



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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Memorandum

Date: June 13, 2024
To: Board of Directors
From: David Potter, Assistant General Manager *TP*
RE: Platte River Subcommittee – June 11, 2024, Meeting Minutes.

The Platte River Subcommittee met at the NRD office on Tuesday, June 11, 2024. Subcommittee members in attendance included Ken Vogel, Seth Hawkins, Gary Hellerich, Don Jacobson, Gary Aldridge, and Susan Seacrest. Directors absent included Luke Peterson and Christine Lamberty. Others in attendance included David Potter. The meeting was called to order by Chair Vogel at 6:00 p.m. and the agenda was reviewed.

The first action item on the agenda for consideration was the **Cooperative Assistance Agreement with the Nebraska Land Trust**. The Nebraska Land Trust (NLT) is a 501 C (3) nonprofit organization actively engaged in land conservation in Nebraska since 2001. The NLT holds full accreditation as a land trust in Nebraska from the National Land Trust Alliance. With only four employees, the organization has successfully completed over 50 individual easements, protecting nearly 48,000 acres under permanent conservation easements across 23 counties. Eighteen of those easements (32%) are in the Lower Platte Valley in Douglas, Sarpy, and Saunders Counties.

LPSNRD is a member of the NLT and through a cooperative agreement, has been providing an annual financial contribution of \$30,000. This 3-year agreement has been extended most recently in 2021 to continue the original Agreement for an additional three-year period. The current three-year agreement with NLT ends June 30, 2024, and the NLT is requesting that this partnership continue for an additional three-year period beginning in Fiscal Year 2025.

Staff is proposing that LPSNRD continue to assist the work of the NLT in developing land protection and easement acquisition strategies, fundraising plans, conservation easement templates, organizing public meetings, providing easement education, and other conservation easement activities for specific areas in the Platte and Missouri River corridors, the Haines Branch Prairie Corridor, and other locations within the District for an additional three-year period starting in FY25. A copy of the proposed agreement (attached) along with the 2024 NLT Report to LPSNRD and a conservation easement article was provided to the subcommittee.

It was moved by Seacrest, seconded by Hawkins, and unanimously approved to recommend the Board of Directors approve the Cooperative Assistance Agreement between the Lower Platte South NRD and the Nebraska Land Trust that allows for an additional three-year District commitment in the amount of \$30,000/year, commencing in fiscal year 2025.

The next item was consideration of a **Joint Funding Agreement with USGS for the Trend Analysis on Continuous Water Quality in the Lower Platte River and LPSNRD on behalf of the LPRCA**. The Platte River Subcommittee and the Board have discussed a possible USGS trend analysis of one or more of

the Platte River streamgages for over a year. The District discussed sponsoring the project ourselves even if other members of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) were not interested. An action item and funds were placed in the FY24 Long Range Implementation Plan (LRIP) and Budget.

Since the adoption FY 24 Budget, more discussion has been had with the LPRCA members and several agencies have now decided to participate in the proposed detailed trend analysis on all the continuous water quality monitoring gages. Information from USGS on the proposed trend analysis of the streamgages is attached. The proposed USGS trend analysis is estimated at \$148,100 and would take two years to complete. The cost would be split between USGS and LPRCA members and other agencies electing to participate in the trend analysis. Of the total cost, the USGS will be contributing \$53,260 and the LPRCA partners will contribute \$94,840. Members and agencies committed to funding the project include NDEE through a Section 319 Small Grants Project for \$15,000 and NeDNR, MUD, Lincoln Water, Nebraska Game & Parks, LPSNRD, PMRNRD, LPNNRD, and UNL at a cost of \$9,980 each. The overall project will be administered through Joint Funding Agreements and a Section 319 Inter-governmental Agreement with LPSNRD on behalf of the LPRCA and with USGS, NDEE and the participating agencies. LPSNRD is serving as the authorizing member/agency on behalf of the LPRCA as per the current LPRCA Interlocal Cooperation Act Agreement.

The first of these agreements for consideration is the USGS Joint Funding Agreement for Water Resource Investigations (Trend Analysis) with Lower Platte South NRD on behalf of the LPRCA. A letter from USGS and the agreement (attached) were provided.

It was moved by Jacobson, seconded by Hawkins, and approved (with Aldridge voting no and others voting yes) to recommend the Board of Directors approve the USGS Joint Funding Agreement for Water Resource Investigations (Trend Analysis) with LPSNRD on behalf of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance.

The third action item was consideration of the **Inter-governmental Agreement for a Section 319 Grant with NDEE for the Trend Analysis of Continuous Water Quality in the Lower Platte River and LPSNRD on behalf of the LPRCA.**

As stated above, NDEE has secured a Section 319 Grant with EPA for \$15,000 to help fund the proposed Trend Analysis. The attached Inter-governmental Agreement is between the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy and the LPSNRD on behalf of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance regarding the implementation of the project titled Trend Analysis of Continuous Water Quality in the Lower Platte River. The two-year grant is consistent with the USGS Trend Analysis Project timeline, and the required 40% nonfederal match (up to \$10,000) will come from the committed funding contributions of the three NRDs (LPSNRD, LPNNRD, and PMRNRD) as per the agreements.

It was moved by Jacobson, seconded by Hellerich, and unanimously approved to recommend the Board of Directors approve the Inter-governmental Agreement between the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy and the LPSNRD on behalf of the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance regarding the implementation of the project titled Trend Analysis of Continuous Water Quality in the Lower Platte River.

The next action item was consideration of a **Joint Funding Agreement for the USGS Streamgage Trend Analysis between LPSNRD on behalf of the LPRCA and LPNNRD, PMRNRD, NeDNR, NGP, UNL, MUD, and Lincoln Water.**

A Joint funding agreement has been drafted between each participating agency and LPSNRD on behalf of the LPRCA. The proposed agreement (attached) is for two years and provides for a payment by each participating agency or partner of \$5,843 in FY25 and \$4,137 in FY26 for a total of \$9,980 for the entire project.

It was moved by Seacrest, seconded by Jacobson, and approved (with Aldridge voting present and others voting yes) to recommend the Board of Directors approve the Joint Funding Agreement for the USGS Streamgage Trend Analysis between LPSNRD on behalf of the LPRCA and LPNNRD, PMRNRD, NeDNR, NGP, UNL, MUD, and Lincoln Water.

Potter then provided updates on the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance, the Platte River Sandbar Removal Project, and the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership. The last meeting of the Corridor Alliance was held on May 29th at the National Guard Camp Ashland. PMRNRD was successful in getting a grant through the Department of Economic Development Infrastructure Match Program. PMRNRD is being awarded \$7.15 million to restore the Platte River water flow to near pre-disaster conditions by removing sand, rock, and silt from the river at Highway 75 near La Platte. The removal of the sandbar will reduce the stress placed upon the bridge pilings and provide increased flood resiliency for future disasters. LPSNRD has committed funds to the project and will be considering a funding agreement for our share of the local match in July or August. Potter has also requested and scheduled a report from the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership at the next subcommittee meeting. LPSNRD has contributed \$5,000 annually to support the efforts of the Partnership.

With no further business or discussion, Vogel declared the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Attachment: 1

Pc: file