the WQMP on April 9, 2019. With the plan approved by EPA, projects within priority 1 areas of the plan within the corridor became eligible for 319 funding. The WQMP was approved by the Alliance by consensus at their May 13, 2019, meeting and by the Lower Platte South NRD on behalf of the LPRCA on June 19, 2019.

The main purposes for having a WQMP is to provide a concise summary of the condition of water resources in Lower Platte River Corridor and to provide direction and a coordinated approach for addressing nonpoint source pollution. The WQMP provides one overarching plan that identifies and focuses on LPRCA and agency priorities. With the approved plan, efforts can be directed to project development and funding acquisition. WQMPs provide numerous benefits including allowing access to Section 319 funding for groundwater and surface water projects, enhancing project buy-in and grant funding potential by integrating LPRCA, agency, and community priorities, providing supporting information for project and grant application development, aiding in LPRCA and agency budget planning, and allowing for more effective leveraging of funds for projects and activities. The WQMP and the 2024-2029 Revision document a list of projects and practices aimed at improving water quality and removing impaired waters from the 303(d) list and provides specific project plans for implementation over the next 3-5 years.

The WQMP requires an update every five (5) years, therefore the format takes this into consideration, and it was designed to be dynamic rather than fixed, allowing for minimal updating effort. Future updates will include a revised assessment of water quality data as compared to WQMP criteria and a determination of whether the current strategy is on track to meet plan goals and, if needed, new nonpoint source load estimates, revision of goals and objectives, updated management strategies and priorities, and updates to the resource and budget needs. After the plan is revised within the required five years, new areas may be targeted.

The WQMP was up for review and revision this year. LPRCA members voted to update the Plan in house. PMRNRD took the lead with LPNNRD and LPSNRD assisting. The recommended revisions were not substantial. The update did not provide for any new priority areas or water quality goals due to insignificant overall change in the LPSNRD watersheds and no new BMPs were identified. A summary of the revision can be found in the copy of EPA's acceptance and checklist. The prepared update was approved by the LPRCA in May 2024 and sent to NDEE and then to the EPA for review. The 2024-2029 Revision was accepted by EPA and NDEE on September 30, 2024. With its approval, the WQMP will continue to be the guiding document for water quality management in the LPRCA. The 2024-2029 Revision is provided and the 2019 LPRCA WQMP is available on the LPSNRD website at: https://www.lowerplatte.org/news_publications/resources.html.

It was moved by Vogel, seconded by Lamberty, and unanimously approved to recommend the LPSNRD Board of Directors approve the 2024-2029 Revision to the Water Quality Management Plan for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance.

The next item was consideration of the **First Amendment to the Interlocal Cooperation Act Agreement for the Platte River and Elkhorn River Cameras between LPSNRD and PMRNRD**. Following the March 2019 flood event, local NRDs emergency managers, and city staff have been interested in deploying camera systems and sensors at key locations along the Platte River to directly observe what is happening during potential ice jam and flooding situations. In 2021, cameras were installed along the Platte River at Columbus, Schuyler, North Bend, Fremont and Leshara. These cameras have provided valuable information on ice breakup and movement through the Platte system. Here is a link to the cameras: <https://apps.usgs.gov/hivis/>. PMRNRD has recently worked with the USGS to install three additional cameras, two on the Elkhorn River at Winslow and West Point and one on the Platte River at Ashland.

In 2023, the Board approved an interlocal cooperation agreement with PMRNRD for the Elkhorn/Platte River Cameras project. USGS contributed to each gage and provided the equipment

and maintenance while LPSNRD and PMRNRD agreed to split the local cost-share. LPSNRD was to provide only half the local share for the camera near Ashland, with PMRNRD providing the other half. PMRNRD was also providing local cost-share on the other two cameras themselves.

Since the installation of the most recent cameras, PMRNRD and USGS now want to install another camera on the Platte River near Louisville. LPSNRD also has an interest in and has planned for this additional camera in our budget and LRIP. The First Amendment to the current Interlocal Cooperation Agreement which reflects this arrangement was provided to the subcommittee for their consideration. The LPSNRD cost for the installation of the camera at Louisville is \$5,090.00, the cost for the FY25 operation and maintenance of the camera at Louisville is \$1,587.50, and the LPSNRD cost for the FY25 operation and maintenance of the camera at Ashland is \$1,639. A copy of the existing agreement with PMRNRD was also provided to the subcommittee for reference. The goal is to get the camera at Louisville installed and operating in the next month or two just prior to ice jam season. The existing camera near Ashland can be accessed at:

<https://usgs-nims-images.s3.amazonaws.com/overlav/NE Platte River near Ashland/NE Platte River near Ashland newest.jpg>

The subcommittee discussed the locations of the cameras and the operation of them.

It was moved by Vogel, seconded by Hellerich, and unanimously approved to recommend the Board of Directors approve the First Amendment to the Interlocal Cooperation Act Agreement for the Platte River and Elkhorn River Cameras between LPSNRD and PMRNRD.

With no further business or discussion, Vogel declared the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Attachment: 1

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